Diogenes

Book factsheet

Bernhard Schlink
The Late Life

Published by Diogenes as *Das späte Leben*
Original title: *Das späte Leben*



At seventy-six, Martin is devoted to his family life with his young wife and six-year-old son when he suddenly learns that he has only a few months to live. Shocked, he searches for answers, wrestling with his feelings and existential questions about his legacy, the meaning of his love and what can be achieved in the short time he has left. Martin wants to do everything right, but later life is full of surprises and unforeseen challenges that he must face.

Contemporary Literature, Bestseller
240 pages
11.6 × 18.4 × 2 cm
January 2024

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Thai (Library House)
Turkish (Iletisim)

Bestseller

#1 Swiss Bestseller
#3 Spiegel Bestseller

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 Herzsprung 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 Librerias de Navarra‹ ausgezeichnet

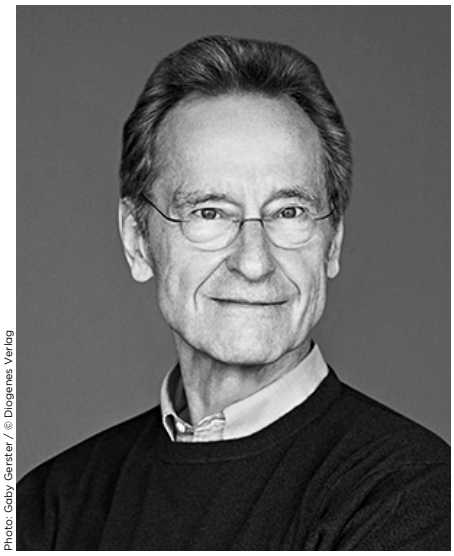
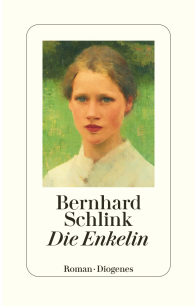


Photo: Gaby Gerster / © Diogenes Verlag

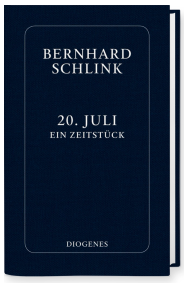
Bernhard Schlink, born in 1944, was a Professor of Public Law and Legal Philosophy and a former judge at the Constitutional Court of North Rhine-Westphalia. His first novel, *Self's Justice*, was published in 1987; his 1995 novel *The Reader*, translated into more than fifty languages and adapted by 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 Granddaughter
368 pages
2021
Award winner
Bestseller



The 20th of July
96 pages
2021



Colours of Farewell
240 pages
2020
Bestseller



Olga
320 pages
2018
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 Betrug*

Praise

The Late Life

»Death - what can it teach me about my life? Schlink introduces his contemporary readers to this old question with masterful dexterity.« – Nils Minkmar / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

»The evidently strongly autobiographical novel impresses and moves as a radically honest self- examination in the face of death, waiting at the door.« – Ronald Schneider / Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf

»A powerful, unpretentious text about what matters in life when it comes to an end.« – Bernd Melichar / Kleine Zeitung, Graz

»A remarkable late-life narrative achievement. Chapeau.« – Peter Mohr / Aachener Zeitung, Aachen

»This tender, impressive novel is again a real Schlink. This unique author understands the art of unpretentious writing about the most intimate, profound and tender things.« – Marianne Janssen / Boekenkrant, Zeist

»His books come with a bestseller guarantee – his new novel is no exception.« – Frank Dietschreit / Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf

»The postmodern abundance of options is narrowed down to a few relationships, thoughts and gestures, and this reduction unfolds an impressive power.« – Nils Minkmar / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich



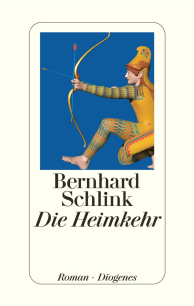
Summer Lies
288 pages
2010
Bestseller



The Weekend
240 pages
2008
Movie Adaptation
Bestseller



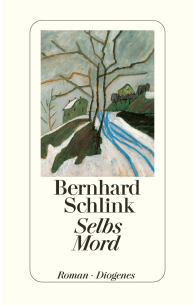
Guilt of the Past
192 pages
2007



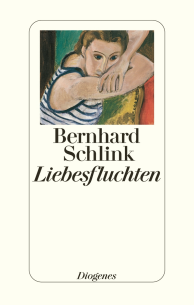
The Homecoming
384 pages
2006
Bestseller



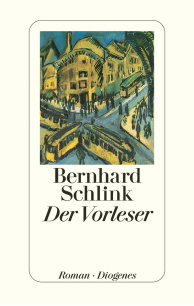
Verifications
368 pages
2005



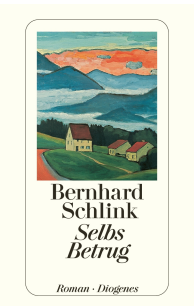
Self's Murder
272 pages
2001



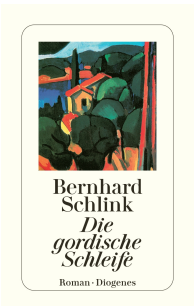
Flights of Love
320 pages
2000
Movie Adaptation



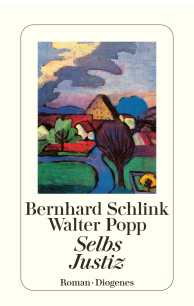
The Reader
208 pages
1995
Award winner
Movie Adaptation
Bestseller



Self's Deception
304 pages
1992
Award winner



The Gordian Knot
272 pages
1988



Self's Punishment
352 pages
1987
Movie Adaptation

Praise (cont'd)

»It is about the last weeks of a cancer patient's life (...) and yet at the end there is serenity and reconciliation.« – Raimund Neuss / Kölnische Rundschau, Cologne

»Schlink's *The Late Life* is one of those works to which – once you've read them – you keep returning, to internalise certain passages over and over.« – Helmut Atteneder / Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, Linz

» [...] a profound discussion on life and death.« – Annette König / SRF, Zurich

»[...] a wise and honest book, devoid of illusion, but not ruthless and not unconciliatory either.« – Thomas Gross / Mannheimer Morgen

»Bestselling author Bernhard Schlink has written a novel on the highly complex art of taking leave.« – Karin Grossmann / Sächsische Zeitung, Dresden

»A moving late work.« – Focus, Berlin

»*The Late Life* is a calm, big and important text.« – Annemarie Stoltenberg / NDR Kultur, Hanover

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

»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