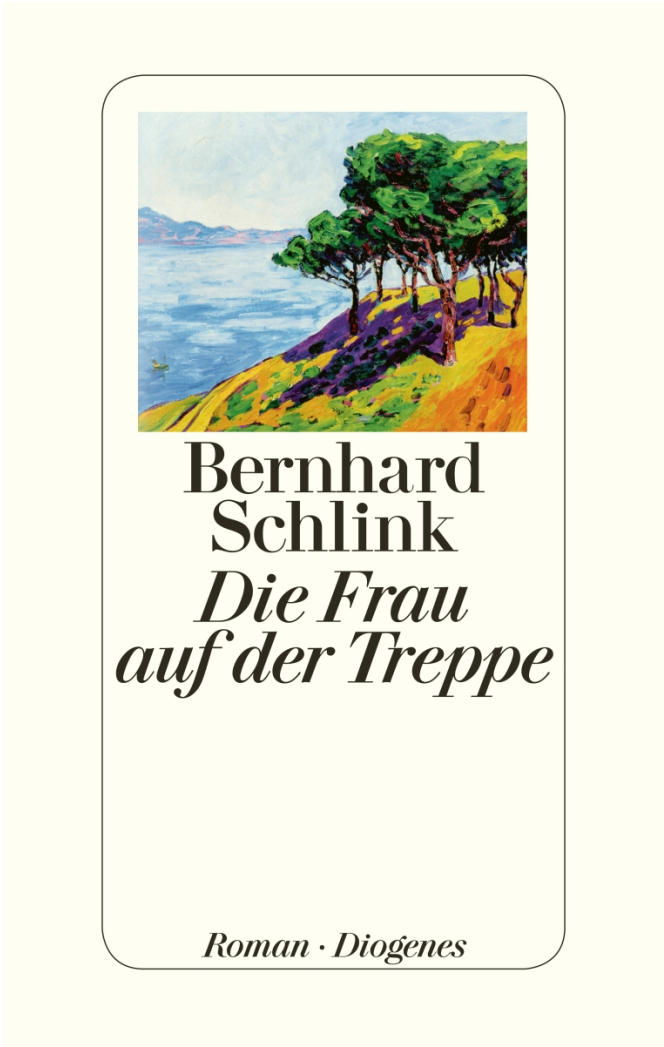
Diogenes

Book factsheet

Bernhard Schlink
The Woman on the Stairs

Published by Diogenes as *Die Frau auf der Treppe*
Original title: *Die Frau auf der Treppe*



A famous painting, missing for decades, suddenly turns up again. A surprise for the art world, and confusing for the man who, as a young lawyer, became entangled in the conflict between the painter and the owner. And who, in the process, fell in love with the woman depicted in the painting. He starts to search for her, and finds much more than the answers to her demeanour and mysterious disappearance. He also has to ask questions about himself that he has always suppressed. The scene: Frankfurt am Main, Sydney and an impassable bay on the Australian coast. A novel about being in the right, about sympathy, property and loss, true and false proximity. And about the happiness of a love that knows its own finite nature.

Contemporary Literature
256 pages
11.6 × 18.4 cm
September 2014

World rights are handled by Diogenes

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Czech (Euromedia)
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Korean (Sigongsa)
Portuguese/BRA (Record)
Romanian (Polirom)
Serbian (Plato)
Spanish/world (Anagrama)
Turkish (Dogan)

Bestseller

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
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

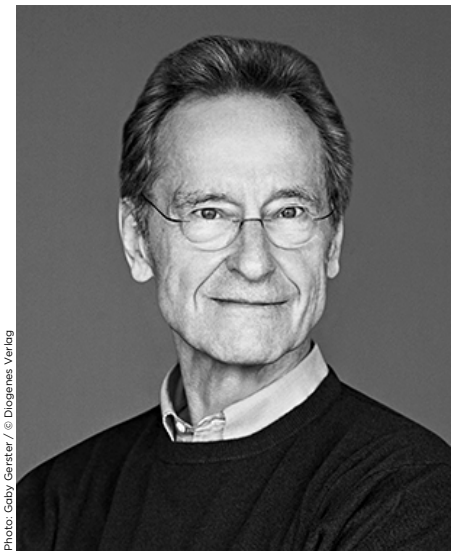


Photo: Gaby Gerster / © Diogenes Verlag

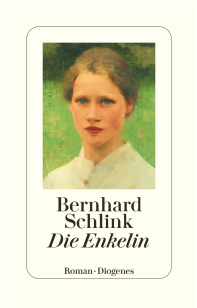
Bernhard Schlink, born in 1944, was a Professor of Public Law and Legal Philosophy and a former judge at the Constitutional Court of North Rhine-Westphalia. His first novel, *Self's Justice*, was published in 1987; his 1995 novel *The Reader*, translated into more than fifty languages and adapted by 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 Late Life
240 pages
2024
Bestseller



The Granddaughter
368 pages
2021
Award winner
Bestseller



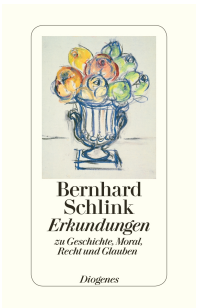
The 20th of July
96 pages
2021



Colours of Farewell
240 pages
2020
Bestseller



Olga
320 pages
2018
Bestseller



Explorations
288 pages
2015



Thoughts on Writing
96 pages
2011

Awards (cont'd)

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 Woman on the Stairs

»Bernhard Schlink's ›The Woman on the Stairs‹ flows with great style between fiction and the politics of the day. The novel is gripping and intelligent, offset with a good portion of thoughtfulness.« – Jens Frederiksen / Rhein-Main-Presse, Mayence

»The novelist has succeeded in writing a veritable thriller, which subtly and expertly intertwines perceptions of art and contemporary political events, debit and credit relational arithmetic as well as the complex relationship of Eros and desire for possession .« – Hendrik Werner / Weser-Kurier, Bremen

»With ›The Woman on the Stairs‹, Bernhard Schlink has written a gripping novel about what happens when life's plans fall apart.« – Nina May / Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung

»It starts like a well-paced thriller with a love interest. Then Bernhard Schlink's novel turns into a melancholic and touching intimate play about life and death.« – Arno Renggli / Nordwestschweiz, Aarau

»The book has a narrative pull, which allows the reader to get through it within a few hours.« – Markus Reiter / Stuttgarter Zeitung

»Stylisticly an almost humble novel, with a touch of melancholic elegance.« – Tilman P. Gangloff / Südkurier, Konstanz

»›The Woman on the Stairs‹ is a daring, hugely emotive work of literature, revolving around the major themes of loss, pretence, love, alienation and death.« – Dagmar Kaindl / News, Vienna



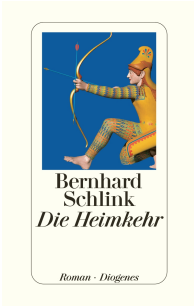
Summer Lies
288 pages
2010
Bestseller



The Weekend
240 pages
2008
Movie Adaptation
Bestseller



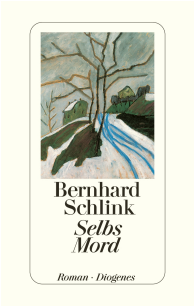
Guilt of the Past
192 pages
2007



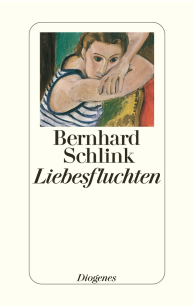
The Homecoming
384 pages
2006
Bestseller



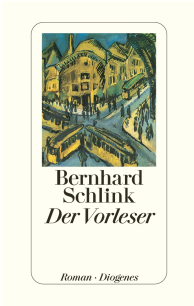
Verifications
368 pages
2005



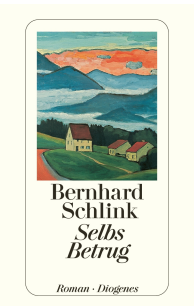
Self's Murder
272 pages
2001



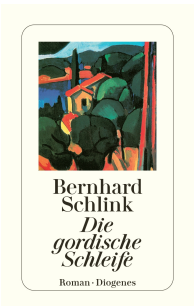
Flights of Love
320 pages
2000
Movie Adaptation



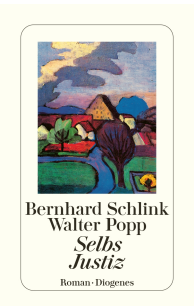
The Reader
208 pages
1995
Award winner
Movie Adaptation
Bestseller



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)

»A delicate and entertaining novel, a cleverly constructed story, almost a thriller, but also a piece about moral code.« – Stefanie Wirsching / Augsburger Allgemeine

»A novel told with breathtaking ease about rights and ethics, great emotions and bitter disappointment.« – Peter Mohr / Die Südostschweiz, Chur

»At the end of this clever but melancholy novel readers are left with some answers to some questions but with others still to ponder. And that's a satisfying ending because it keeps the novel alive after the last page has been turned.« – Claire Hopley / Washington Times

»Bernhard Schlink's *The Woman on the Stairs* runs on taut suspense.« – Hamilton Cain / www.ophra.com (3 Thrillers You Won't Be Able To Put Down)

»Bernhard Schlink [...] tells a mysterious, character-driven, and history-enriched story in which a man reckons with his past.« – Annie Bostrom / Booklist, Chicago

»Bernhard Schlink offers a profoundly moving meditation on how one's life is affected by the choices one makes along the way.« – Publishers Weekly (starred review), New York

»...exquisite novel...« – Publishers Weekly (starred review), New York

»A beautiful novel exploring how nostalgia can both keep us at a standstill and enliven us to dramatic action, Schlink's writing is as graceful and unsettling as a fine work of art.« – Laura Farmer / The Gazette, USA

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

Praise (cont'd)

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