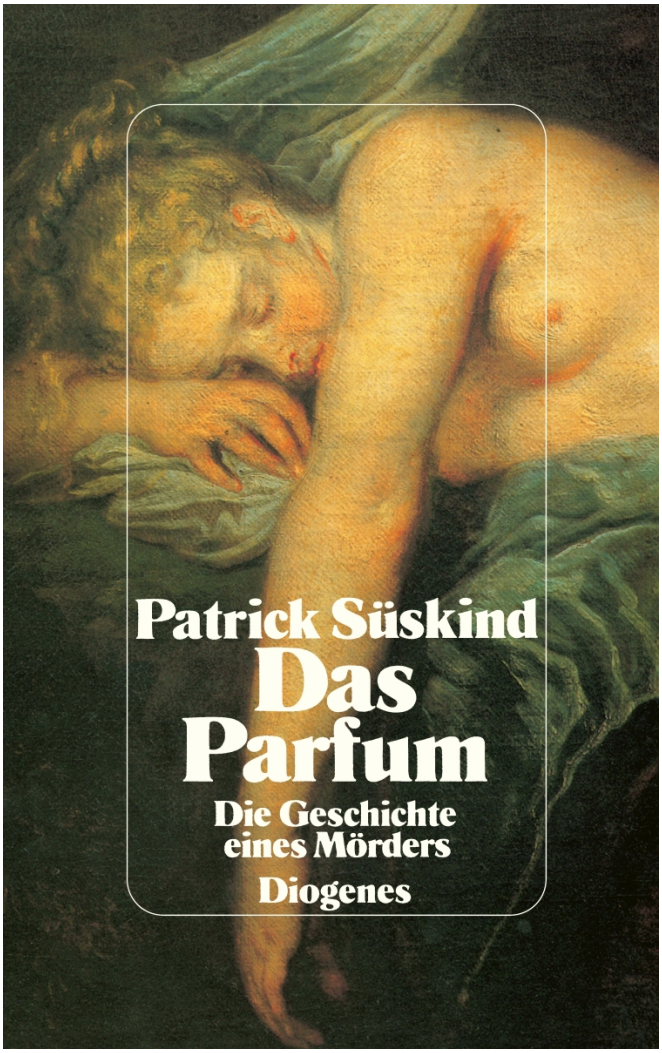
Diogenes

Book factsheet

Patrick Süskind
Perfume

Published by Diogenes as *Das Parfum*
Original title: *Das Parfum. Die Geschichte eines Mörders*



Perfume is a long-lasting international success story: Originally published in 1985 and translated into over 50 languages, the book has sold more than 20 million copies worldwide. In Germany, the book spent 9 years on the *Spiegel* bestseller list. The movie adaptation of 2006 was one of the 15 most successful in German cinema history, with 5.6 million box office viewers in Germany alone.
Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, born in eighteenth-century Paris and abandoned on the streets, discovers that he has an extraordinary – almost superhuman – sense of smell, he inherited from his mother. As he sniffs his way across France, this gift is exploited by Grenouille to create the world's most marvellous perfumes. Yet in seeking perfection in his experiments, he realises that a vital ingredient is missing for the perfect scent: innocence. In order to get the ingredient he needs, he must capture it – whatever the cost.

Contemporary Literature, Compulsory Reading
320 pages
11.6 × 18.4 cm
February 1985

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Bestseller

Spiegel Bestseller

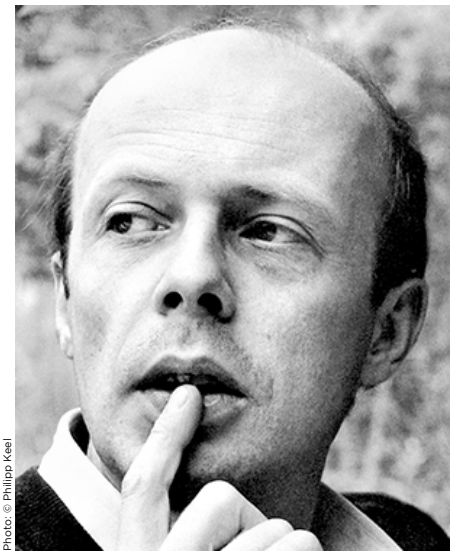
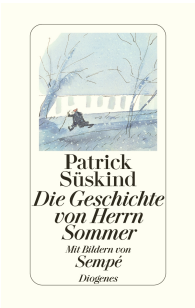
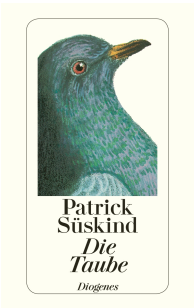


Photo: © Philipp Keel

Patrick Süskind, born in Ambach on Lake Starnberg in 1949, studied medieval and modern history in Munich and Aix-en-Provence, making a living writing screenplays. His one-man play *The Double Bass* was published in 1984, his novel *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* in 1985, the novella *The Pigeon* in 1987 and *The Story of Mr Sommer* with illustrations by Jean-Jacques Sempé in 1991.



The Story of Mr Sommer
136 pages
1991



The Pigeon
104 pages
1987

Movie adaptations

2006: Das Parfum. Die Geschichte eines Mörders
Director: Tom Tykwer
Screenplay: Andrew Birkin
Cast: Ben Wishaw, Alan Rickman, Rachel-Hurd-Wood, Dustin Hoffman

2005: Vom Suchen und Finden der Liebe
Director: Helmut Dietl
Cast: Moritz Bleibtreu, Alexandra Maria Lara, Uwe Ochsenknecht

1997: Rossini
Director: Helmut Dietl
Cast: Götz George, Mario Adorf, Heiner Lauterbach, Veronica Ferres, Gudrun Landgrebe

1991: Kontrabaß
Director: Vladimir Momcilovic
Cast: Predrag Ejdus

Awards

2007 ›Bayerischer Filmpreis‹ für die Beste Regie an Tom Tykwer für *Das Parfum*
2007 6 Lolas beim ›Deutschen Filmpreis‹ für *Das Parfum*
2007 ›DIVA‹ für *Das Parfum*
2006 ›Schauspieler des Jahres‹ für Ben Whishaw und Karoline Herfurth in *Das Parfum*
2006 ›Bambi‹ für den Besten Film des Jahres für *Das Parfum*
1997 Bayrischer Filmpreis für *Rossini oder die mörderische Frage, wer mit wem schlief.* Regiepreis für Helmut Dietl; Darstellerpreis für Heiner Lauterbach; Preis für die beste schauspielerische Nachwuchsleistung für Jan Josef Liefers
1997 Bundesfilmpreis ›Goldenes Filmband‹ für den besten deutschen Film für *Rossini oder die mörderische Frage, wer mit wem schlief*. Weitere Auszeichnungen für die beste Regie (Helmut Dietl), beste Nebendarstellerin (Martina Gedeck) und den besten Schnitt (Inez Regnier).
1997 ›Ernst-Lubitsch-Preis‹ für *Rossini oder die mörderische Frage, wer mit wem schlief*
1996 ›Drehbuchpreis des Bundesinnenministeriums‹ für *Rossini oder die mörderische Frage, wer mit wem schlief*
1987 Deutscher Fernsehpreis ›Telestar‹
1987 ›F.A.Z.-Literaturpreis‹
1987 ›Gutenberg-Preis‹
1987 ›Tukan-Preis‹
1987 ›World Fantasy Award for Best Novel‹

Praise

Perfume

Praise (cont'd)

»Süskind shows his outstanding gift for unravelling the implications behind very small oddities, and exposing the dangerous anarchy which lurks beneath everyday events.« – Sunday Times, London

»Reminiscent of Kafka in its fearsome triviality and its bleak depiction of vulnerability.« – Daily Telegraph, London

»Frightening and surprisingly moving« – Guardian, London

»A fantastic tale of murder and twisted eroticism controlled by a disgusted loathing of humanity ... Clever, stylish, absorbing and well worth reading.« – Literary Review

»An ingenious and totally absorbing fantasy« – Daily Telegraph

»It's an exceptionally clever book, one to be relished; virtuoso even in its details and contradictions.« – Alice Villon-Lechner / Tages-Anzeiger, Zurich

»With delicate poetry, Süskind writes of the persuasive power of scent, enrapturing the reader. He gives form to the exotic aromas.« – Michael Fischer / Der Spiegel, Hamburg

»A monster has entered German-language literature, of the kind that hasn't been since Oskar Matzerath and his tin drum – this is a literary event.« – Stern, Hamburg

»A precious jewel of style and suspense.« – Die Welt, Berlin

»An astonishing ›tour de force‹ both in concept and execution.« – The Guardian, London

»A supremely accomplished work of art, marvelously crafted and enjoyable, and rich in historical detail.« – San Francisco Chronicle

»Unlike anything you've ever read. A phenomenon.« – Le Figaro, Paris

Patrick Süskind

»Patrick Süskind is a master of the deceptively simple tale.« – Alison Roberts / The Times, London