



The Rabbit Factor

Antti Tuomainen

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In Antti Tuomainen's novel *The Rabbit Factor*, a Helsinki actuary's predictable world turns into a bizarre landscape filled with chaos, death threats, and an enormous plastic rabbit.

Henri, a diligent worker, feels like he's becoming unhinged from the "great mechanism" that holds the universe together. He prefers logic and statistics to his company's new team-building activities, but his refusal to participate in these "amateurish therapy sessions" and sushi-making weekends leads to his termination.

Soon after, Henri learns that his brother, Juhani, is dead, and that he has inherited YouMeFun, Juhani's family adventure park complex (as Henri explains: while amusement parks are passive venues, an adventure park is where visitors are active, climbing walls, slides, and ropes, or making their way through labyrinths). Though YouMeFun is an odd venture for Henri, he learns all facets of the operation and applies his mathematical skills to the park's troubled finances. But he's also harassed by menacing gangsters, like the Lizard Man, whose breath smells of "something badly digested." Juhani owed these men a large sum of money, and they may have prompted his fatal heart attack.

Henri narrates in a wry yet reflective manner, expressing both cynicism and yearning. He observes the beauty of the seasons and autumn's "ocean of colour" as he commutes to YouMeFun's surreal Caper Castle, Tumble Tunnel, Giant Rabbit, and Curly Cake Cafe. He also offers constructive encouragements to YouMeFun's employees, and becomes caught up in a romantic involvement with Laura, the park manager. He's able to fight back against the underworld thugs using his shrewd, surprising balance of mental and physical powers.

Filled with keen, deadpan humor and vulnerable eloquence, *The Rabbit Factor* is a dark and delightful novel with an intelligent, brave, and persnickety hero.

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