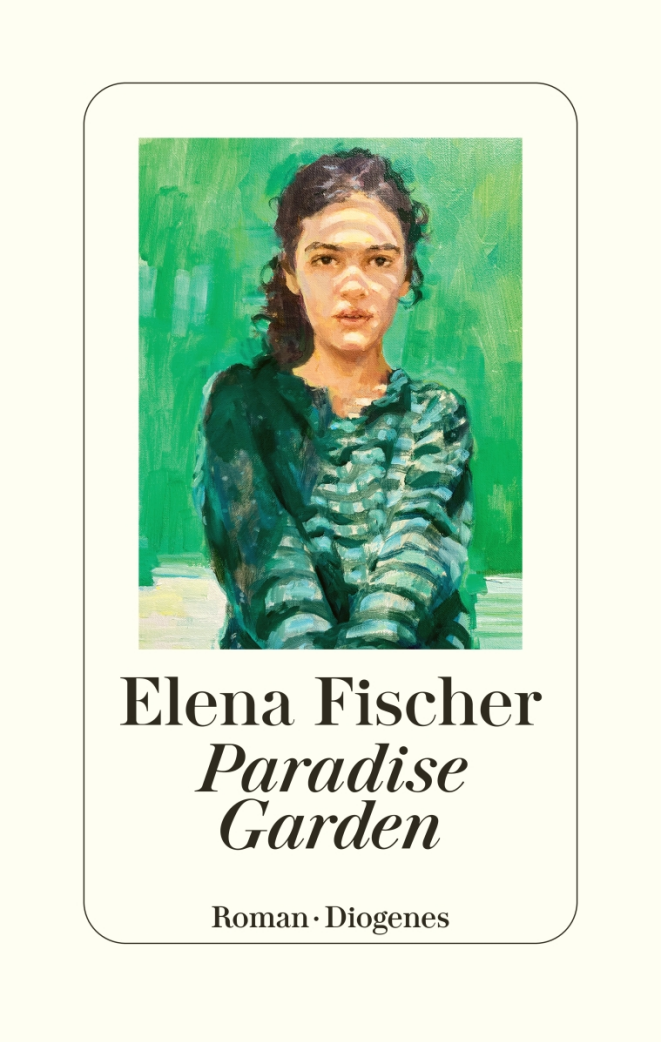
Diogenes

Book factsheet

Elena Fischer
Paradise Garden

Published by Diogenes as *Paradise Garden*
Original title: *Paradise Garden*



Fourteen-year-old Billie rarely crosses the boundaries of her high-rise housing estate. By the end of the month their money barely stretches to pasta with ketchup, but her mother, Marika, lights up Billie's world with her imagination and big heart. One day, however, they receive an unwelcome visit from her Hungarian grandmother, and Billie loses much more than the colourful everyday life she shared with her mother. No longer able to ask Marika any more questions, Billie sets off alone in their old Nissan – she is determined to meet the father she never knew and find out why she keeps dreaming about the sea, even though she's never been there.
»The beginning was the last day before the summer holidays.
The beginning was a song on the radio.
The beginning was big plans.«
Elena Fischer

Contemporary Literature, Bestseller
352 pages
11.6 × 18.4 × 2.3 cm
September 2023

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Serbian (Publik Praktikum)
Slovak (E.J. Publishing)
Spanish/world (AdN)
Turkish (Domingo)

Bestseller

#7 Spiegel Bestseller
12 Swiss Bestseller

Awards

2024	*Paradise Garden* ist das Debüt des Jahres des Literaturwerks Rheinland-Pfalz-Saar
2023	*Paradise Garden* für das ›Lieblingsbuch der Unabhängigen‹ nominiert
2023	*Paradise Garden* nominiert für den ›Debütpreis des Harbour Front Literaturfestivals Hamburg‹
2023	*Paradise Garden* auf der Longlist des ›Deutschen Buchpreises‹
2021	›Literatur-Förderpreis‹ der Landeshauptstadt Mainz für junge Autorinnen und Autoren
2021	Finalistin beim 29. open mike

Praise

Paradise Garden

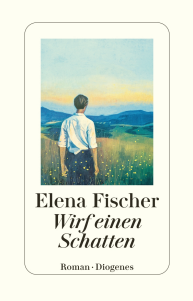
»A protagonist who casts a spell on you and attests to [Elena Fischer's] gift of perception and great narrative talent.« – Maja Hattesen / SWR Kultur, Stuttgart

»The blurb sounded promising. What followed were hours in which I couldn't put the book down. The young author tells the story of 14-year-old Billie so sensitively…« – Debora Schnitzler / Die Zeit, Hamburg



Photo: Alexander Conrads / © Diogenes Verlag

Elena Fischer, born in 1987, studied comparative literature and film in Mainz, where she lives with her family. In 2019 and 2020, she participated in the Darmstadt Text Workshop, led by Kurt Drawert. In 2021 she was a finalist at the 29th ›Open Mike‹ with an extract from her debut novel *Paradise Garden* and won the Mainz provincial government's prize for young authors. Elena Fischer has been nominated for the ›German Book Prize‹ and for the ›Harbour Front Literary Festival's Debut Prize‹ 2023.



Cast a Shadow
304 pages
2026

Praise (cont'd)

»For *Paradise Garden* is a road novel in which one is always ready to give the shirt off one's back for the happiness of its characters, or at least the end of their misfortune.« – Katharina Teutsch / Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurt

»There is a surprising lightness to the quiet sadness that runs through the book, which is repeatedly underscored by witty dialogue and whimsical twists.« – Christine Westermann / Stern, Hamburg

»It is impressive, to say the least, how masterfully and down-to-earth she tells of life in a high-rise suburb [. . .]« – Olaf Przybilla / Süddeutsche Zeitung Landkreise, Munich

»*Paradise Garden* is an accomplished debut about the courage to get to know one's own origins and to accept them as they are.« – Ursula Nowak / Deutschlandfunk, Cologne

»This novel is a small miracle - and a big surprise.« – Claudio Armbuster / ZDF, Mainz

»The young author paints the picture of three women who [...] initially have little empathy for each other and only slowly build up understanding and affection after a tragic accident.« – Isabelle Fischer / Nürnberger Nachrichten, Nuremberg

»You want to read more from this author.« – Ruhr Nachrichten, Dortmund

»A really good debut.« – Marietta Bernasconi / WDR 2, Cologne

»[. . .] we will be hearing a lot more from Elena Fischer.« – Helmut Attender / Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, Linz

»Landing the first novel with a renowned publisher and then immediately being nominated for the ›German Book Prize‹.« – Claudio Armbuster / ZDF, Mainz

»Elena Fischer writes so lovingly about sadness that it is comforting.« – Alina Bronsky / (Author)

»In its emotionality, Elena Fischer's coming of age novel is reminiscent of Benedict Wells' *Hard Land*.« – SRF, Zurich/Basel

»Billie whispers in our ears. The revolt breathes in these chapters brimmed with hope and longing. She's got a sound all of her own, feverish, eclectic.« – Éric Neuhoff / Le Figaro Littéraire, Paris

»Heartbreaking and funny at the same time.« – Het Parool, Amsterdam

»Compelling. With all its tension, speed and humor, this coming-of-age story is extremely suitable as a young-adult novel. But don't neglect it if you're over eighteen.« – Trouw, Amsterdam

»I loved this book from page one onwards. It will be beneficial to your heart and soul.« – Jana Šlinská / Denník N, Bratislava

Praise (cont'd)

»Witty and affecting, her young heroine has an unbreakable frankness. Until the end of her journey, Billie illuminates this magnificent novel that follows the chaotic path of family reunion.« – Thierry Bolliot / L'Alsace, Mulhouse

»With lively and inventive language, Elena Fischer delivers a charming, heart-catching debut novel.« – Elle, Paris

»One of the best this year. Full of exentric, strange and somewhat irritating characters, but in a sympathetic way.« – Suvehiidlane, Tallinn

»Blending imagination and melancholy, travelogue and coming-of-age novel, Elena Fischer garnishes Paradise Garden with vibrant characters, stunning landscapes, and scenes that are utterly cinematic in their dialogue and pacing. A small miracle of sensitivity, intelligence, and freshness.« – Madame Figaro, Paris

»... a tender, coming-of-age story of loss, resilience and longing for home.« – Dua Lipa's Service 95 newsletter

»The German author delivers a poignant debut novel about an adolescent's resilience and longing for freedom.« – France Dimanche, Paris

»A book that makes you think on complexity of family ties and developing identity. Tears of laughter and sadness.« – Raamatukodu, Tallinn

»Heartbreaking, sad and hopeful at the same time. Anyone who enjoyed reading Wolfgang Herrndorf's *Tschick* will also enjoy Elena Fischer. « – Karin Waldner-Petutschnig / Kleine Zeitung, Graz

»A complex story about the beauty of life. « – Münchner Merkur, Munich

»A refreshing bit of magic.« – Cory Oldweiler / Los Angeles Review of Books

Elena Fischer

»She's got a sound all of her own, feverish, eclectic.« – Éric Neuhoff / Le Figaro Littéraire, Paris