



# The Almost Nearly Perfect People: Behind the Myth of the Scandinavian Utopia

*Michael Booth*

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***The Christian Science Monitor's* #1 Best Book of the Year**

A witty, informative, and popular travelogue about the Scandinavian countries and how they may not be as happy or as perfect as we assume, “*The Almost Nearly Perfect People* offers up the ideal mixture of intriguing and revealing facts” (Laura Miller, *Salon*).

Journalist Michael Booth has lived among the Scandinavians for more than ten years, and he has grown increasingly frustrated with the rose-tinted view of this part of the world offered up by the Western media. In this timely book he leaves his adopted home of Denmark and embarks on a journey through all five of the Nordic countries to discover who these curious tribes are, the secrets of their success, and, most intriguing of all, what they think of one another.

Why are the Danes so happy, despite having the highest taxes? Do the Finns really have the best education system? Are the Icelanders as feral as they sometimes appear? How are the Norwegians spending their fantastic oil wealth? And why do all of them hate the Swedes? In *The Almost Nearly Perfect People* Michael Booth explains who the Scandinavians are, how they differ and why, and what their quirks and foibles are, and he explores why these societies have become so successful and models for the world. Along the way a more nuanced, often darker picture emerges of a region plagued by taboos, characterized by suffocating parochialism, and populated by extremists of various shades. They may very well be almost nearly perfect, but it isn't easy being Scandinavian.

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