

Diogenes

Bernhard Schlink
The 20th of July

Published by Diogenes as *20. Juli*
Original title: *20. Juli*



Bernhard Schlink's first play is a disturbing mind game about the presence of the past and about the price of trade: being left with dirty hands.

The last day of school falls on the 20th of July, the anniversary of an assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. The previous day, the right-wing party ›Deutsche Aktion‹ with their charismatic young leader won 37 percent of the vote in the regional election. In history class, a heated discussion arises between the final year students and their teacher: shouldn't the assassination attempt have been carried out 13 years earlier, in 1931? What can be learned for the future? Is it better to keep one's hands clean, or to risk getting them dirty? A lesson about morals, responsibility and making decisions.

Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature
96 pages
12.5 x 20.5 cm
June 2021

World rights are handled by Diogenes

Film rights are handled by Diogenes

Rights currently sold:
Greek (Kritiki)

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 Librerías 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
- 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*



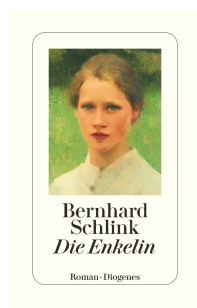
Bernhard Schlink, born in 1944, was a Professor of Public Law and Legal Philosophy and a former judge at the Constitutional Court of North Rhine-Westphalia. His first novel, *Self's Justice*, was published in 1987; his 1995 novel *The Reader*, translated into more than fifty languages and adapted by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



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

🏆 Awards (cont'd)

- 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 20th of July

»A successful, perfectly-timed mind game.« – Catrin Stövesand / Deutschlandfunk, Cologne

»Bernhard Schlink's contemporary play leaves (almost) all questions open – and stays in your mind.« – Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Essen

»A provocative depiction of a moment in time.« – Focus, Berlin

»He plays through the thought in an almost classical way, in five scenes, awakening associations with Rolf Hochhuth or Hans Magnus Enzensberger.« – Welf Grombacher / Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung, Potsdam

»In *The 20th of July*, Schlink expands his thinking about our present day, in which the clash of political forces suggests a turning point.« – Sebastian Fischer / Abendzeitung München, Munich

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

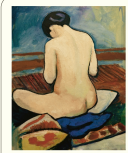
»[Schlink] writes instructive tales that adeptly raise difficult questions and propose appealing answers.« – New York Times Book Review

»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



Bernhard Schlink
Sommerlügen

Diogenes

Summer Lies
288 pages
2010

🏆 Bestseller



Bernhard Schlink
Das Wochenende

Roman · Diogenes

The Weekend
240 pages
2008

🎬 Movie Adaptation
🏆 Bestseller



Bernhard Schlink
Vergangenheits-schuld
Beiträge zu einem deutschen Thema

Diogenes

Guilt of the Past
192 pages
2007



Bernhard Schlink
Die Heimkehr

Roman · Diogenes

The Homecoming
384 pages
2006

🏆 Bestseller



Bernhard Schlink
Vergewisserungen
Über Politik, Recht, Schreiben und Glauben

Diogenes

Verifications
368 pages
2005



Bernhard Schlink
Selbs Mord

Roman · Diogenes

Self's Murder
272 pages
2001



Bernhard Schlink
Liebesfluchten

Diogenes

Flights of Love
320 pages
2000

🎬 Movie Adaptation



Bernhard Schlink
Der Vorleser

Roman · Diogenes

The Reader
208 pages
1995

🏆 Award winner
🎬 Movie Adaptation
🏆 Bestseller



Bernhard Schlink
Selbs Betrug

Roman · Diogenes

Self's Deception
304 pages
1992

🏆 Award winner



Bernhard Schlink
Die gordische Schleife

Roman · Diogenes

The Gordian Knot
272 pages
1988

🏆 Award winner



Bernhard Schlink
Walter Popp
Selbs Justiz

Roman · Diogenes

Self's Punishment
352 pages
1987

🎬 Movie Adaptation