

Diogenes

Andrej Kurkow
Death and the Penguin

Published by Diogenes as *Picknick auf dem Eis*
Original title: *Smert' postoronnego* (Death and the Penguin)



Andrej Kurkow *Picknick auf dem Eis*

Roman · Diogenes

Viktor is lonely. Abandoned by his last Muse, he lives alone except for his penguin Mischa. Viktor is desperate. Somehow, he has to earn enough to keep him in bread and Mischa in fish. But he is a daydreamer and an out-of-work short-story writer, and he has nothing to show for himself except a talent for language and a drawer full of unfinished manuscripts for a novel. He has a hard time of it in Kyiv, haunt of the nouveau riche and the Mafia, where the only things that count are money and business acumen. One day, however, the editor-in-chief of a big newspaper offers Viktor a well-paid job as a free-lance collaborator: Viktor is to write obituaries on famous personalities – who are, by the way, not yet dead. Viktor asks no questions and gets down to work. He doesn't think anything of doing a job for an acquaintance of his boss on the side, and the acquaintance, who turns out to be a small-time rogue with a heart of gold, comes along quite often with a lucrative job. One day, Viktor pours his heart out to him over a glass of vodka: like all writers, he is anxious to see his work published, but the VIPs for whom he has written brilliant obituaries cling tenaciously to life... Some days later, however, Viktor opens the paper and finds his first obituary in print.

Book factsheet

General Fiction
288 pages
11.6 x 18.4 cm
March 1999

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(except Russian and Ukrainian)

Rights currently sold:

Arabic (Al-Arabi)
Breton (An Alarc'h embannaduriou)
Chinese/CN (Beijing Imaginist)
Chinese/TW (Emily)
Danish (Mr. East)
Dutch (Prometheus/Bert Bakker)
English/UK (BBC)
English/world (Random House)
Finnish (Otava)
French (Liana Levi)
Georgian (Intelekti)
Hungarian (Muvelt Nép)
Icelandic (Bjartur & Veröld)
Italian (Keller)
Japanese (Shinchosha)
Norwegian (Cappelen Damm)
Portuguese/PT (Porto)
Romanian (Paralela 45)
Spanish/world (Blackie Books)
Swedish (Natur och Kultur)

❖ Awards

- 2023 Italienische Übersetzung von *Samson und Nadjeschda* für den ›Premio Strega Europeo‹ nominiert
- 2023 englische Übersetzung von *Jimi Hendrix live in Lemberg* auf der Longlist des ›International Booker Prize‹
- 2023 Als ausländisches Ehrenmitglied (Foreign Honorary Membership) in die ›American Academy of Arts and Letters‹ aufgenommen
- 2022 ›Geschwister Scholl Preis‹ für *Tagebuch einer Invasion*
- 2022 *Graue Bienen* auf der Shortlist des ›Prix Fémina‹
- 2022 ›The Halldór Laxness International Literature Prize‹
- 2022 ›Prix Médicis étranger‹ für *Graue Bienen*
- 2022 *Graue Bienen* nominiert für den ›Prix du meilleur livre étranger‹
- 2021 ›Fulbright Visiting Scholar-Stipendium‹ in San Diego, Kalifornien, USA
- 2014 Ernennung zum ›Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur‹ durch den französischen Präsidenten François Hollande
- 2012 ›Premio Gogol, Rom‹
- 2012 ›Prix des lecteurs, Frankreich, für Der Gärtner von Otschakow‹
- 2009 Jurymitglied für den ›Man Booker International Prize 2009‹
- 2008 Writer in Residence in Innsbruck
- 2005 Nach Einschätzung der Zeitschrift *Lire* ist Andrej Kurkow einer der 50 wichtigsten Schriftsteller der Welt.
- 2002 Preis ›Schriftsteller des Jahres 2001‹, den Buchhändler anlässlich der Buchmesse in der Ukraine vergeben haben

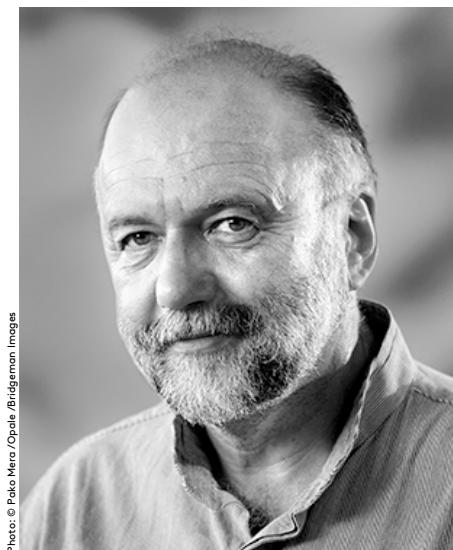


Photo: © Polko Mara / Opale / Bridgeman Images

Andrej Kurkow, born in St. Petersburg in 1961, has lived in Kyiv since childhood and writes in Russian. He studied foreign languages, was a newspaper editor and, during his military service, a prison guard, and wrote numerous screenplays. He is considered to be one of Ukraine's most important contemporary writers and is nominated for the »International Booker Prize« 2023 with *Jimi Hendrix Live in Lviv*. Andrej Kurkow's works have been published in 42 languages. He has been a freelance author since 1996 and lives in Ukraine with his family.

❖ Awards (cont'd)

- 2001 In der Ukraine als Künstler des Jahres 2001 mit dem Preis »Mann des Jahres« ausgezeichnet
- 1997 Sein Drehbuch *Ein Freund des Verblichenen* wird für den »Felix«-Preis in der Kategorie »Bester Europäischer Drehbuchautor des Jahres« nominiert.
- 1996 Das Drehbuch, basierend auf Kurkows Erzählung *Ein Freund des Verblichenen*, erhielt ein Stipendium vom französischen Kultusministerium, wodurch der Film teilfinanziert werden konnte. *Priyatel pokoynika* wurde 1997 eim Filmfestival in Cannes gezeigt.
- 1994 Nominierung des Romans *Bikfordov mir* für den Russischen Booker Prize
- 1994 Stipendium der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung für seine Erzählung *Liebeslied eines Kosmopoliten*

Praise

Death and the Penguin

»A brilliantly deadpan satire on corruption in post-communist Ukraine.« – Christopher Taylor / The Sunday Telegraph, London

»*Death and the Penguin* is the most professional work of literature to have been published here for years!« – Olga Busina / Kiev News

»The deadpan tone works perfectly, and it will be a hard-hearted reader who is not touched by Viktor's relationship with his unusual pet.« – The Times, London

»A striking portrait of post-Soviet isolation ... In this bleak moral landscape Kurkov manages to find ample refuge for his dark humour.« – New York Times, New York

»A black comedy of rare distinction, and the penguin is an invention of genius.« – The Spectator, London

»*Death and the Penguin* comes across as an almost perfect little novel ... fast-paced and witty and on the side of the angels.« – John Powers / NPR's Fresh Air, Washington D.C.

»*Death and the Penguin* successfully balances the social awkwardness of Woody Allen, the absurd clashes of Jean-Luc Godard and the escalating paranoia of Franz Kafka.«

– Vikas Turakias / The Cleveland Plain Dealer

»Misha, the most memorable character of his thriller *Death and the Penguin*, left web-footed prints all over my imagination.« – NPR, Washington D.C.

»I loved the f*ck out of it.«
– Paul Constant / The Stranger, Seattle

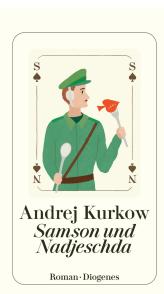
Andrej Kurkow

»Andrej Kurkow knows how to make a story entertaining and amusing.« – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

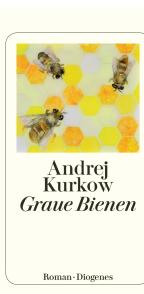
»Andrej Kurkow is a master of grotesque humour.« – Brigitte, Hamburg



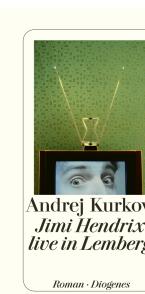
Samson and the Stolen Heart
432 pages
2023



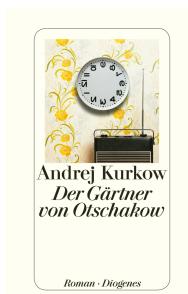
Samson and Nadezhda
368 pages
2022



Grey Bees
448 pages
2019

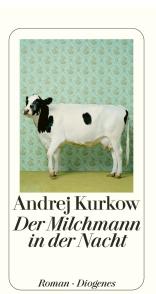


Jimi Hendrix live in Lviv
416 pages
2014



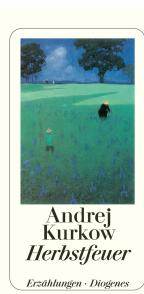
The Gardener of Ochakov
352 pages
2012

❖ Award winner

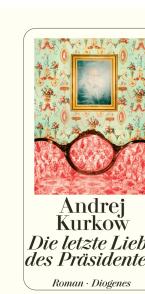


The Milkman in the Night
544 pages
2009

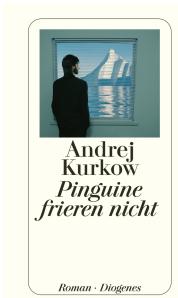
❖ Award winner



Bonfire
240 pages
2007

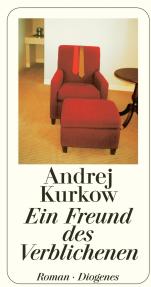


The President's Last Love
704 pages
2005



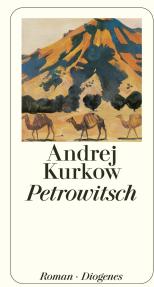
Andrey
Kurkov
*Pinguine
frieren nicht*

Roman · Diogenes
Penguin Lost
544 pages
2003



Andrey
Kurkov
*Ein Freund
des Verbliebenen*

Roman · Diogenes
A Matter of Death and
Life
144 pages
2001
Award winner



Andrey
Kurkov
Petrowitsch

Roman · Diogenes
The Good Angel of Death
448 pages
2000

Praise (cont'd)

»With Kurkov, one is guaranteed entertainment of the highest order.« – Wiener Zeitung

»Kurkov's style is spare and effective, drawing us with deception ease into a dense, complex world full of wonderful characters.« – Michael Palin / (author)

»A latter-day Bulgakov [...] A Ukrainian Murakami.« – Phoebe Taplin / The Guardian, London

»A post-Soviet Kafka.« – Colin Freeman / The Daily Telegraph, London

»A kind of Ukrainian Kurt Vonnegut.« – Ian Sansom / The Spectator, London

»Kurkov writes short, sly, page-turners that specialize in what we might call absurdist noir.« – John Powers / NPR's Fresh Air, Washington D.C.

»Armed with the hilarious animal metaphors that populate his books, Kurkov depicts a humorous and scathing satire of the post-Soviet world, and of a Ukrainian society rediscovering itself, independent and riven by mafia, chaos and corruption.« – Laurent Rigoulet / La Chronique, Brussels

»His prose marked by humour and a contagious humanity evokes magical realism and the absurd.« – Jorge Ferrer / El Mundo, Madrid

»Andrey Kurkov's writing style moves between the unexpected, the beautiful and the hilarious — a tone that permits him to tell a tragedy without renouncing the paradox and the satire.« – Karina Sainz Borgo / ABC, Madrid

»He works with such imaginative power, which nothing seems to be able to quench, with a humorous and tender tone, with protagonists who don't have their fate in their hands, yet are saved by goodness and kindness.« – Alain Guillemoles / La Croix, Montrouge

»Andrey Kurkov connects the absurd with the ordinary, the comic with the sordid.« – Isabelle Mandraud / Le Monde, Paris