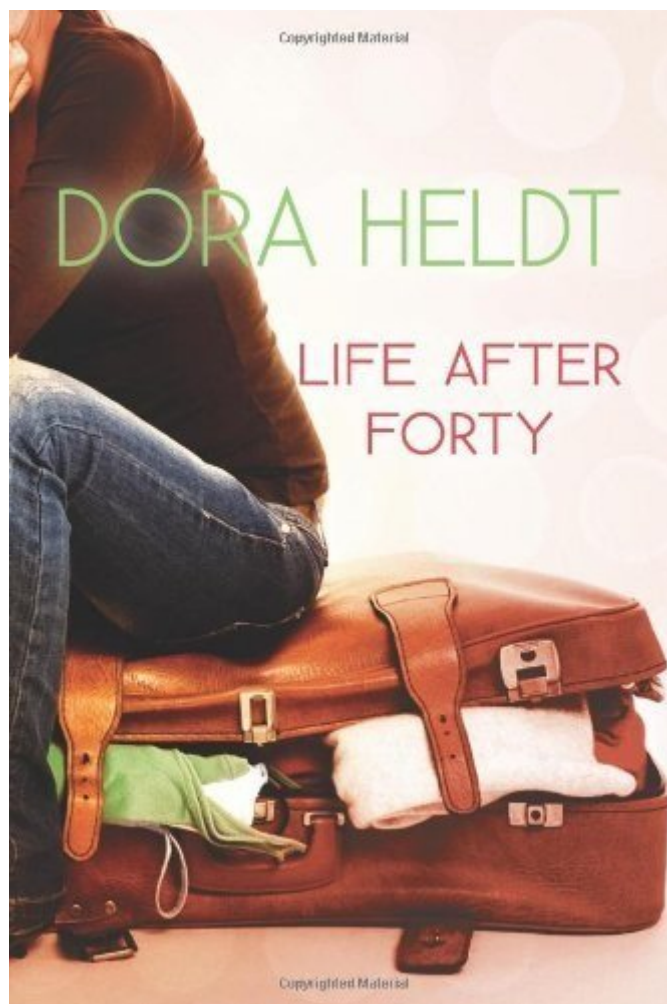


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# Life After Forty



## Synopsis

When Christine's husband of ten years dumps her over the phone while she watches a Hugh Grant film she is sent spinning on a cathartic, self-medicated journey to the land of self-acceptance and self-reliance. Surrounded by her sister and a strong support group of friends, Christine learns how to deal with the horrors of dating, finding new appliances, and the exhilarating feeling of shopping without consequence. An uproarious look at the suddenly single life of a divorcee, Dora Heldt's first book to appear in English captures the zeitgeist of the new millennium with searing insight while never deigning to take itself too seriously. Sparkling dialogue and unforgettable characters create a vibrant world of sardonic, take-no-prisoners women who hold their own in a world geared toward acceptance of their younger selves. Not since Bridget Jones's Diary or Sex in the City has anything like Life After Forty so accurately and thoroughly expressed the modern female point of view with such startling clarity.

## Book Information

File Size: 368 KB

Print Length: 238 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1611090091

Publisher: Crossing (April 21, 2011)

Publication Date: April 21, 2011

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00439GMNS

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #33,233 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #20 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > German #24 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Women's Fiction > Divorce #31 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > German

## Customer Reviews

I finished this book, but only due to some unwritten reader's code. I wonder, with so many wonderful

books available, how one like this gets published. Is there really a demograph of desperate over 40 women large enough to provide a market for such books? Unfortunately, few of the divorced "over forty" women I know have the luxury of financial freedom; most struggle to pay their rent and car payment. I found this story unrealistic and boring. Just a tale of a divorced woman, getting her life back together, with few hardships involved.

This book is an easy read as you are quickly grabbed by the story. In the first few pages the woman, Christine, who is about to turn 40, gets a phone call from her husband saying he wants a divorce out of the blue. He didn't even have the courage to do it in person. She is in shock and we go with her on the journey of figuring out why and remaking her future. The book is translated from the German but the translation is seamless. Actually you would never know it is a translation except for the somewhat odd first names, the names of the cities and the occasional references to the Euro. Other than that it was intriguing to see how very much like us they live - same TV shows, same music, etc. I read it quickly, in two sittings (stayed up a bit too late), just because I wanted to know where she was going. She has wonderful support from her women friends and also from her family. I didn't realize until almost the end that the book was fiction because it certainly reads like a memoir. I don't like too much info before I start a book so I seem to have ignored that information and it was easy to ignore because it seemed so down to earth and realistic. And I think that is its charm - portraying the shock, bereavement, gradual adjustment and all the other emotions that befall a person in such a situation. She also shows how some of her women friends are often faced with similar relationship issues but make different decisions. Many women will love this book and find its insights very helpful.

Woman is cheated on by man who leaves her for another woman. Very common, not at all unique. But what is special about this book is how the character works through the year following her abrupt separation and how she reclaims her life. She does it quietly in a real-world way. There's no scene where she has a screaming fit and cuts her ex down to size, or a confrontation with the other woman. At no point does he crawl back, showing her how pathetic he is. She's simply a real woman working through real pain and learning how to live her life as a single person rather than as a couple. Her friends are lovely and boost her up. You always have the sense that she will work through it because she has such supportive friends and family to keep her going. Her small realizations are the most poignant--such as buying things she loves but never was able to have because her ex would not like them. It feels like she is getting in touch with her real self

again. Further, this book gently probes the idea of relationship types and value. What one person wants out of a relationship is not what another one wants. Relationships are all unique, but the universal is that needs on both sides need to be met. However that happens, the end result of fulfillment and contentment is the real measure of a relationship. There's no fairy tale ending, no prince on a white horse. And I like that about this story. It's realistic and honest. It's thought-provoking in regard to the concessions we make for love and relationships, and what the best compromise for oneself is. There are some great moments in the book, too. The retail therapy session was delightful and made me feel like I myself had gone on a wonderful spending spree. I could completely relate to the character and her feelings. This is the best book I've read in quite some time.

I found this book to be a bit plodding in regard to pace. It took me quite a long time to get through it which is unnatural for me. I don't know if it is the translation or simply the characters themselves. I found the main character to be boring, and not in a she's-one-dimensional way, but rather a she is such a doormat that she is annoying. As things happen to her in life she appears to be removed from all of the action, her husband and her best friends actions just garnered silent fuming. Each time she appeared to be doing something to bolster herself, self-esteem, her will she does something that makes it all seem like it was just a perfunctory, going-through-the-motions type of reaction, sexual encounters even seem to have that same fell. I found this book to be forgettable and was overall a tedious read.

I enjoyed reading this book and the writing is very clever. It's the story of a 40-year-old woman who begins the journey of going through a divorce after 12 years of marriage. Since the story takes place in Germany, there is also cultural differences that I found fascinating. For instance, people smoke cigarettes a lot in this book which is so unique for many American readers since smoking is vilified here. People also drink a lot of wine and champagne and Prosecco, many drinks a day. Interestingly enough, though, when the main character was drinking wine at home and felt it "going to her head" she poured it down the drain. So there is a lot of casual use of alcohol which is so unlike American chick lit novels I read; however, the characters aren't necessarily getting drunk or binge drinking. I found this quite interesting, because we can be such prudes with alcohol in the US and the author makes wine drinking appear so relaxed and normal with her characters. The story is much more than smoking and drinking though! It's the story of a kind and successful woman unwinding from an old, semi-content life and the growing pains of creating a new one. Friendships, new love interests, and

family support are a big part of her growth. I definitely recommend this book because it was an absorbing page-turner taking place in Germany.

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