

# Diogenes

**Bernhard Schlink**  
***The Homecoming***

Published by Diogenes as *Die Heimkehr*  
Original title: *Die Heimkehr*



**Bernhard  
Schlink**  
*Die Heimkehr*

*Roman · Diogenes*

Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature  
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March 2006

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Serbian (Plato)  
Spanish/world (Anagrama)  
Ukrainian (Folio)

#### **📌 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 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
- 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

As a child, Peter Debauer, the narrator of the novel, spends his holidays at his grandparents' house in Switzerland. In the evening, he sits with them at the table and reads, while they edit and correct the magazine novels with which they earn their money. Since paper is very expensive in the 1950s, his grandparents let him use the back of the edited manuscripts to scribble on, but tell him never to turn them over and read the text. One day, he simply cannot resist and turns the page - and reads about the odyssey of a German soldier to Siberia, his eventual return and subsequent search for his wife. Finally the soldier locates the city and the house in which she lives, but when his wife opens the door, another man is standing beside her, while she is holding his child on her arm. Then the soldier... But Peter Debauer cannot find out what happens next. He has already thrown away the original manuscripts - on which he has scribbled and drawn - which contained the end of the novel. Years later he recalls the story and wants to know how it ends. The search for the end of the story turns into the search for its author - a man who has repeatedly been able to hide his tracks, who has assumed a number of different identities, pursued various careers and who has developed a rather peculiar relationship to the horrors of the twentieth century. During his search, Peter Debauer encounters himself. In his attempt to discover the end of the soldier's story, he embarks on his own odyssey: the search for his origins and his return, and for the woman he loves.

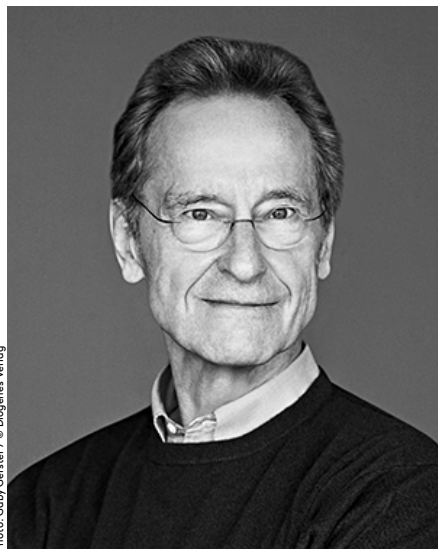


Photo: Gabby Gerster / © Dörmann Verlag

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*.

## 🏆 Awards (cont'd)

- 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 Homecoming*

›Fueled by a mystery, ›Homecoming‹ is a powerful meditation on justice, history and the nature of evil. [...] Schlink has written another lean, meticulously structured, disquieting thought-provoker.« – Los Angeles Times

›Beguiling ... Despite its intricate, meze-like progression, ›Homecoming‹ has surprising narrative thrust.« – The Economist, London

›Sensitive and disturbing ... The reader's mind opens to the story like a plant unfurling its leaves to the sun.« – The New York Times Book Review

›It is effectively a glorious return of an old theme and its variations: the relation between a son and an absent father.« – Le Monde, Paris

›Impressive [...] Schlink has always carried the precision of an advocate summing up before the court of history. His novels are laid out with a clarity of purpose; they are a faithful reconstruction of the human predicament.« – The Guardian, London

›Schlink has put together a clever package and skilfully guides the reader through modern German history.« – The Sunday Telegraph, London

### 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

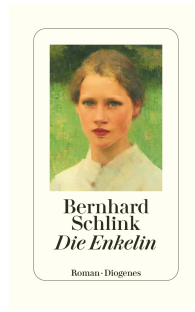
›[Schlink] writes instructive tales that adeptly raise difficult questions and propose appealing answers.« – New York Times Book Review



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



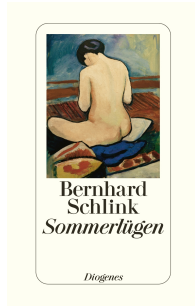
Explorations  
288 pages  
2015



The Woman on the Stairs  
256 pages  
2014  
🏆 Bestseller



Thoughts on Writing  
96 pages  
2011



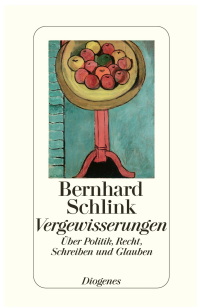
Summer Lies  
288 pages  
2010  
🏆 Bestseller



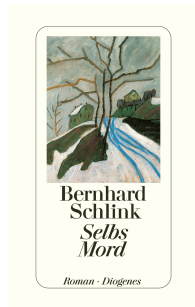
The Weekend  
240 pages  
2008  
🎬 Movie Adaptation  
🏆 Bestseller



Guilt of the Past  
192 pages  
2007



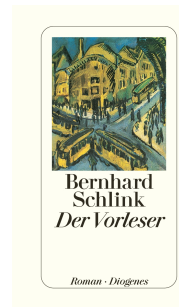
Verifications  
368 pages  
2005



Self's Murder  
272 pages  
2001



Flights of Love  
320 pages  
2000  
🎬 Movie Adaptation



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

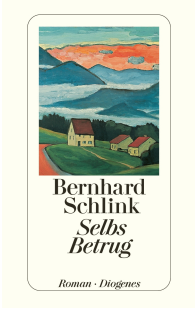
### Praise (cont'd)

»The German novelist Bernhard Schlink is pretty much second to none when it comes to storytelling.« – Helmut Atteneder / Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, Linz

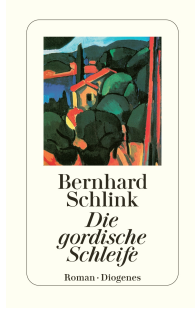
»Schlink knows the depths of the human soul all too well. The writer and judge proves with each of his books that he knows how to transform German history into literature.« – ZeitPunkt, Leipzig

»One of the most successful and versatile German writers of our time.« – Volker Hage / Der Spiegel, Hamburg

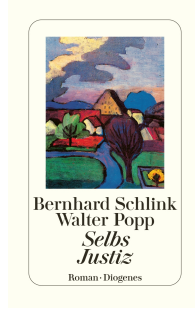
»The truly masterly aspect of Schlink's prose is its intelligence – an intelligence that is firmly rooted in common sense.« – Welt am Sonntag, Hamburg



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



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



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