

# PAASI- LINNA MODERN CLASSIC

“You are the Gabriel García Márquez of the North to us.  
You thaw the cold that envelops Finland with your earthy,  
ever-delectable stories. Thank you for writing them.”

JOYAU FIGARO (FRANCE)





“The hare, the bear and the solitary hero – the pillars of Arto Paasilinna’s universe”

# ARTO PAASILINNA



Photos © Veikko Somerpuro

**A**rto Paasilinna’s earthy depictions of the endless escapades of Finnish men and their irrepressible attitude towards life have claimed a permanent place in the national canon. His elemental language and exuberant optimism have also found international appreciation. He is the world’s best-known contemporary Finnish author, with works translated into over 40 languages. In Europe, Paasilinna is considered a prominent eco-philosopher, whose works are simultaneously timeless and timely; their themes, dark humour and delvings into the heart of humanity continue to touch new readers around the world.

As an author, Paasilinna is a natural storyteller and blue-blooded humourist, who imbues his picaresque novels with a biting take

on contemporary life and satire. At the core of his wild adventures, rife with surprising turns of events, is a philosophical view of people as prisoners of modern mores and conventions. Paasilinna’s protagonists pig-headedly fight conventionality, mediocrity and the other scourges of modern life. They are driven by a burning desire to return to nature, where human existence would prove easier. Paasilinna finds material for his humour from the most unlikely subjects, such as suicides and unemployment, but always handles them with compassion and understanding.

Almost all Paasilinna novels are founded on a wildly comical notion, implemented throughout his works without a fear of consequences. Paasilinna’s writing can be considered to belong to the genre of magical realism. One of his main

themes is freedom – or the illusion thereof. His protagonists have little consideration for social standing, regulations or societal demands, and generally do whatever pops into their heads.

Works by Paasilinna have been adapted for film and stage both in Finland and abroad and have also appeared in graphic novel format.

Around 7.5 million Arto Paasilinna books have been sold worldwide. Publishers in several countries have brought out more than 15 titles to date, with steadily increasing numbers. Paasilinna’s work has been published in over 40 languages by the following publishers:

Albanian (*Dituria, Ora*), Bulgarian (*Colibri*), Brazilian Portuguese (*Bertrand Brasil*), Catalan (*Edicions 62*), Complex Chinese (*Aquarius*), Simplified Chinese (*Shanghai Gaotan Culture*), Croatian (*AGM*), Czech (*Hejkal*), Danish (*Tiderne*

*Skifter, Modtryck*), Dutch (*Wereldbibliotheek*), English (*Canongate, Peter Owen, Penguin*), Estonian (*Varrak, Tänapäev*), Erzya (*Sjatko*), French (*Denoël, Gallimard*), Galician (*Rinoceronte*), German (*Lübbe*), Greek (*Empiria*), Hebrew (*Am Oved*), Hungarian (*Magvető, Széphalom*), Icelandic (*Edda, Skrudda*), Italian (*Iperborea*) Japanese (*Shinjusha*), Korean (*Sol*), Latvian (*Daugava*), Lithuanian (*Baltos Lankos*), Macedonian (*ViG Zenica*) Moksha (*Moksha Magazine*), Norwegian (*Aschehoug*), Polish (*Kojro*), Portuguese (*Relógio d’Água*), Russian (*Olga Morozova*), Romanian (*Polirom*), Serbian (*Odiseja*), Slovak (*Slovart*), Slovenian (*Mladinska Knjiga*), Spanish (*Anagrama*), Swedish (*Brombergs*), Turkish (*Simavi*), Ukrainian, (*Calvaria*) Vietnamese (*Compagnie Générale du Livre*), Thai (*Thames*).



# THE YEAR OF THE HARE



”This incredible ecological fable, a journey through Finnish seasons and landscapes, is a genre of its own. Arto Paasilinna has invented a new genre: ecological humour.”

**BIBLIOMONDE**

Vatanen the journalist is feeling burnt out and sick of the city. One summer evening while on assignment his car hits a young hare on a country road. He goes in search of the injured creature. This small incident becomes a life-changing experience for Vatanen as he decides to break free from the world’s constraints. He quits his job, leaves his wife, sells his possessions to travel the Finnish wilds with his new-found friend. Their adventures take in forest fires, pagan sacrifices, military war games, killer bears and much more.

*The Year of the Hare* is an entertaining mix of fable, farce, mid-life crisis and road book. It is a fable of freedom, commitment and survival. It is series of comic bumbles and misadventures.

Classified as masterpiece of World literature in UNESCO Collection of Representative Works.

Premio Letterario Giuseppe Acerbi (Italy) 1994

Pro Finlandia (Finland) 1993

Prix Littéraire Air Inter (France) 1989

Film (Finland) 1977, (France) 2006

**TRANSLATIONS:** Bulgarian, Chinese (Simplified and Complex), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, English, Estonian, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Ukrainian

Fiction – 182 pages – Original “Jäniksen vuosi” W+G 1975

# THE HOWLING MILLER

“Paasilinna’s gift in this gem of a novel – is to wring humor from the most desperate of circumstances.”

**THE NEW YORK TIMES (USA)**

Gunnar Huttunen is a troubled miller, who moves to a small village where he beautifully renovates a dilapidated mill and entertains with his excellent (if slightly bizarre) animal impressions. But at night the miller’s raucous howling proves too distressing for the villagers who diagnose him as a madman and banish him from their precious oasis. What follows is a witch hunt as Gunnar battles with a desire for his mill and the drop dead gorgeous horticulture expert, and his longing for a hassle-free life.

*The Howling Miller* paints a crystalline portrait of society, its norms, and what it means to function outside them. This tale is a narrative *tour de force*, told with verve, humour, and a touch of the bizarre.

**TRANSLATIONS:** Bulgarian, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian

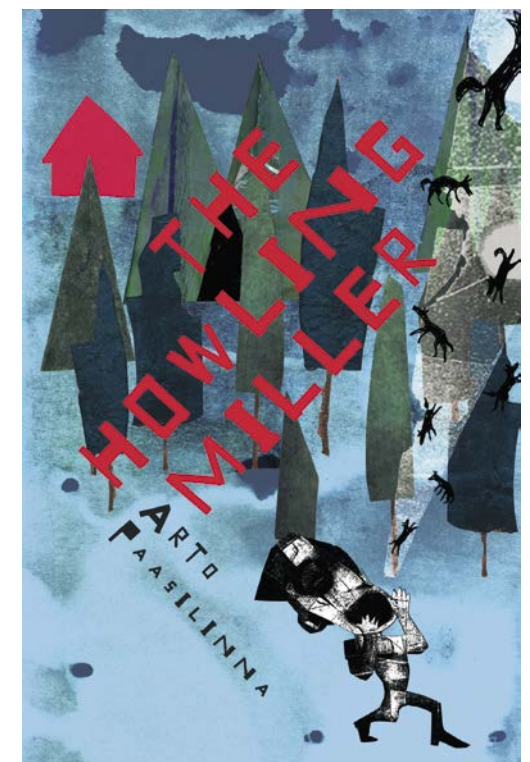
International film rights optioned (France)

Film (Finland) 1982

Fiction – 236 pages – Original “Ulvova mylläri” WSOY 1981

“– even a glimpse of Paasilinna’s singular vision of freedom and persecution proves beguiling”

**THE GUARDIAN (U.K.)**





# THE CHARMING MASS SUICIDE

Onni Rellonen has reached a dead end and the only way out seems to be a revolver and a secluded barn - but he is shocked to find another wretched soul has beaten him to it. Colonel Hermann Kempainen is already in position with a noose around his neck, but to his dismay, Rellonen saves his life at the last minute. The two men realise they have a common problem and decide to seek strength in numbers. Their newspaper advertisement receives over 600 responses from other Finns planning to off themselves. The suicide candidates decide to meet, and before long have joined forces to achieve their shared goal. The story reaches its climax as the busload of Finns travel around Europe searching for a suitable spot for their mass suicide.

One of the most popular Paasilinna titles, *The Charming Mass Suicide* is a joyful celebration of life.

**TRANSLATIONS:** Bulgarian, Chinese (Simplified and Complex), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Slovenian, Swedish, Russian

Musical (South Korea) 2009

Film (Finland) 2000

International film rights sold (USA)

Prix littéraire des auteurs Européens "Furet du Nord" (France) 2004

Fiction - 280 pages - Original "Hurmaava joukkoitsemurha"  
WSOY 1990

"Don't commit suicide  
without reading this book".

LECTURE ECRITURE  
(FRANCE).

"Outstanding medicine  
for depression, better  
than Prozac!"

LIRE (FRANCE)



## THE FOREST OF HANGED FOXES

Three small-time crooks in Stockholm become fed up with poverty and rob a handsome amount of gold. Two of them get caught but remain calm in the knowledge that the gold will be waiting for them. Oiva Juntunen, however, feels that keeping gold safe for other people is a waste of a perfectly good fortune. Not surprisingly, he grows more and more anxious as the day approaches when his former mates will be released from prison. Faced with the prospect of two tough guys coming to collect their due, he decides to disappear.

In *The Forest of Hanged Foxes*, Paasilinna weaves a dense narrative true to his own nature as a backwoods philosopher.

**TRANSLATIONS:** Albanian, Czech, Catalan, French, Galician, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Slovenian, Spanish, Russian, Swedish

Lecture Jeunesse Prize (France) 1995

TV Film (Finland) 1986

International film rights optioned (France)

Fiction - 240 pages - Original "Hirtettyjen kettujen metsä" WSOY 1987



# LIFE SHORT, RYTKÖNEN TALL

Honoured land surveyor Taavetti Rytkönen remembers the old days like they were yesterday - but he can't remember yesterday. Luckily, the wad of cash in his pocket smoothes out the bumps in the road as Taavetti sets out on a journey to hunt down the past. If only the taxi driver Sorjonen had known who he was picking up...

The pages of *Life Short, Rytkönen Tall* are populated by many mysterious, quirky and fascinating characters. This novel takes the reader on a road trip up north from Helsinki in the most beautiful Finnish summer scenery.

*Life Short, Rytkönen Tall* is a hilarious novel about memory loss that not only makes us think, smile and dream, but confirms Arto Paasilinna's position as one of the greatest contemporary Northern European authors

**TRANSLATIONS:** Albanian, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Swedish

International film rights optioned (Italy)

Film (Finland) 1996

Fiction - 233 pages - Original "Elämä lyhyt, Rytkönen pitkä"  
WSOY 1991





# REVEREND'S BEASTLY VALET

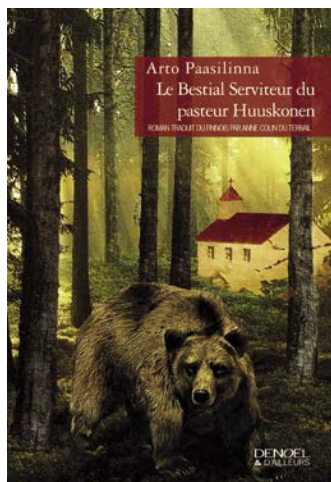
The wilful reverend is performing a marriage ceremony, but it ends in disaster when the village caterer and the she-bear that has been stalking him are burnt to a crisp on an electricity pylon. One of the orphaned bear cubs finds a new home at a zoo, the other stays with the reverend Huuskonen. This memorable fiftieth birthday gift is the parishioners' revenge on their reverend, who likes to blast his flock with fiery sermons. Huuskonen becomes so attached to the bear, which he christens Darn It, that he eventually loses his wife, home and job. And so the unemployed reverend goes wandering – and his teddy bear tags along. Huuskonen soon schools the bear in everything from religious rituals to household chores and dance steps. The reverend and his bear get along like brothers, even though Darn It ends up raising hell.

*The Reverend's Beastly Valet* is a fantastic display of absurdity even by Arto Paasilinna's standards.

**TRANSLATIONS:** French, Chinese (Complex), Czech, German, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Slovenian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Swedish

20 meilleurs livres de l'année (Le Point, France) 2007

Fiction – 294 pages – Original “Rovasti Huuskosen petomainen miespalvelija” WSOY 1995



# SWEET POISON COOK

Sweet Linnea Ravaska lives on a small croft in the remote village of Harmisto. It seems like the perfect idyll – a red cottage with blooming Scotch roses and cats sprawling in the yard. But today is pension day and Linnea is anxious. Once a month, a group of uncontrollable, loud-mouthed louts, led by Linnea's foster son Kauko, turn up once again to demand a chunk of her pension. Linnea has to suffer even more rampant debauchery than usual, and she is forced to sign an unfair will and testament. This is the start of a fierce battle of wills between the gang of young rogues and the frail old lady. Just in case the worst comes to pass, she mixes herself a fatal poison. The young crooks get not only their share of the poison, but also a reason to remove the difficult old lady from their path. Eventually, the iron-willed Linnea gets to show us what a sweet poison cook is capable of.

*The Sweet Poison Cook* is a humorous crime novel where the killer is dressed in old lace; spiked with arsenic, written by the genius of literary sitcom.

Prix Chronos des Lycéens (France) 2003

International film rights sold (France)  
TV film (Finland) 2002

**TRANSLATIONS:** Czech, Dutch, French, German, Icelandic, Italian, Korean, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish

Fiction – 194 pages – Original “Suloinen myrkynteittäjä” WSOY 1988



# SON OF THE THUNDER GOD

The Finnish people clearly no longer believe in their own gods. This is the verdict reached by a crisis meeting of pagan deities, and so the supreme god Ukko sends his son Rutja down to Earth to convert the nation back to its true religion. Events begin to unfold at breakneck speed. As a wave of change sweeps across Finland, government officials can only look on with bated breath. Soon everyone is building an altar to Ukko. It is a time of miracles, and the ancient powers of the Earth are once more within reach of mortal man.

*The Son of the Thunder God* is Christian satire powered by slapstick and good humanist humour; closer to *Life of Brian* than *The Passion*, this novel lays bare the hypocrisy and inadequacy of our consumerist society.

**TRANSLATIONS:** Czech, Croatian, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish, Romanian

Fiction – 262 pages – Original “Ukkosenjumalan poika” WSOY 1984

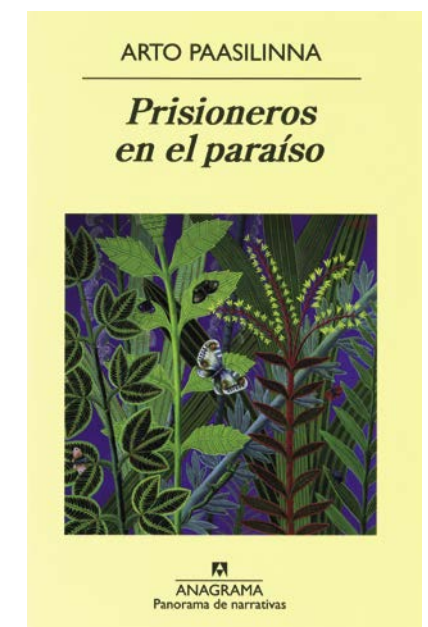
# PRISONERS PARADISE

A plane travelling on a UN mission makes an emergency landing in a remote corner of the Indonesian archipelago. The passengers – Swedish midwives, Finnish lumberjacks, Norwegian doctors, and English pilots and stewardesses – overcome the initial discomfort and, without losing hope of returning to home, get organised in order to maximise their happiness on the island.

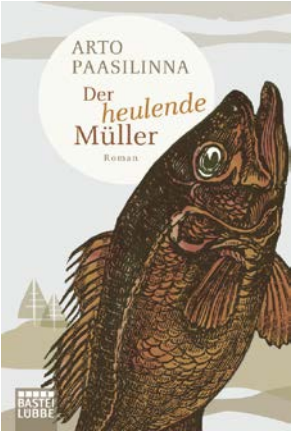
With anarchistic, crazy and rebellious characters, Paasilinna builds an imaginative utopia, reinventing the literary topos of a desert island with irreverent humour. With fair distribution of wealth and justice combined with liberation from civilised structures, we just might achieve happiness. Maybe.

**TRANSLATIONS:** French, German, Italian, Korean, Swedish, Spanish

Fiction – 184 pages – Original “Paratiisaaren vangit” W+G 1974







## NOVELS

Alive at His Own Funeral (Elävänä omissa hautajaisissa) 2009

The Flight of the Maidens (Neitosten karkuretki) 2008

The Wanton Prayer Wheel (Rietas rukousmylly) 2007

Cold Nerves, Hot Blood (Kylmät hermot, kuuma veri) 2006

The Finnish Book of Snouts (Suomalainen kärsäkirja) 2005

Clumsy Guardian Angel (Tohelo suojelusenkeli) 2004

The Airships of Mr Liljeroos (Liikemies Liljeroosin ilmalaivat) 2003

Ten Shrews (Kymmenen riivinrautaa) 2001

The Last Lap of the Human Race (Ihmiskunnan loppulaukka) 2000

The World Ends in a Neigh (Hirnuva maailmanloppu) 1999

The Herb Garden of Unhanged Scoundrels (Hirttämättömien lurjusten yrttitarha) 1998

Sunrise on Judgment Day (Tuomiopäivän aurinko nousee) 1997

The Flying Carpenter (Lentävä kirvesmies) 1996

The Reverend's Beastly Valet (Rovasti Huuskosen petomainen miespalvelija) 1995

Volomari Volotinen's First Wife and Other Old Junk (Volomari Volotisen ensimmäinen vaimo ja muuta vanhaa tavaraa) 1994

Adam and Eve (Aatami ja Eeva) 1993

The Best Village in the World (Maailman paras kylä) 1992

Life Short, Rytkönen Tall (Elämä lyhyt Rytkönen pitkä) 1991

The Charming Mass Suicide (Hurmaava joukkoitsemurha) 1990

God Almighty (Auta armias) 1989

The Sweet Poison Cook (Suloinen myrkyneittäjä) 1988

Koikkalainen from Far Away (Koikkalainen kaukaa) 1987

Saviour Surunen (Vapahtaja Surunen) 1986

The Surefooted Shipwright (Parasjalkainen laivanvarustaja) 1985

The Son of the Thunder God (Ukkosenjumalan poika) 1984

The Forest of Hanged Foxes (Hirtettyjen kettujen metsä) 1983

The Howling Miller (Ulvova mylläri) 1981

The Golden Climber (Kultainen nousukas) 1982

Good Heavens! (Herranen aika) 1980

War Horse (Sotahevonen)1979

Looking for Grandfather (Isoisää etsimässä) 1977

A Happy Man (Onnellinen mies) 1976

The Year of the Hare (Jäniksen vuosi) 1975

Prisoners of Paradise (Paratiisisaaren vangit) 1974

Operation Finlandia (Operaatio Finlandia) 1972

## GRAPHIC NOVELS

The Beastly Valet, (Karvainen kamaripalvelija, ill. Hannu Lukkarinen) WSOY 2006

Translations: Italian

The Flying Carpenter (Ronkoteus - Lentävä kirvesmies, ill. Hannu Lukkarinen), WSOY 2002

Translations: French, Italian

## SELECTED WORKS (NON-FICTION)

Faces of Europe, travelogue (Euroopan kasvot) WSOY 1980

The Bear-Killer, reportage (Karhunkaataja Ikä-Alpi), Tammi 1964

Translations: French.

The National Guest Book, bathroom graffiti, (Kansallinen vieraskirja) W+G 1971

## MEMOIR

Nine Dreams, WSOY 2002 (Yhdeksän unelmaa)

Translations: Swedish



"It sometimes makes me wonder how millions of readers around the world can love and identify with the characters of my novels. Especially when most of them are animals. Rabbits, horses, pigs. Well - you can find God the Almighty, angels, and the Devil, too, if you look. It kind of sums it all up in harmony, doesn't it?"

ARTO PAASILINNA

International rights in Arto Paasilinna's work are  
represented by Bonnier Rights Finland.

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