

**Bernhard Schlink**  
*The 20th of July*

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Original title: *20. Juli*



Bernhard Schlink's first play is a disturbing mind game about the presence of the past and about the price of trade: being left with dirty hands.

The last day of school falls on the 20th of July, the anniversary of an assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. The previous day, the right-wing party ›Deutsche Aktion‹ with their charismatic young leader won 37 percent of the vote in the regional election. In history class, a heated discussion arises between the final year students and their teacher: shouldn't the assassination attempt have been carried out 13 years earlier, in 1931? What can be learned for the future? Is it better to keep one's hands clean, or to risk getting them dirty? A lesson about morals, responsibility and making decisions.

## Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature  
96 pages  
12.5 x 20.5 cm  
June 2021

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**Translation rights currently sold:**  
Greek (Kritiki)

### **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
- 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



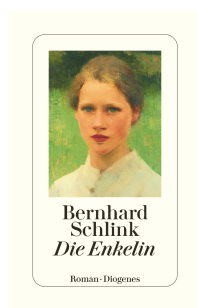
Bernhard Schlink, born in 1944, was a Professor of Public Law and Legal Philosophy and a former judge at the Constitutional Court of North Rhine-Westphalia. His first novel, *Self's Justice*, was published in 1987; his 1995 novel *The Reader*, translated into more than fifty languages and adapted by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



*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)

- 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*
- 1989 Autorenpreis deutschsprachige Kriminalliteratur ›Der Glauser‹ für *Die gordische Schleife*

## Praise

### *The 20th of July*

»A successful, perfectly-timed mind game.« – Catrin Stövesand / Deutschlandfunk, Cologne

»Bernhard Schlink's contemporary play leaves (almost) all questions open – and stays in your mind.« – Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Essen

»A provocative depiction of a moment in time.« – Focus, Berlin

»He plays through the thought in an almost classical way, in five scenes, awakening associations with Rolf Hochhuth or Hans Magnus Enzensberger.« – Welf Grombacher / Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung, Potsdam

»In *The 20th of July*, Schlink expands his thinking about our present day, in which the clash of political forces suggests a turning point.« – Sebastian Fischer / Abendzeitung München, Munich

### 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



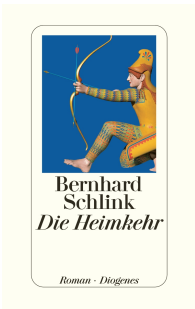
Summer Lies  
288 pages  
2010  
🏆 Bestseller



The Weekend  
240 pages  
2008  
🎬 Movie Adaptation  
🏆 Bestseller



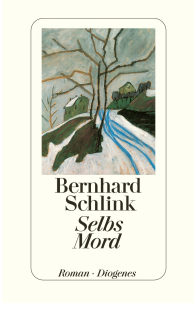
Guilt of the Past  
192 pages  
2007



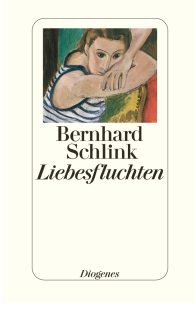
The Homecoming  
384 pages  
2006  
🏆 Bestseller



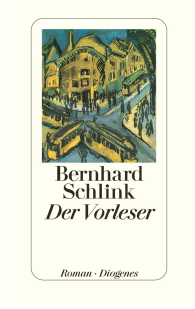
Verifications  
368 pages  
2005



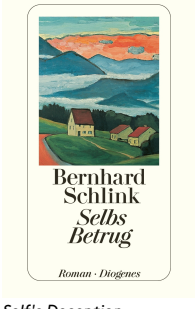
Self's Murder  
272 pages  
2001



Flights of Love  
320 pages  
2000  
🎬 Movie Adaptation



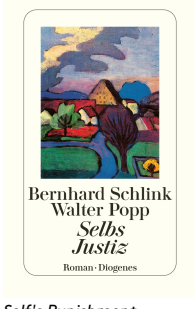
The Reader  
208 pages  
1995  
🏆 Award winner  
🎬 Movie Adaptation  
🏆 Bestseller



Self's Deception  
304 pages  
1992  
🏆 Award winner



The Gordian Knot  
272 pages  
1988  
🏆 Award winner



Self's Punishment  
352 pages  
1987  
🎬 Movie Adaptation