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new/s release

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“The unique quality of Axel Thormählen's stories lies in their integrity of subject, action, and expression. They refuse to be dissected or peeled like an onion. Each is a jewel in one's hand, a luminous presence to be acknowledged whole.”

– Thomas Vargish, author of *Inside Modernism: Relativity Theory, Cubism, Narrative*

A Happy Man and Other Stories

Fiction by Axel Thormählen
Translated by Marianne Thormählen
Back Cover Art by Danielle Adair
Introduction by Judith Freeman
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A Happy Man and Other Stories or/oder Der Glückliche und andere Erzählungen draws together nine short stories by German author Axel Thormählen. Jochen, the title story's hero, is a man content in the face of others' discontent and their foolish fear of mortality. Like Jochen, many of Thormählen's characters live within deceptively simple, but impossibly profound movements, accepting the happy limits of life. Judith Freeman asks in her introduction, “though we are drained, hunted to death, and out of breath, is [Jochen] not still, are we not all, happy men?” Thormählen's great achievement is that his stories move as much toward the answer as the question, but in the end leave both untouched and unrelenting.

“A delightful, unusual, highly individual book, with a gentle wisdom, sometimes disturbing or amusing or both, but always very distinctive. I enjoyed it, story by story, greatly, but the total atmosphere exceeds the sum of its parts.”

– Claude Rawson, author of *God, Gulliver and Genocide* and editor of *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, IV*

Axel Thormählen was born in Lower Saxony, Northern Germany, in 1945, and has lived in Sweden since 1968, dividing his time between writing and translating (from Swedish into German). He has published three novels in German: *Hanky* (1978), *Hanna* (1983), and *When Wörter töten könnten* ('If Words Could Kill') (2003). His novel in Swedish, *Wilhelm* (1993), was published by Ellerströms, who have also brought out two collections of his short stories in Swedish. *A Happy Man / Der Glückliche* is his first bi-lingual German/English publication.

Marianne Thormählen (translator) is Professor of English Literature at Lund University, Sweden, and an authorized translator and interpreter in English and German. She has written books on T. S. Eliot, John Wilmot 2nd Earl of Rochester, and the Brontë sisters; her most recent book is *The Brontës and Education*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2007.