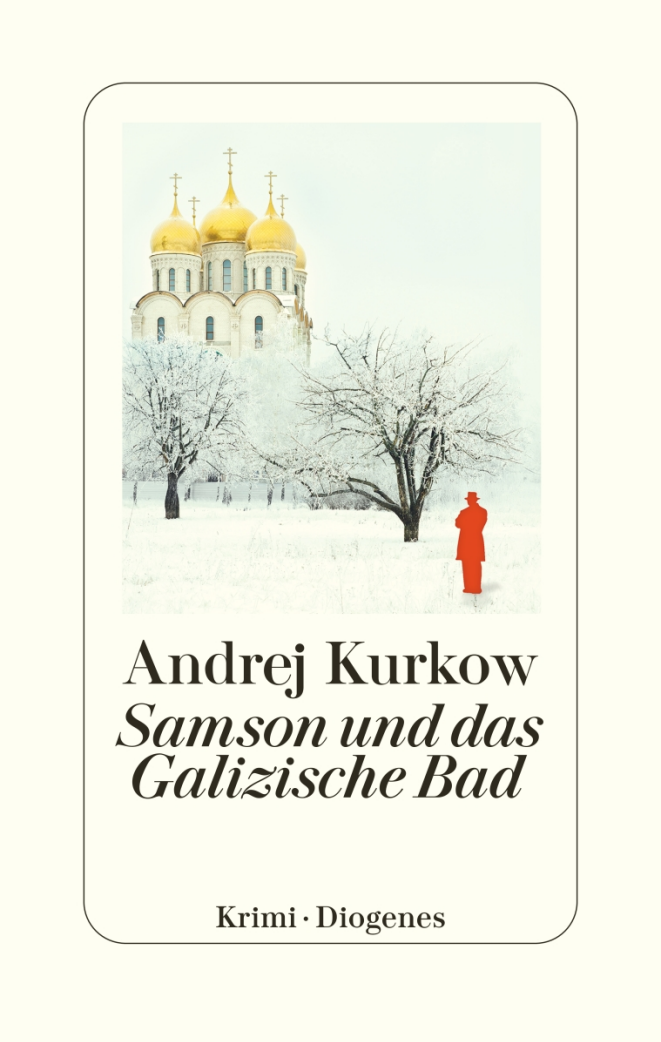
Diogenes

Book factsheet

Andrej Kurkow & Jurij Nikitin (Ill.)
Samson and the Galician Bath

Published by Diogenes as *Samson und das Galizische Bad*
Original title: *Samson i bannoye delo*



A troop of Red Army soldiers disappears without a trace, in the heart of Kyiv, while visiting a banya, a traditional Ukrainian bathhouse. When Samson discovers fragments of bone in the banya's furnace, he uncovers a sinister conspiracy. In this third volume of the series about kindhearted Samson and quickwitted Nadezhda, the Ukrainian master of absurd storytelling vividly depicts a Kyiv filled with political turbulence and eccentric characters — and draws playful parallels with the present day.

Contemporary Literature, Crime Fiction
480 pages
11.6 × 18.4 × 3.1 cm
November 2025

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Romanian (Paralela 45)

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

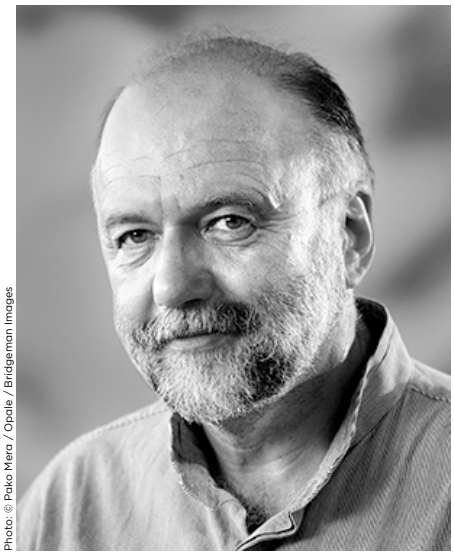
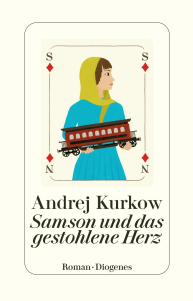
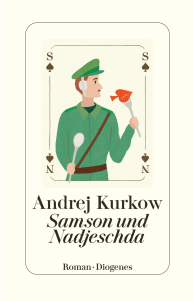


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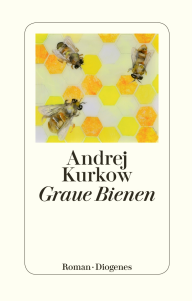
Andrej Kurkow, born in 1961 in what was then Leningrad, has lived in Kyiv since his childhood. He studied foreign languages and became a newspaper editor and screenwriter. Since his novel *Death and the Penguin*, he has been considered one of the Ukraine's most important contemporary authors. His work 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.



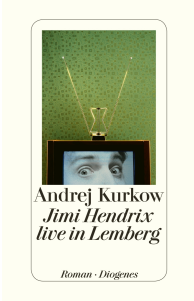
Samson and the Stolen Heart
432 pages
2023



Samson and Nadezhda
368 pages
2022
Award winner
Bestseller



Grey Bees
448 pages
2019
Award winner



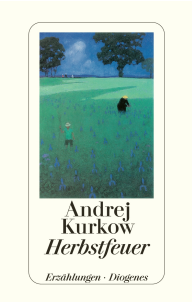
Jimi Hendrix Live in Lviv
416 pages
2014
Award winner



The Gardener of Ochakov
352 pages
2012
Award winner



The Milkman in the Night
544 pages
2009



Bonfire
240 pages
2007



The President's Last Love
704 pages
2005

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

Praise

Samson and the Galician Bath

»Kurkov vividly depicts a city filled with political turbulence - and draws ominous parallels with present day.« – The iPaper

»*The Lost Soldiers* is not a conventional crime novel. [...] However, it is a very engaging work of fiction, told with wit and imagination by a man often described as Ukraine's greatest living writer.« – The Sunday Times, London

»Ironic and multilayered, Kurkov's narration of the past is read with reflection on the present, while Ukraine, once again, struggles for its survival.« – Le Nouvel Obs, Paris

Andrej Kurkow

»Andrey 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.

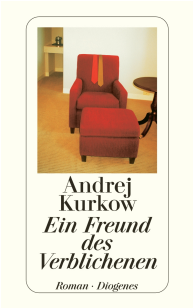
»Armed with the hilarious animal metaphors that populate his books, Kurkow depicts a humorous and scathing satire of the post-Soviet world, and of a Ukrainian society rediscovering itself, independent and riven by mafia, chaos and corruption.« – Laurent Rigoulet / La Chronique, Brussels

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

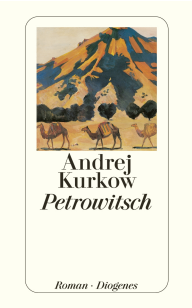
»A latter-day Bulgakov [. . .] A Ukrainian Murakami.« – Phoebe Taplin / The Guardian, London



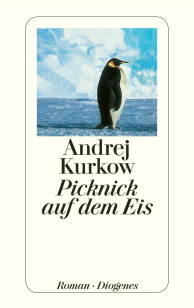
Penguin Lost
544 pages
2003



A Matter of Death and Life
144 pages
2001
Award winner



The Good Angel of Death
448 pages
2000



Death and the Penguin
288 pages
1999

Praise (cont'd)

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

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

»Andrey 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

»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

»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