

# Diogenes

**Bernhard Schlink**

***Olga***

Published by Diogenes as *Olga*

Original title: *Olga*



**Bernhard  
Schlink**  
*Olga*

Roman · Diogenes

The grand new novel by the author of *New York Times* #1 bestseller *The Reader!*

This is the story of a woman who fights and finds herself, and a man who dreams and loses himself. Their moving love is entwined with the twisting paths of German history, leading us from the late 19th to the early 21st century, from Germany to Africa and the Arctic, from the Baltic Sea to Southwest Germany.

An intelligent woman fights the prejudices of her time.

A hopeless man loses himself in African and Arctic escapades, driven by the power-hungry dreams of his time. He can only confront reality in failure – like so many of his generation. She remains tied to him throughout her life – in thought, letters and a great rebellion. This is the story of their love.

A novel full of history.

## Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature, Bestseller

320 pages

11.6 x 18.4 cm

January 2018

Contact:

Susanne Bauknecht, Rights Director,  
susanne.bauknecht@diogenes.ch and Suzanne  
Héglé, Film Rights Manager,  
suzanne.hegele@diogenes.ch

### Translation rights currently sold:

Croatian (Vorto Palabra)  
Czech (Euromedia)  
Dutch (Cossee)  
English/UK (Weidenfeld & Nicolson/Orion)  
English/USA (HarperCollins)  
French (Gallimard)  
Greek (Kritiki)  
Icelandic (Forlagið)  
Italian (Neri Pozza)  
Japanese (Shinchosha)  
Korean (Sigongsa)  
Norwegian (Gyldendal Norsk)  
Portuguese/PT (ASA/Leya)  
Romanian (Polirom)  
Russian (Azbooka)  
Serbian (Plato)  
Spanish/world (Anagrama)  
Thai (Library House)  
Turkish (Dogan)  
Ukrainian (Hemiro)

### Bestseller

# 1 Spiegel Bestseller List

### Movie adaptations

#### 2011: *Das Wochenende*

Director: Nina Grosse

Cast: Katja Riemann, Sebastian Koch, Barbara Auer

#### 2009: *The Reader*

Director: Stephen Daldry

Screenplay: David Hare

Cast: Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes, David Kross,  
Bruno Ganz, Karoline Herfurth, Volker Bruch,  
Hannah Herzprung und Alexandra Maria Lara

#### 2008: *The Other Man*

Director: Richard Eyre

Screenplay: Richard Eyre

Cast: Liam Neeson, Laura Linney und Antonio  
Banderas

#### 1991: *Der Tod kam als Freund*

Director: Nico Hoffmann

Cast: Martin Benrath, Hannelore Elsner, Heino  
Ferch, Marianne Hoppe

### Awards

2024 Spanische Übersetzung von *Die Enkelin*  
mit dem »Premio de las Librerías de  
Navarra« ausgezeichnet



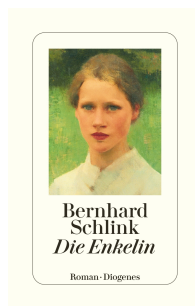
Bernhard Schlink, born in 1944, was a Professor of Public Law and Legal Philosophy and a former judge at the Constitutional Court of North Rhine-Westphalia. His first novel, *Self's Justice*, was published in 1987; his 1995 novel *The Reader*, translated into more than fifty languages and adapted by Stephen Daldry into a film starring Kate Winslet, established his worldwide renown. He has been awarded with national and international prizes like the German ›Bundesverdienstkreuz (Order of Merit) 1st Class‹, the French ›Chevalier dans l'Ordre de la Legion d'Honneur‹ and the Italian ›Grinzane Cavour Prize‹. His latest novel is *The Late Life*.



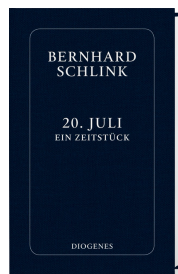
*Justice*  
208 pages  
2026



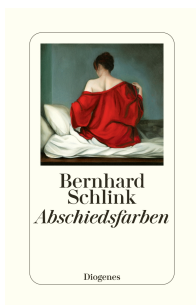
*The Late Life*  
240 pages  
2024  
🏆 **Bestseller**



*The Granddaughter*  
368 pages  
2021  
🏆 **Award winner**  
🏆 **Bestseller**



*The 20th of July*  
96 pages  
2021



*Colours of Farewell*  
240 pages  
2020  
🏆 **Bestseller**



*Explorations*  
288 pages  
2015



*The Woman on the Stairs*  
256 pages  
2014  
🏆 **Bestseller**



*Thoughts on Writing*  
96 pages  
2011

## 🏆 Awards (cont'd)

- 2014 ›Pak Kyong-ni Prize‹ der südkoreanischen Kulturstiftung Toji für sein schriftstellerisches Schaffen
- 2003 ›Bundesverdienstkreuz 1. Klasse‹ für *Der Vorleser*
- 2002 ›Preis des German-British Forum‹ für sein Gesamtwerk
- 2001 Finnischer Literaturpreis ›Eeva Joenpelto-Preis‹ der Gemeinde Lohja
- 2001 Ernennung zum ›Chevalier dans l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur‹
- 2000 ›Ehrengabe‹ der Heinrich-Heine-Gesellschaft in Düsseldorf
- 2000 ›Sonderkulturpreis‹ der japanischen Tageszeitung *Mainichi Shinbun*, der jedes Jahr an einen japanischen Buchbestseller vergeben wird, für *Der Vorleser*
- 2000 ›Evangelischer Buchpreis‹ des Deutschen Verbandes Evangelischer Büchereien für *Der Vorleser*
- 1999 Erstmals verliehener ›WELT-Literaturpreis‹ für sein literarisches Schaffen
- 1997 ›Grinzane-Cavour-Preis‹ (Italien) für *Der Vorleser*
- 1997 ›Prix Laure Bataillon‹ (Frankreich) für *Der Vorleser* (Auszeichnung für den Autor sowie für den Übersetzer Bernard Lortholary)
- 1997 ›Hans-Fallada-Preis‹ der Stadt Neumünster für *Der Vorleser*
- 1993 ›Deutscher Krimi-Preis‹ des Bochumer Krimi Archivs für *Selbs Brutug*
- 1989 Autorenpreis deutschsprachige Kriminalliteratur ›Der Glauser‹ für *Die gordische Schleife*

## Praise

### *Olga*

›*Olga's* success – it is the most sold foreign title according to Datalib – is in large part due to the legitimate parallels [with *The Reader*], that instantly work.« – Claude Devarrieux / Libération, Paris

›Always economical with words and feelings, he evokes them precisely by keeping a certain distance.« – Kerenn Elkaim / Livres Hebdo, Paris

›Bernard Schlink, maybe one of the best German writers, possibly even the best, creates an immaculate novel against the backdrop of German history with a rare intelligence and mastery.«  
– Serge Bressan / Le Quotidien du Luxembourg

›*Olga, Mother Courage*‹  
– L'Express, Paris

›The plot advances quickly, you are caught up by a fact, a year, a decision without even being aware of it.«  
– Geneviève Simon / Arts Libre, Brussels

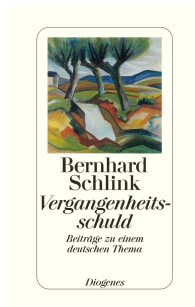
›With this novel the author of the bestseller *The Reader* recognises all the women who were constrained by their times and could have done great things.«  
– Vocabulaire, Maubeuge



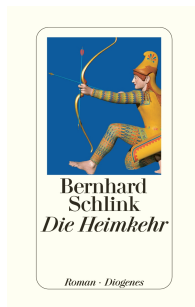
**Summer Lies**  
288 pages  
2010  
🏆 **Bestseller**



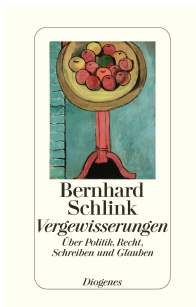
**The Weekend**  
240 pages  
2008  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**  
🏆 **Bestseller**



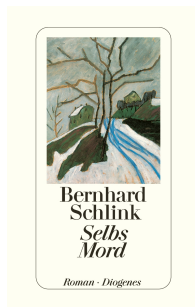
**Guilt of the Past**  
192 pages  
2007



**The Homecoming**  
384 pages  
2006  
🏆 **Bestseller**



**Verifications**  
368 pages  
2005



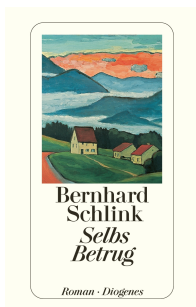
**Self's Murder**  
272 pages  
2001



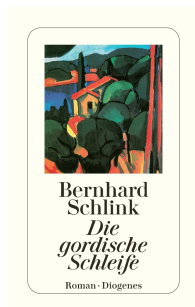
**Flights of Love**  
320 pages  
2000  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**



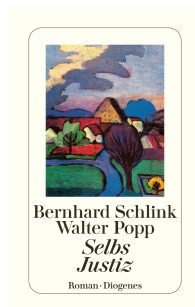
**The Reader**  
208 pages  
1995  
🏆 **Award winner**  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**  
🏆 **Bestseller**



**Self's Deception**  
304 pages  
1992  
🏆 **Award winner**



**The Gordian Knot**  
272 pages  
1988  
🏆 **Award winner**



**Self's Punishment**  
352 pages  
1987  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**

## Praise (cont'd)

»A wonderful portrait of a fighter by the author of *The Reader*.«  
– Avantages, Clichy

»It is simultaneously full of substance, captivating, informative, between a thriller and a historical novel. Very sensitive, also subtle, gripping from beginning to end. A coup that will last.«  
– Gilles Pudlowski / Service Littéraire, Paris

»*Olga* is captivating. Bernhard Schlink tells the story in lucid, serene language.« – Kester Schlenz / stern, Hamburg

»With *Olga*, Bernhard Schlink broaches topics, about which little has been written, such as German colonialism, and the fate of German-speaking refugees from Eastern Europe.« – De Standaard, Antwerp

»*Olga* is a beautiful, polyphonic novel about highly unequal lovers.« – de Volkskrant, Amsterdam

»Composed with exceptional restraint, using simple, precise words and following a central theme while maintaining the narrative arc in one single breath - *Olga* is a magnificent piece of literature.« – Edgar Davidian / L'Orient Littéraire, Beyrouth

»Just like the stubborn Ferdinand, we know we won't forget *Olga*, a woman who goes out for secret nocturnal walks, who dreams of *Dante's Divine Comedy*, votes for the SPD, blames Bismarck for Germany's political extremes, and knows all the cemeteries in the city.«  
– Alexandre Fillon / Le Figaro Littéraire, Paris

»In this unadorned fresco, the author of the acclaimed *The Reader* effortlessly traverses a century once more, and makes the turmoil of history feel almost muted. He also paints a beautiful portrait of a woman, which is full of tenderness and melancholy.« – Madame Figaro, Paris

»Schlink is a brilliant stylist; this bittersweet love affair is deeply moving.« – Volker Albers / Hamburger Abendblatt

»[Schlink] takes up motifs from his most famous work *The Reader* (1995). *Olga*, who fights to be allowed to continue her education, seems like an alternative draft of the illiterate Hannah, whose lacking abilities led to her becoming a concentration camp guard during the Nazi era.« – Nina May / Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung

»*Olga* is more the collective drama of a century than a personal destiny; the story this novel tells is that of history itself – narrated by the great historical confusions.« – Britta Heidemann / WAZ, Essen

LANGVERSION: »*Olga* is captivating. Bernhard Schlink tells the story in lucid, serene language. He is a master of this warm, pleasant tone, which has a hint of the old-fashioned to it.« – Kester Schlenz / stern, Hamburg

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## Praise (cont'd)

»There is always a very differentiated philosophical edifice of ideas behind lawyer Bernhard Schlink's novels. Yet he tells a gripping, true-to-life story which startles you with its unforeseen twists, and not only makes you think, but feel too.« – Ulrike Sárkány / NDR Kultur, Hannover

»Schlink was and is an author for readers who love intelligently told stories. And they won't be disappointed by *Olga*.« – Martin Ebel / Tages-Anzeiger, Zurich

»The fact that we can picture *Olga* before us so vividly is thanks to Bernhard Schlink's simple yet genius trick of employing four classic narrative perspectives – it's almost a lesson in epic writing.« – Birgit Eckes / Kölnische Rundschau

»Everything points towards *Olga* being a new bestseller which can pick up where the international success of *The Reader* left off. In other words: not to be missed!« – Rainer Hartmann / SWR1, Stuttgart

»An insightful novel about love, friendship, and almost a century of German history.« – Franziska Trost / Kronen Zeitung, Vienna

»The sentences are typical Schlink: succinct, unadorned, emotional.« – Andreas Platthaus / FAZ, Frankfurt

»The third part of the novel – letters Olga writes to Herbert after he's set out for the Arctic – is the most beautiful. Here, the camera finally zooms in and we learn of Olga's feelings, how she's torn between hope and fear, love and anger at her lover, who has left her for a madcap expedition.« – Franziska Wolffheim / Spiegel online, Hamburg

»You should read this novel if you appreciate the power of history. How do we remember each other? As individuals, or as parts of a larger whole?« – Arjun Neil Alim / Evening Standard, London

»Spanning from the late 19th Century to the turn of the 21st, *Olga* is a fascinating and unforgettable tale that explores a huge variety of important themes.« – Publishing Post, London

»It makes for a compelling reading experience.« – Malcolm Forbes / The Herald, Glasgow

»Fast-paced and ambitious, this is a work that makes you appreciate the power of history.« – The Week, London

»And in Schlink's macro look at Germany's past, it's the small acts – of kindness and humility – that linger.«

– Francesca Carington / The Sunday Telegraph, London

»Schlink's lucid, no-frills prose lends his novel immediacy, and at times potency, and gives us a character to root for.« – Malcolm Forbes / The Herald, Glasgow

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## Praise (cont'd)

»You should read this novel if you appreciate the power of history. How do we remember each other? As individuals, or as parts of a larger whole?« – Arjun Neil Alim / Evening Standard, London

»This is not a straightforward elegy – and throughout the book, death is not an absolute end. Instead, Schlink frames the novel as a search for meaning, which dances in *Olga* between a multitude of timeframes and territories.« – Natalie Whittle / Financial Times, London

»One of Bernhard Schlink's secrets stems from his art of telling stories by interweaving the standpoints of different generations in the very same life story. *Olga* is another very well-done example of that.« – Le Monde, Paris

»A cleverly-constructed tale of cross-class romance... *Olga's* story draws us into a present-day reckoning with Germany's past.« – Mail on Sunday, London

»Readers who love rich character studies will want to pick this up.« – Publishers Weekly, New York

»Two world wars and the passage of more than a century do not overshadow Schlink's (*The Woman on the Stairs*, 2017) story of lovers who never fully belong to each other, just as they never fully belonged to the world.« – Booklist, Chicago

»Schlink's storytelling conjures a nation in flux, from two blood-soaked wars through a split and reunification, a century bookended by the life of an intrepid woman.« – Hamilton Cain / Oprah Daily, New York

»*Olga* is a poignant portrait of a woman out of step with her time.« – The Guardian, London

»*Olga's* fortunes in the aftermath of his disappearance are relayed in Charlotte Collins's graceful translation from the German, which shifts midway through to the first-person testimony of a man the elderly *Olga* has known since he was a sickly boy, entertained by her tales of Herbert's exploits.« – Alida Becker / The New York Times, New York

## Bernhard Schlink

»Schlink has won his huge popular following by bringing to bear a penetrating intelligence about the psyche of his characters and an empathy for their dilemmas. Professor Schlink may be an expert on the letter of the law, but writer Schlink is an intrepid explorer of the much trickier terrain of the human heart.« – Andrew Nagorski / Newsweek, London

»[Schlink] writes instructive tales that adeptly raise difficult questions and propose appealing answers.« – New York Times Book Review

»The German novelist Bernhard Schlink is pretty much second to none when it comes to storytelling.« – Helmut Atteneder / Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, Linz

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### Praise (cont'd)

»Schlink knows the depths of the human soul all too well. The writer and judge proves with each of his books that he knows how to transform German history into literature.« – ZeitPunkt, Leipzig

»One of the most successful and versatile German writers of our time.« – Volker Hage / Der Spiegel, Hamburg

»The truly masterly aspect of Schlink's prose is its intelligence – an intelligence that is firmly rooted in common sense.« – Welt am Sonntag, Hamburg