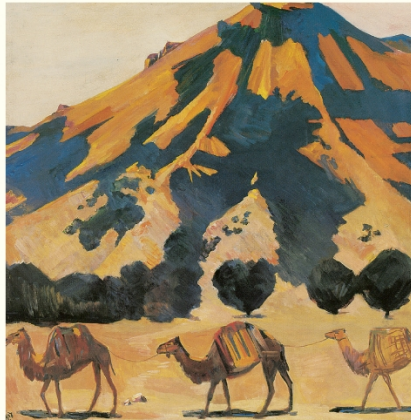


Andrej Kurkow

*The Good Angel of Death*

Published by Diogenes as *Petrowitsch*

Original title: *Dobryj angel smerti*



Andrej  
Kurkow  
*Petrowitsch*

*Roman · Diogenes*

When the unemployed history teacher Kolya moves into a new apartment in the Old Town of Kyiv, he finds a book by the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko with a great many hand-written commentaries. On closer perusal of the book, Kolya finds references to a diary by the poet which was believed to be lost without trace, and which now seems to be in a fort in the middle of the desert in Mangyshlak in Kazakhstan. Kolya sets off for Kazakhstan. Since he has no money for the journey, he stows away on a floating fish factory. A few days later he is set ashore with five litres of water and a substantial store of tinned fish, and a long march ensues. But the sun burns down relentlessly, Kolya's knowledge of the region is scanty, and he soon curses himself for having had such a crazy idea. He nearly perishes in a sandstorm, but a camel belonging to an old Kazakh pulls him out of the sand. The nomad Dshamshed takes the exhausted Kolya into his yurt, and his daughters Natasha and Gulya nurse him back to health ... An exciting adventure novel, an enchanting love story and a protest against all nationalism, whether Russian, Kazakh or Ukrainian.

Book factsheet

Crime Fiction, Contemporary Literature  
448 pages  
11.6 x 18.4 cm  
August 2000

World rights are handled by Diogenes  
(except Russian and Ukrainian)

#### Rights currently sold:

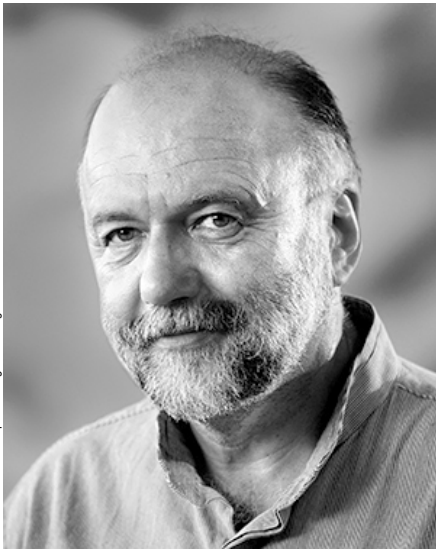
English/UK (Harvill Secker)

French (Liana Levi)

Polish (Noir sur Blanc)

#### Awards

- 2026 Andrej Kurkow erhält den ›Orwell Prize‹ in der Kategorie *Spezial Prize* for 'one of the finest bodies of work in contemporary literature'
- 2024 Englische Übersetzung von *Samson und Nadjeschda* auf der Longlist des ›International Booker Prize‹
- 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* nominiert für den ›Prix du meilleur livre étranger‹
- 2022 *Graue Bienen* auf der Shortlist des ›Prix Fémina‹
- 2022 ›Prix Médicis étranger‹ für *Graue Bienen*
- 2022 ›The Halldór Laxness International Literature Prize‹
- 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 ›Prix des lecteurs‹, Frankreich, für *Der Gärtner von Otschakow*
- 2012 ›Premio Gogol‹, Rom
- 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
- 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.



Andrej Kurkow, born in 1961 in what was then Leningrad, has lived in Kyiv since his childhood. He studied foreign languages and became a newspaper editor and screenwriter. Since his novel *Death and the Penguin*, he has been considered one of the Ukraine's most important contemporary authors. His work has been translated into forty-five languages. Kurkow lives with his family in Ukraine as a freelance writer. In 2023, he was made an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.



*Samson and the Galician Bath*  
480 pages  
2025



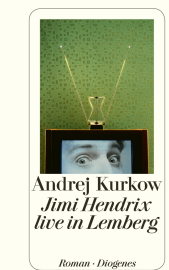
*Samson and the Stolen Heart*  
432 pages  
2023



*Samson and Nadezhda*  
368 pages  
2022  
🏆 Award winner  
📈 Bestseller



*Grey Bees*  
448 pages  
2019  
🏆 Award winner



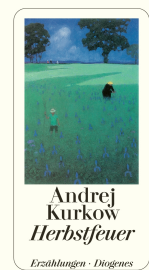
*Jimi Hendrix Live in Lviv*  
416 pages  
2014  
🏆 Award winner



*The Gardener of Ochakov*  
352 pages  
2012  
🏆 Award winner



*The Milkman in the Night*  
544 pages  
2009



*Bonfire*  
240 pages  
2007

## 🏆 Awards (cont'd)

- 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 Stipendium der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung für seine Erzählung *Liebeslied eines Kosmopoliten*
- 1994 Nominierung des Romans *Bikfordov mir* für den Russischen Booker Prize

## Praise

### *The Good Angel of Death*

»Plenty of Russian soul, melancholy and sadness, but here and there a spark of hope – no matter for what.« – Jürgen Deppe / Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Hamburg

### Andrej Kurkow

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

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

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

»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

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

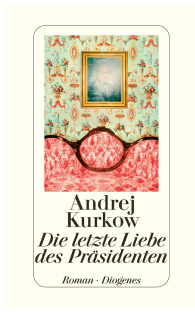
»A latter-day Bulgakov [. . .] A Ukrainian Murakami.« – Phoebe Taplin / The Guardian, London

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

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

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

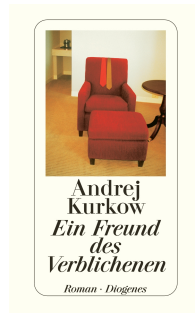
»He works with such imaginative power, which nothing seems to be able to quench, with a humorous and tender tone, with protagonists who don't have their fate in their hands, yet are saved by goodness and kindness.« – Alain Guillemoles / La Croix, Montrouge



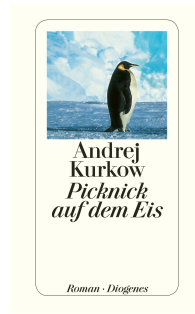
**The President's Last Love**  
704 pages  
2005



**Penguin Lost**  
544 pages  
2003



**A Matter of Death and Life**  
144 pages  
2001  
🏆 **Award winner**



**Death and the Penguin**  
288 pages  
1999

### Praise (cont'd)

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

»Andrej 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

»It is no surprise that Kurkov began his literary career as a joke writer during the Soviet era. His humour is sharp and precise, but never cynical. As long as there is laughter, there is also hope, even within a rotten system.« – Tommi Melender / Helsingin Sanomat, Helsinki