

# Diogenes

**Bernhard Schlink**  
***The Late Life***

Published by Diogenes as *Das späte Leben*  
Original title: *Das späte Leben*



**Bernhard  
Schlink**  
*Das  
späte Leben*

Roman · Diogenes

At seventy-six, Martin is devoted to his family life with his young wife and six-year-old son when he suddenly learns that he has only a few months to live. Shocked, he searches for answers, wrestling with his feelings and existential questions about his legacy, the meaning of his love and what can be achieved in the short time he has left. Martin wants to do everything right, but later life is full of surprises and unforeseen challenges that he must face.

## Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature, Bestseller  
240 pages  
11.6 x 18.4 x 2 cm  
January 2024

World rights are handled by Diogenes

Film rights are handled by Diogenes

### Rights currently sold:

Armenian (Vernatun)  
Azerbaijani (Qanun)  
Bulgarian (Kryg)  
Croatian (Petrine Knjige)  
Czech (Euromedia)  
Dutch (Cossee)  
English/UK (Weidenfeld & Nicolson/Orion)  
French (Gallimard)  
Greek (Kritiki)  
Italian (Neri Pozza)  
Macedonian (Ili-Ili)  
Romanian (Polirom)  
Russian (Azbooka)  
Serbian (Plato)  
Spanish/world (Anagrama)  
Thai (Library House)  
Turkish (Iletisim)

### 📍 Bestseller

#1 Swiss Bestseller  
#3 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 Herzprung und Alexandra Maria Lara

#### 2008: **The Other Man**

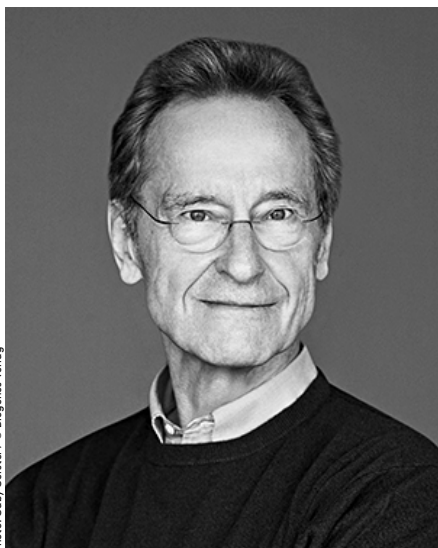
Director: Richard Eyre  
Screenplay: Richard Eyre  
Cast: Liam Neeson, Laura Linney und Antonio Banderas

#### 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



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*.

### Awards (cont'd)

- 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
- 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 Late Life*

›Death - what can it teach me about my life? Schlink introduces his contemporary readers to this old question with masterful dexterity.« – Nils Minkmar / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

›The evidently strongly autobiographical novel impresses and moves as a radically honest self-examination in the face of death, waiting at the door.« – Ronald Schneider / Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf

›A powerful, unpretentious text about what matters in life when it comes to an end.« – Bernd Melicher / Kleine Zeitung, Graz

›A remarkable late-life narrative achievement. Chapeau.« – Peter Mohr / Aachener Zeitung, Aachen

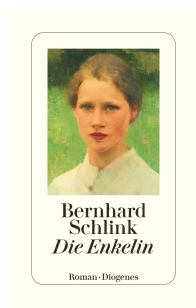
›This tender, impressive novel is again a real Schlink. This unique author understands the art of unpretentious writing about the most intimate, profound and tender things.« – Marianne Janssen / Boekenkrant, Zeist

›His books come with a bestseller guarantee – his new novel is no exception.« – Frank Dietschreit / Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf

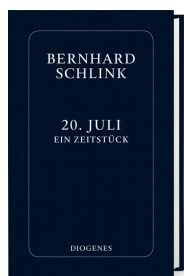
›The postmodern abundance of options is narrowed down to a few relationships, thoughts and gestures, and this reduction unfolds an impressive power.« – Nils Minkmar / Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich



*Justice*  
208 pages  
2026



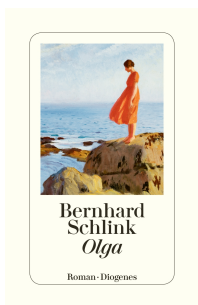
*The Granddaughter*  
368 pages  
2021  
Award winner  
Bestseller



*The 20th of July*  
96 pages  
2021



*Colours of Farewell*  
240 pages  
2020  
Bestseller



*Olga*  
320 pages  
2018  
Bestseller



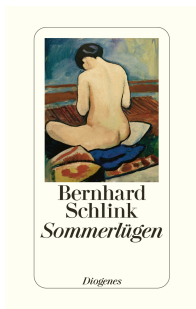
*Explorations*  
288 pages  
2015



*The Woman on the Stairs*  
256 pages  
2014  
Bestseller



*Thoughts on Writing*  
96 pages  
2011



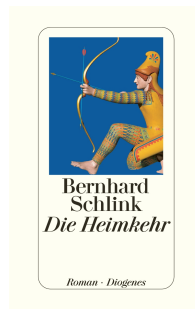
**Summer Lies**  
288 pages  
2010  
🏆 **Bestseller**



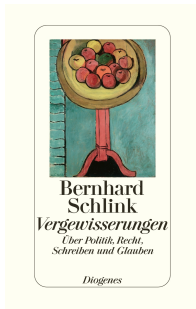
**The Weekend**  
240 pages  
2008  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**  
🏆 **Bestseller**



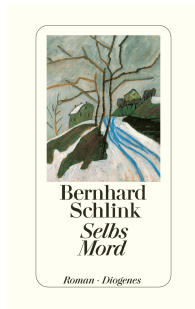
**Guilt of the Past**  
192 pages  
2007



**The Homecoming**  
384 pages  
2006  
🏆 **Bestseller**



**Verifications**  
368 pages  
2005



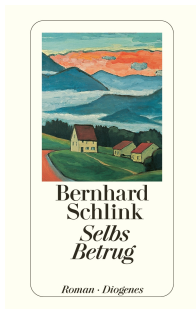
**Self's Murder**  
272 pages  
2001



**Flights of Love**  
320 pages  
2000  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**



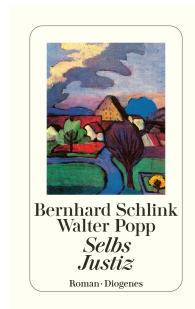
**The Reader**  
208 pages  
1995  
🏆 **Award winner**  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**  
🏆 **Bestseller**



**Self's Deception**  
304 pages  
1992  
🏆 **Award winner**



**The Gordian Knot**  
272 pages  
1988  
🏆 **Award winner**



**Self's Punishment**  
352 pages  
1987  
🎬 **Movie Adaptation**

**Praise (cont'd)**

»It is about the last weeks of a cancer patient's life (...) and yet at the end there is serenity and reconciliation.« – Raimund Neuss / Kölnische Rundschau, Cologne

»Schlink's *The Late Life* is one of those works to which – once you've read them – you keep returning, to internalise certain passages over and over.« – Helmut Atteneder / Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, Linz

» [...] a profound discussion on life and death.« – Annette König / SRF, Zurich

»[...] a wise and honest book, devoid of illusion, but not ruthless and not unconciliatory either.« – Thomas Gross / Mannheimer Morgen

»Bestselling author Bernhard Schlink has written a novel on the highly complex art of taking leave.« – Karin Grossmann / Sächsische Zeitung, Dresden

»A moving late work.« – Focus, Berlin

»*The Late Life* is a calm, big and important text.« – Annemarie Stoltenberg / NDR Kultur, Hanover

**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