

# Diogenes

Charles Lewinsky  
*Halfbeard*

Published by Diogenes as *Der Halbhart*  
Original title: *Der Halbhart*



Charles  
Lewinsky  
*Der Halbhart*

Roman · Diogenes

Sebi, our teenage hero and narrator in Charles Lewinsky's epos, is not exactly tailored to the rough medieval world he's born into: gifted with youthful wisdom, he is more of a storyteller than a warhorse. With these qualities, he hardly meets the demands in the rural Swiss village in 1313. However from *Halfbeard*, a stranger from a distant region, the boy discovers both the good and the bad in humanity – and does come into his own as he dedicates himself to the power of narration: the truth is in the telling.

## Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature  
688 pages  
11.6 × 18.4 cm  
September 2020

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### Translation rights currently sold:

Dutch (Meridiaan)  
Italian (SEM Libri)  
Russian (Foliant)

### 📌 Bestseller

# 1 Swiss Bestseller  
Spiegel Bestseller

### 🏆 Awards

- 2020 *Der Halbhart* auf der Shortlist des ›Schweizer Buchpreises‹
- 2020 *Der Halbhart* auf der Longlist des ›Deutschen Buchpreises‹
- 2020 ›Dreitannen-Literaturpreis‹ des Buchfestivals Olten
- 2016 *Andersen* auf der Shortlist des ›Schweizer Buchpreises‹
- 2014 *Kastelau* auf der Longlist des ›Deutschen Buchpreises‹
- 2011 *Gerron* für den ›Schweizer Buchpreis‹ nominiert
- 2009 ›Prix Lipp‹ für *Melnitz*, Genf
- 2008 ›Best Foreign Novel‹ für *Melnitz*, Foreign Literature Learned Society, Peking
- 2008 ›Prix du meilleur livre étranger‹ für *Melnitz*, Paris
- 2007 *Melnitz* wird als ›Bester deutscher Roman 2006‹ von der ›Jury für den besten fremdsprachigen Roman des Jahres im 21. Jahrhundert‹ in China ausgezeichnet.
- 2001 ›Preis der Schweizerischen Schillerstiftung‹ für *Johannistag*

### Praise

#### *Halfbeard*

»Like this figure its creator Charles Lewinsky is a storytelling machine who proves his versatility in his new novel *Halfbeard*.« – Tobias Sedlmaier / NZZ am Sonntag, Zurich

»The art of storytelling is critically examined and rapturously appreciated. That is both a celebration and a joy.« – Martin Oehlen / Frankfurter Rundschau, Frankfurt

»But he also tells touching, moving events, he portrays highly differentiated characters with inner lives that cannot be fully unearthed.« – Roman Bucheli / NZZ, Zurich



Charles Lewinsky, born in Zurich in 1946, has been a freelance writer since 1980. He won international renown with his novel *Melnitz*, which was awarded numerous prizes, including the French ›Prix du meilleur livre étranger‹. His novel *Halfbeard* was nominated for both the ›Swiss Book Prize‹ and the ›German Book Prize‹. His works have been published in 16 languages. Charles Lewinsky lives in Vereux (France) in summer, and in Zurich in winter.

### Praise (cont'd)

»Above all Lewinsky reveals the power stories possess and what terrible realities can come out of them.« – Fabienne Nägeli / SRF 2, Zurich

»The lines between fiction and reality blur. This is what good literature is.« – Frank Pommer / Die Rheinpfalz, Ludwigshafen

»Exciting, funny and drastic, distressing and sensitive – and saturated with a melancholy faith in reason.« – Hansruedi Kugler / Aargauer Zeitung, Aarau

»Lewinsky is in top form with his narrative exuberance.« – Rico Bandle / Der Bund, Berne

»Charles Lewinsky knows how to make history into a compelling story.« – Mathias Ziegler / Wiener Zeitung, Vienna

»That such a book is in the best sense of the word a page-turner, which one can hardly put down, proves the proficiency of the author.« – Oliver Jungen / FAZ, Frankfurt

»The richness and depth of Lewinsky's narrative guarantee its appeal to a broad readership.«

– New Books in German, London

»In *Halfbeard*, Charles Lewinsky hasn't only written a rousing novel, but a political one too.« – Anne-Sophie Scholl / Die Republik, Zurich

»Lewinsky's tome isn't just an accomplished historical novel, but above all a humorous, ingenious and wonderful celebration of storytelling.« – Heinz Storrer / Schweizer Familie, Zurich

»Just like Sebi can't stop telling his story, nor can this reader pull themselves away from it – and for the duration of almost 700 captivating pages.« – Stuttgarter Zeitung, Stuttgart

»A lesson in storytelling and historiography.« – Jörg Magenau / Deutschlandfunk Kultur, Berlin

»Charles Lewinsky is a great storyteller.« – Mark Stokmans / Trouw, Amsterdam

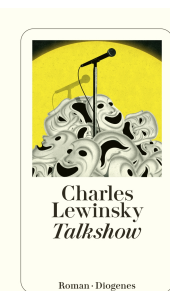
### Charles Lewinsky

»Rare linguistic splendour and striking narrative virtuosity.« – Andreas Isenschmid / NZZ am Sonntag, Zurich

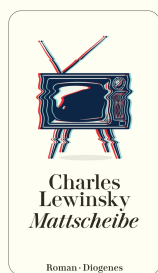
»Lewinsky has a deft feel for drama; you get the impression he has a field day setting the readers on one track and then drawing them onto another.« – Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

»Charles Lewinsky is a literary jack of all trades. Wilding a sharp pen and with a keen eye he moves between different genres in a virtuoso manner. He has dedicated his life to words and today is one of the most read Swiss authors.« – Kurt Aeschbacher / SRF 1, Zurich

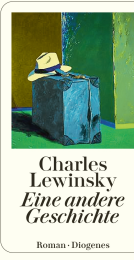
»Charles Lewinsky is probably one of the hardest-working and undisputedly one of the most successful and versatile Swiss writers.« – Martin Ebel / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich



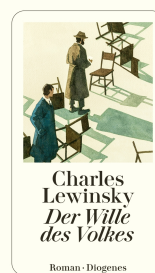
*Talkshow*  
240 pages  
2026



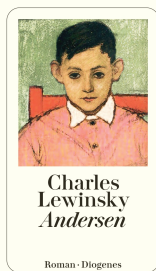
*Telly*  
240 pages  
2026



*A Different Story*  
416 pages  
2026



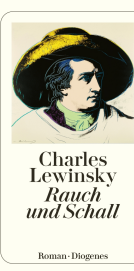
*The People's Will*  
416 pages  
2026



*Andersen*  
608 pages  
2026



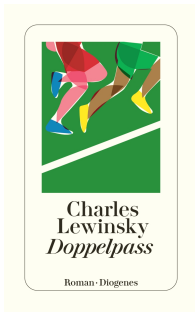
*Deceptively Real*  
352 pages  
2024  
🏆 Bestseller



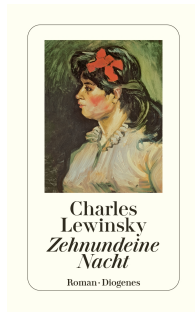
*Smoke and Sound*  
304 pages  
2023  
🏆 Bestseller



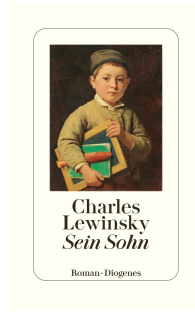
*The Devil on Christmas Night / The Good Lord on Inspection Day*  
88 pages  
2023



*Give-and-Go*  
384 pages  
2023

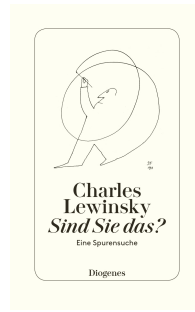


*Ten and One Nights*  
240 pages  
2023

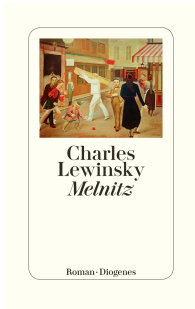


*His Son*  
368 pages  
2022

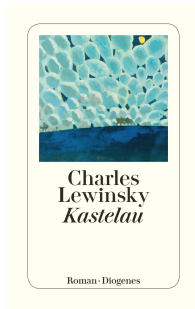
**Bestseller**



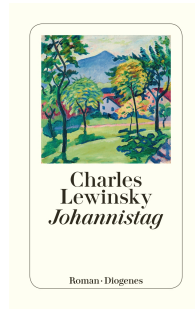
*Is that You?*  
288 pages  
2021



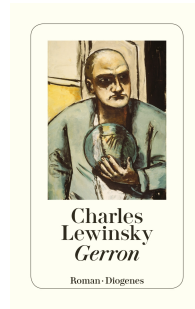
*Melnitz*  
944 pages  
2021



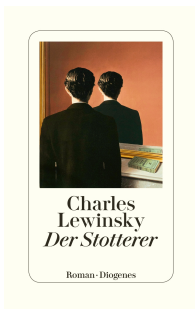
*Kastelau*  
416 pages  
2021



*Midsummer's Day*  
368 pages  
2021



*Gerron*  
704 pages  
2021



*The Stutterer*  
416 pages  
2019

**Bestseller**

### Praise (cont'd)

»Charles Lewinsky is a rascal in literature who masters all styles and eras.« – Rolf Fath / Badische Neueste Nachrichten, Karlsruhe

»The versatile star of contemporary Swiss literature.« – Hansruedi Kugler / Aargauer Zeitung, Aarau

»Above all, though, the tradition, the storytelling itself is always part of the narrative; this is the allure of the multi-layered works.« – Peter Zander / Berliner Morgenpost, Berlin

»Charles Lewinsky is the Swiss author with the broadest range when it comes to forms of expression.« – Felix Mürner / Radio SRF2 Kultur, Basel

»Charles Lewinsky has a sure instinct for dramaturgy. Immensely entertaining.« – Helmut Maurö / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich