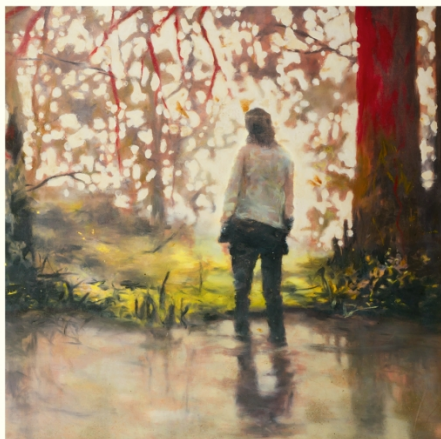


# Diogenes

**Benedict Wells**  
***Hard Land***

Published by Diogenes as *Hard Land*  
Original title: *Hard Land*



**Benedict Wells**  
***Hard Land***



Roman · Diogenes

Missouri, 1985: In an attempt to escape a troubled home life, fifteen-year-old Sam takes a holiday job in an old cinema. And for the duration of one magical summer, everything is turned on its head. He finds friends, falls in love and discovers the secrets of his hometown. For the first time ever, he is no longer an unremarkable outsider. Until something happens that forces him to grow up.

A homage to 1980s coming-of-age movies like *The Breakfast Club* and *Stand By Me* - the story of a summer that will never be forgotten.

## Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature  
352 pages  
11.6 × 18.4 × 2.4 cm  
March 2021

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### Translation rights currently sold:

Arabic (Al-Arabi)  
Armenian  
Catalan (Les Hores)  
Chinese/CN (Archipel Press)  
Croatian (HENA)  
Czech (Plus)  
Dutch (Meulenhoff)  
Estonian (Rahva)  
Finnish (Aula & Co.)  
French (Slatkine)  
Greek (Utopia)  
Hungarian (Geopen)  
Norwegian (Press)  
Polish (Poznanskie)  
Portuguese/PT (ASA/Leya)  
Serbian (Plato)  
Slovak (Albatros Slovakia)  
Slovenian (Mladinska)  
Spanish/world (Enciclopèdia Catalana)  
Turkish (Eksik Parça)

### 📍 Bestseller

# 1 Spiegel Bestseller  
# 2 Swiss Bestseller

### 🎬 Movie adaptation

#### Becks letzter Sommer

Director: Frieder Wittich  
Screenplay: Oliver Ziegenbalg  
Cast: Christian Ulmen, Nahuel Pérez Biscayart,  
Eugene Boateng, Friederike Becht, Fabian  
Hinrichs

### 🏆 Awards

- 2022 ›Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis‹ in der Kategorie *Preis der Jugendjury* für *Hard Land*
- 2022 Benedict Wells wurde neu in das PEN-Zentrum Deutschland aufgenommen
- 2022 Platz 3 für *Hard Land* beim ›LovelyBooks-Leserpreis‹ in der Kategorie *Literatur*
- 2021 *Hard Land* für ›Lieblingsbuch der Unabhängigen‹ nominiert
- 2021 *Hard Land* ist ›Das Lieblingsbuch‹ des Deutschschweizer Buchhandels
- 2020 *Die Wahrheit über das Lügen auf der Shortlist* für den Literaturpreis ›Text & Sprache‹ des Kulturkreises deutsche Wirtschaft
- 2018 ›Euregio-Schüler-Literaturpreis‹ für *Vom Ende der Einsamkeit*



Benedict Wells, born in Munich in 1984, moved to Berlin after completing school and focused on his writing, earning a living with various jobs. His fourth novel, *The End of Loneliness*, spent more than a year and a half on the *Spiegel* Bestseller list, was awarded the 2016 ›European Union Prize for Literature‹, among other awards, and has been published in 39 languages. His latest novel *Hard Land* was awarded the independent young adult jury's ›German Youth Literature Award‹ in 2022. After several years in Barcelona, Benedict Wells now lives in Zurich.



**The Stories Inside Us**  
400 pages  
2024

🏆 **Bestseller**



**The Truth About Lying**  
256 pages  
2018

🏆 **Award winner**  
🏆 **Bestseller**



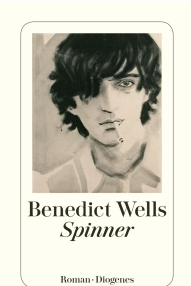
**The End of Loneliness**  
368 pages  
2016

🏆 **Award winner**  
🏆 **Bestseller**



**Almost Ingenious**  
336 pages  
2011

🏆 **Bestseller**



**Crank**  
320 pages  
2009



**Beck's Last Summer**  
464 pages  
2008

🏆 **Award winner**  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**

## 🏆 Awards (cont'd)

- 2016 ›DER LESERPREIS‹ Bronze-Auszeichnung bei Lovelybooks.de für *Vom Ende der Einsamkeit*
- 2016 ›Bronze‹-Auszeichnung in der Kategorie ›Buch des Jahres‹ für *Vom Ende der Einsamkeit*, gewählt von den Buchmarkt-Lesern
- 2016 ›Literaturpreis der Europäischen Union‹ Deutschland an Benedict Wells für *Vom Ende der Einsamkeit*
- 2016 ›Buchpreis Familienroman‹ der Stiftung Ravensburger Verlag für *Vom Ende der Einsamkeit*
- 2016 ›Lieblingsbuch der Unabhängigen‹ anlässlich der Woche unabhängiger Buchhandlungen (WUB) in Deutschland für *Vom Ende der Einsamkeit*
- 2009 ›Bayerischer Kunstförderpreis‹ in der Sparte Literatur u. a. an Benedict Wells für seinen Debütroman *Becks letzter Sommer*

## Praise

### *Hard Land*

»That summer when you first fall in love can never be repeated. But this gem of a book somehow captures the sunbeams of youth and makes them shine brightly again.« – Katja Kraft / Münchner Merkur, Munich

»Page by page, the reader grows more and more fond of the characters, sighing with the first-person narrator and wanting to give him a helping hand.« – Stefan Hauck / Börsenblatt, Frankfurt

»Outstanding dialogue, razor-sharp sentences, unspont stories within the story, and precisely detailed observations follow one after the other, unfurling with precision.« – Ulrich Steinmetzger / Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Essen

»This book contains stunning truthfulness.« – Stefan Gohlisch / Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, Hannover

»A book so natural in its abundance, it's as though it wrote itself.« – Hartmut Wilmes / Kölnische Rundschau, Cologne

»This novel sends the reader into the aforementioned state of euphancholy.« – Peter Zander / Berliner Morgenpost, Berlin

»Sam's development from inconspicuous nobody to self-determined young man is delicately drawn.« – Markus Schramek / Tiroler Tageszeitung, Innsbruck

»The ›wonderful years‹ of which Truman Capote wrote are captured here with all their magic. We suffer, love, hope with Sam.« – Manfred Papst / Neue Zürcher Zeitung am Sonntag, Zurich

»All the characters in the novel are lovingly and precisely depicted.« – Dorothea Westphal / Deutschlandfunk Kultur, Cologne

»Benedict Wells is an experienced writer with a feel for bipolar emotional worlds, for big dreams and subtle tragedy.« – Bernhard Blöchl / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

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## Praise (cont'd)

»If it leaves you cold, you've obviously never been young.« – Theresa Hübner / WDR 5, Cologne

»This is wonderfully written. You live and suffer, cry and cheer with him. Outstanding!« – Express, Cologne

»But above all, with the tone of this novel Benedict Wells also summons the Americans' high art of storytelling: cool, light-footed, laconic, passionate.« – Doris Kraus / Die Presse am Sonntag, Vienna

»It [*Hard Land*] will bring many people comfort, laughter and tears. The fact that it's great literature is actually irrelevant.« – Uli Kreikebaum / Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne

»A wonderful coming-of-age novel, emotionally gripping and full of courage.« – Lilo Solcher / Augsburgere Allgemeine, Augsburg

»Anyone who doesn't have a fridge where their heart should be will be captivated.« – Arno Orzessek / rbb Kultur, Berlin

»If one didn't know better, one could think *Hard Land* was a centuries-old classic of coming-of-age literature.« – Oliver Pfohlmann / Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin

»A phase of life that is often mocked is given new value here, through sublimely talented characterisation.« – Julian Melichar / Kleine Zeitung, Graz

»Benedict Wells proves himself to be one of the best contemporary German-language authors.« – Juliane Fischer / Salzburger Nachrichten, Salzburg

»There can be no doubt that, with this title, Benedict Wells has become the successor to the world's greatest coming-of-age novel, Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*.« – Lothar Schröder / Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf

»Through his linguistic style and themes, Benedict Wells succeeds in deeply moving the reader, taking them on an emotional journey full of ups and downs.« – Sarah Woipich / Passauer Neue Presse, Passau

»As the reader familiar with Wells will know, he removes layer by layer, and shows us his characters' innermost workings with the greatest empathy.« – Nora Zukker / Tages-Anzeiger, Zurich

»With *Hard Land*, Benedict Wells has once again achieved a moving blend of humour and emotion, as universally impressive as the genre promises.« – Tanja Ochs / Heilbronner Stimme, Heilbronn

»This book is carefully narrated, and despite the sometimes tough themes, there are no heavy collisions; many goose bumps, but no barrage of effects.« – Torsten Unger / MDR Thüringen, Leipzig

»Sam, familiar with the tones of fear and pain, learns what thoughtfulness, trust, and respect sound like.« – Sonntag, Hannover

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### Praise (cont'd)

»Wells' latest creation tells a coming-of-age story in such a way that you would think the author is American.« – Peer Teuwsen / NZZ am Sonntag, Zurich

»Each scene appears before one's eye in true technicolor. Relishing, comforting popcorn delight.« – Het Parool, Amsterdam

»Some heavy topics are being dealt with in this otherwise quite light-footed novel. Sam's grieving process and the tough passage toward adulthood are convincingly depicted.« – Nederlands Dagblad, Amersfoort

»If you want to convince a young person that reading is fun, you'd best offer him a book by Benedict Wells.« – NRC Handelsblad, Amsterdam

»With *Hard Land* Wells proves his ability for cinematic writing. By a scratch of a pen he puts down true-to-life characters in a refined language.« – tzum.info, Groningen

### Benedict Wells

»This 23-year-old Berliner is the shooting star in Germany's young literary scene: a multi-talented virtuoso with a touch of madness.« – Jan Drees / 1Live, Cologne

»The German Wunderkind« – Paula Coccozza / The Guardian, London

»Benedict Wells is probably the biggest talent our country has seen in the past few years.« – Kester Schlenz / Stern, Hamburg

»If you want to convince a young person that reading is fun, you'd best offer him a book by Benedict Wells.« – NRC Handelsblad, Amsterdam