

Diogenes

Andrej Kurkow
Grey Bees

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Original title: *Serye pchely*



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Graue Bienen

Roman · Diogenes

When honey tastes of war.

Grey Bees is a novel about a war that has almost been forgotten, a novel full of atmosphere and wisdom, which forces the reader to slow down, reminding him of what matters most: preserving the integrity of nature.

Beekeeper Sergey lives in Donbass, where Ukrainian fighters and pro-Russian separatists exchange gunfire on a daily basis. He survives by following the motto: Hear nothing, see nothing – stay out of it. His only concern is the well-being of his bees. Because the bees' world continues to be ruled by intelligent order and wonderful productivity while mankind wreaks havoc. One spring, he sets off: He wants to bring the bees to a region where they can collect nectar in peace.

Book factsheet

Contemporary Literature
448 pages
11.6 x 18.4 x 2.8 cm
August 2019

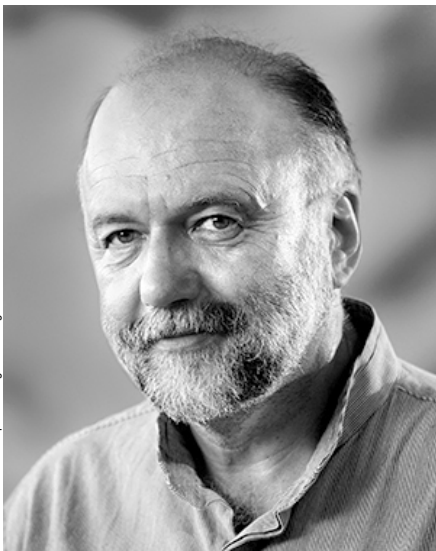
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Slovenian
Spanish/world (PRH Grupo (Salamandra, Lumen, etc))
Swedish (Natur och Kultur)
Telugu (Chaaya Books)
Turkish (Siren)

Awards

- 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*



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.

🏆 Awards (cont'd)

- 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
- 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 ein 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

Grey Bees

»Like Norbert Scheuer's *Winter Bees*, this is far more than just another book about bees – and it is Kurkow's strongest work yet.« – Mathias Schnitzler / Berliner Zeitung

»At the same time poetic and poignant.« – Gala, Hamburg

»With the novel *Grey Bees*, the author Andrej Kurkow has once again achieved a resounding success.« – Peter Budig / Nürnberger Nachrichten

»Andrej Kurkow's novel illustrates the life of a civil society that lives in a war without being at war themselves.« – Simona Pinwinkler / Salzburger Nachrichten

»Kurkow tells Sergej's story in a predominantly light and humorous tone, but frequently interweaves grotesque scenes of destruction.« – Gisela Erbslöh / SWR2, Baden-Baden

»With *Grey Bees*, Andrej Kurkow has produced a sharply-drawn picture of the festering conflict in the Ukraine, one from which the rest of Europe has long since averted its gaze.« – Sigrid Löffler / Deutschlandfunk Kultur, Cologne

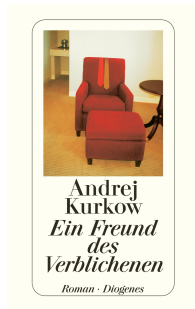
»It is highly impressive how Andrej Kurkow manages to create a melancholic mood in his tale of the happiness seeker Sergej without descending into pathos.« – Terrance Albrecht / WDR 5, Cologne

»Kurkow tells the oppressive story of the everyday of war in Eastern Ukraine with a quiet and poetic language.« – Céline Graf / Der Bund, Berne

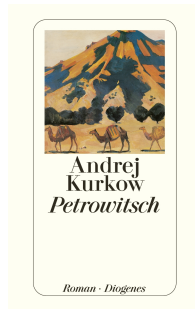
 Andrej Kurkow <i>Samson und das Galizische Bad</i> Kritini · Diogenes	 Andrej Kurkow <i>Samson und das gestohlene Herz</i> Roman · Diogenes	 Andrej Kurkow <i>Samson und Nadschda</i> Roman · Diogenes	 Andrej Kurkow <i>Jimi Hendrix live in Lemberg</i> Roman · Diogenes
Samson and the Galician Bath 480 pages 2025	Samson and the Stolen Heart 432 pages 2023	Samson and Nadezhda 368 pages 2022 🏆 Award winner 📈 Bestseller	Jimi Hendrix Live in Lviv 416 pages 2014 🏆 Award winner
 Andrej Kurkow <i>Der Gärtner von Otschakov</i> Roman · Diogenes	 Andrej Kurkow <i>Der Milchmann in der Nacht</i> Roman · Diogenes	 Andrej Kurkow <i>Herbstfeuer</i> Erzählungen · Diogenes	 Andrej Kurkow <i>Die letzte Liebe des Präsidenten</i> Roman · Diogenes
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



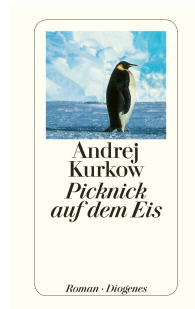
Penguin Lost
544 pages
2003



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)

»This time, the Ukrainian author of *Death and the Penguin*, known for his brilliantly dark humour, has written a modern-day odyssey, with a return that is ambiguously hopeful.« – India Lewis / The Arts Desk, London

»In spare prose, Ukraine's most famous novelist unsparingly examines the inhuman confusions of our modern times and the longing of the warm-hearted everyman that is Sergeyich for the rationality of the natural world.« – John Thornhill / Financial Times, London

»*Grey Bees* is as timely as the author's *Ukraine Diaries* were in 2014, but treats the unfolding crisis in a more imaginative way, with a pinch of Kurkov's signature humour.« – fantasticfiction.com

»Kurkov distils a happy desperation, a form of surreal pantheism that places him geographically, like his country, between Russian romanticism and Scandinavian fatalism, between Chekhov and Paasilinna, Gogol and Hamsun.« – Frederic Beigbeder / Le Figaro, Paris

»In his book, the writer paints the ›grey zone‹ on the frontline with great humanity.« – Isabelle Mandraud / Le Monde, Paris

»This book lingers in the details, and every detail bears significant power.« – Kalani Pickhart / Electric Literature, New York

»And this one is actually kind of a sweet simple story, but in a way that's deceptively so. You watch someone's sweetness be pushed to its limits.« – Jennifer Wilson / New York Times Book Review, New York

»May more novels follow.« – Anna Reid / The Independent, Dublin

»*Grey Bees* is a gentle, sometimes ambivalent book about a conflict that had its share of moral complexity.« – The New Yorker, New York

»And this one is actually kind of a sweet simple story, but in a way that's deceptively so. You watch someone's sweetness be pushed to its limits.« – The New York Times Book Review, New York

»The Ukrainian writer depicts with unsettling simplicity the day-to-day life of isolated pensioners in their deserted villages, in the heart of a ›grey zone‹ which divides the pro-Russian separatists from the rest of the Ukrainians on the front line.« – Isabelle Mandraud / Le Monde, Paris

»The novel doesn't provide an answer. But it reminds us not to forget the poetry, courage and imagination of a country that is much more than the battlefield it is today.« – Flavie Philipon / Elle, Paris

»Somewhere between realism and dream, Andrei Kurkov has penned a great, absurd and philosophical novel about the chaos of the world, and about the brotherhood between a simple man and his bees.« – Sophie Joubert / L'Humanité, Saint-Denis

Praise (cont'd)

»The novel *Grey Bees* is essential reading in this time of war. Literature as an antidote to barbarism and hopelessness.« – Philippe Chevilly / Les Echos, Paris

»Somewhere between political fable and sparks of bucolic philosophy, this is a wonderful book that says so much about how high the stakes are where war is concerned.« – Jacques Lindecker / L'Alsace, Mulhouse

»*Grey Bees* makes the reader laugh, with tears in their eyes.« – Cécile Dutheil de la Rochère / AOC, Nîmes

Andrej Kurkov

»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, Kurkov 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

»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

Praise (cont'd)

»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