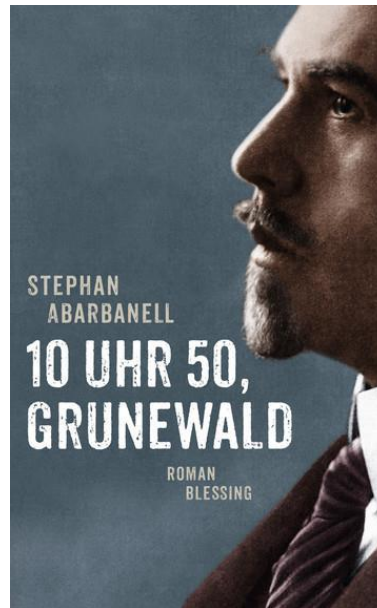


Penguin
Random House
Verlagsgruppe

Best of
Penguin Random House
Verlagsgruppe

Fiction
Spring 2022

**Art lover, Prussian dandy, writer,
foreign minister in the Weimar Republic
– the last five minutes in the life of a
man as enigmatic as he was fascinating**



Stephan Abarbanell
Grunewald, 10:50 a.m.

[10 Uhr 50, Grunewald]
Novel

Blessing
200 pages
June 2022

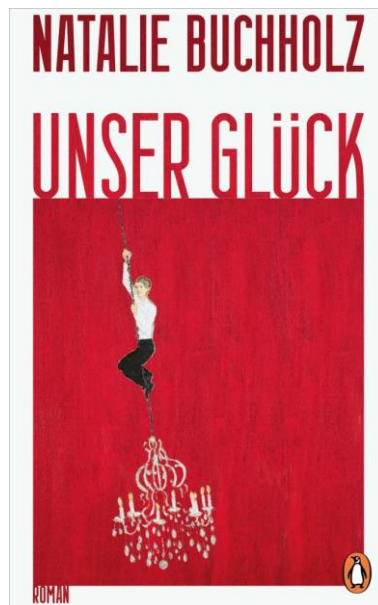
English sample translation
available soon

Stephan Abarbanell, born in Brunswick in 1957, grew up in Hamburg. He studied theology and general rhetoric in Hamburg, Tübingen and Berkeley. For over 20 years he had been in charge of cultural affairs at *rbb Broadcasting*. His first novel, *Orient*, was translated into several languages.

On a cool, cloudy day in June 1922, Walther Rathenau, the Weimar Republic's newly appointed foreign minister, gets into his chauffeur-driven convertible and sets off for the ministry. He has just returned from signing the decisive Treaty of Rapallo, and his more or less forced reconciliation with the Soviet Union has drawn not only criticism, but also death threats: they say that he, the Jew, has betrayed Germany.

Five minutes later, he is shot dead, assassinated by right-wing extremists. In Stephan Abarbanell's lyrical and profound psychological novel, Rathenau's final journey becomes a metaphor for Rathenau's journey into himself – on which he finally finds answers to the questions that have troubled him his whole life.

What happens to us when our home becomes a financial bargaining chip?



English sample translation available

Natalie Buchholz
Our Good Fortune
[Unser Glück]
Novel

Penguin Verlag
224 pages
February 2022

Natalie Buchholz, born in France in 1977, studied Cultural Studies and Aesthetic Practice at the University of Hildesheim and at the Université Aix-Marseille. In 2018, her debut novel *The Red Swimming Pool* was published. In 2020 she was awarded the Spiegelungen Prize for minimal prose.

When the young parents Franziska and Coordt find a lovely – and affordable – flat in one of Munich's best neighbourhoods, it's the opportunity of a lifetime. But there's a condition attached: it won't be just them and their small boy living there. Tempted by the chance of owning their own home, and one they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford, they agree to a deal that will put their love to the test. Like a catalyst, the new flat accelerates and deepens existing cracks in their relationship, and their son, too, is aware of the increasing friction between them. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity has turned out to be a trap. Will they find a way out?

Natalie Buchholz has created an irresistible story, written in clear, rhythmic prose. A novel set up like an experiment, showing the freedom that improved living conditions can bring – and the destructive power of financial pressure.

Press

"This story unfolds like a dense chamber play, dramaturgically tightening the set screws, and is certainly suitable as a parable for our present. [...] a stroke of luck in book format." *BR24 "Neues vom Buchmarkt"*

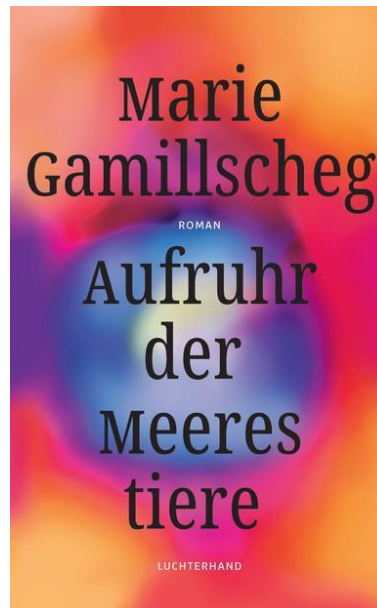
"Natalie Buchholz's accurate narration makes it easy to read over the horror in her story. Once you start to get the story straight, you realise how cleverly creepy it is told." *Textland.de*

On fathers and daughters – the tale of an impossible relationship

**New Books
in German**

**English sample translation
available soon**

Marie Gamillscheg, born in Graz in 1992, lives and works in Berlin, freelancing as a journalist and contributing to *ZEIT Campus* and other media. She was awarded the city of Graz literature promotion prize in 2015 and the New German Fiction Prize. In 2016 she took part in the Klagenfurt Literature Course and was awarded a working stipend by the Berlin Senate. Her works have been published in many magazines and anthologies. Her novel *All That Shines* topped the ORF list of best books, was nominated for the Aspekte Literature Prize and won the Austrian Book Prize for the Best Debut Novel in 2018.



Marie Gamillscheg
A Disturbance of Jellyfish
[Aufruhr der Meerestiere]
Novel

Luchterhand HC
304 pages
March 2022

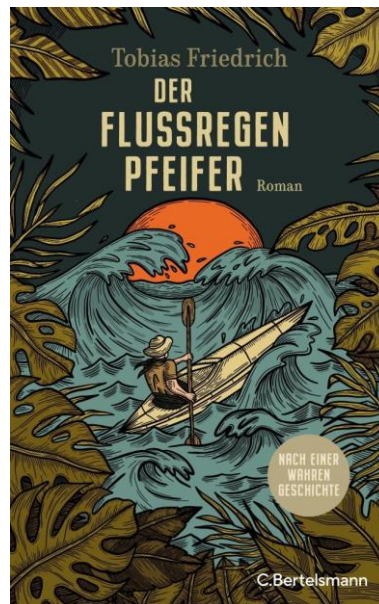
Luise is intelligent, Luise is independent, Luise is an island. She has also gained a reputation as an excellent marine biologist. Her specialty is the sea walnut, a ghostly illuminated jellyfish living in the dark waters of the oceans. When Luise is asked to go to Graz for a project with a famous zoo, she says yes right away. But Graz is the town she grew up in and the town where her estranged father, who is ill, still lives – and where the silence between them began, long ago...

Marie Gamillscheg writes compellingly and vividly about the process of freeing ourselves from our childhood, our body, and the rules that we believe to be our own – but which others have determined for us. At the same time, this novel is an attempt to describe the inherent impossibility of father-daughter relationships.

Press

"One of the most exciting young voices of German-speaking literature." *Spiegel Online*

Seven years in a kayak: the utterly improbable but true story of one man's odyssey



Tobias Friedrich
The Ringed Plover
[Der Flussregenpfeifer]
A novel based on a true story

C. Bertelsmann
512 pages
March 2022
With 1 colour and 4 b/w illustrations

English sample translation
available soon

Tobias Friedrich, born in 1969, is a songwriter, and has written songs for his two bands as well as other artists. He was the publisher of a Berlin music magazine, and is now an author of non-fiction books and the co-organiser of the Berlin culture show *Ein Hit ist ein Hit*. He says that *The Ringed Plover*, his literary debut, came about when "I was amazed to find that there were no books about Oskar Speck. It was obvious that I would be hopelessly out of my depth writing a novel about him, because I've never written a novel before. So I immediately buckled down."

May 1932. With a daring plan to paddle to Cyprus and back, and just enough provisions to last the trip, Oskar Speck slides his folding kayak into the water. He plans to be back in six months. But his well-laid plans are scuppered: in pursuit of a sporting ambition, with jazz music and Mark Twain's witty wisdom for company, and chased by Nazis who want to turn the kayak's captain into a German hero, the loveable loner ends up paddling all the way to Australia, where he's arrested as a spy and put in prison. He loses all hope of being freed, and fears that he'll never see Gili – the most charmingly gap-toothed woman in the world – again. But then fate hands him a lifeline.

The Ringed Plover, Tobias Friedrich's literary debut, is based on the unlikely but true tale of a man from Hamburg who spent seven years paddling 50,000 km in his folding boat, despite never having learnt how to swim. A funny, suspenseful, fast-paced novel that is as astonishing as the true story that inspired it.

Praise

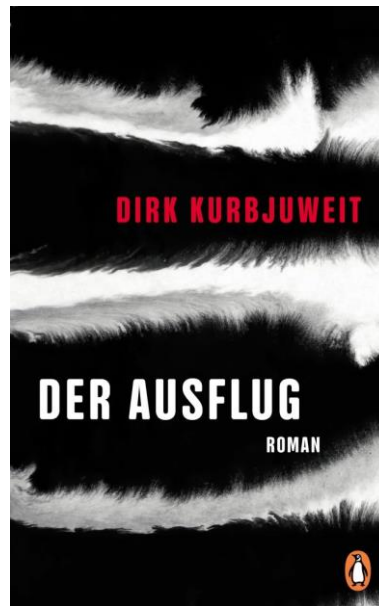
"Tobias Friedrich takes us on a madcap, headlong journey – finally, a new adventure novel!" *Takis Würger*

A shocking journey into the heart of Germany's darkness

**New Books
in German**

**English sample translation
available**

Dirk Kurbjuweit, born in 1962, is one of the most versatile and productive authors of our time. Known to a broad readership as a reporter for *Zeit* and *Spiegel*, he has been a convincing narrator from an early age. Critics celebrated his works and several of his literary successes served as models for film adaptations and radio play adaptations. His books have been translated into numerous languages.



Dirk Kurbjuweit

The Trip

[Der Ausflug]

Novel

Penguin Verlag
192 pages
February 2022

Childhood friends Amalia, Josef, Gero and Bodo are on a summer canoeing trip. However, the moment they arrive at their destination it's clear that they aren't welcome. Josef in particular, who is black, senses the locals' discomfort in his presence. They evidently deeply dislike anything that looks remotely foreign. But should the friends let themselves be intimidated by a few backward provincials? Should they simply give in? Amalia, Josef, Gero and Bodo are determined to stay, and from that moment on there's no turning back. Every step they take leads them closer to the abyss. They all know that this trip won't end well, but none of them wants to admit it. Soon their summer adventure becomes a desperate effort to get out of this place alive.

Press

"From the beginning there is something threatening, ominous, and indeed: his explosive psychological study of xenophobia and friendship shakes you up, leaves you stunned. A short radical novel that shows that racism and violence are much closer than we think." *egoFM "Buchhaltung"*

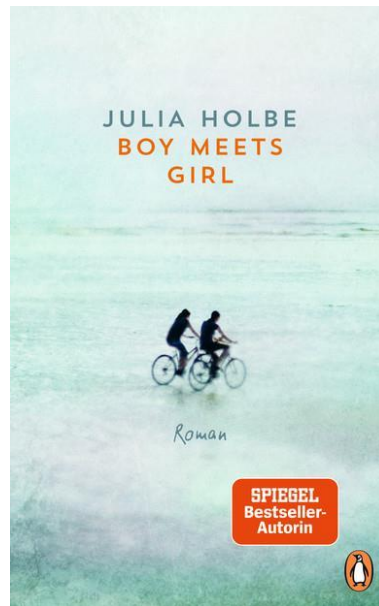
"The idea that Kurbjuweit is creating a parable here makes for quite uncomfortable reading – which speaks to his storytelling." *Berliner Zeitung*

Every step we take can be the start of a whole new story

Spiegel
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR

English sample translation available soon

Julia Holbe was born in 1969 and lives in Frankfurt am Main but spends part of the year in Brittany. She spent twenty years working as an editor of international literature at the S. Fischer Verlag. *Our Happy Days*, her first novel, was a top 20 *Spiegel* bestselling book.



Julia Holbe
Boy Meets Girl
[Boy meets Girl]
Novel

Penguin Verlag
288 pages
March 2022

'Boy meets girl': anything can start with this sentence – there isn't a story that cannot be brought into the world with it. For Nora, too, a brief encounter changes her life entirely. All of a sudden she realises that she has for too long been a mere visitor in her own life. Now the painful end of her marriage and her ageing father's increasing helplessness finally inspire her to make changes.

When she meets Gregory, she senses that life has more in store for her – and yet she feels like there's something missing, something she can't quite grasp. Then she encounters Yann again, a friend from the old days, a man she thought she'd almost lost for ever.

Julia Holbe's novel is about all those little life-changing moments and captures the magical seconds in which doubt and fear transform into hope, and something new is born. *Boy Meets Girl* is like a French film: light-footed, profound and unforgettable.

A courageous paediatric nurse fights for her little patients – and her happiness

Spiegel
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR

English synopsis of all four volumes available

Rights sold prior publication to:
Italy (Giunti), The Netherlands (Meulenhoff Boekerij)

With a total of over two million copies, **Corina Bomann**'s novels are an indispensable part of the bestseller shelves not only in Germany – most recently, the volumes "The Colours of Beauty. Sophia's Triumph" and "The Women of the Lion's Court. Mathilda's Secret". With her new series of novels about the Waldfriede Hospital in Berlin, she is fulfilling her heart's wish: inspired by the real chronicle of the clinic, she wants to create a monument to the clinic and its eventful history, making it the setting for a great historical saga.



Corina Bomann

Beacon of Hope

[Leuchfeuer]

The Sisters of Waldfriede Hospital (Vol. 2)
Novel

Penguin Verlag
550 pages
June 2022

The Berlin district of Zehlendorf, 1933. Just as the Waldfriede clinic has finally made a name for itself and the clinic's director Conradi is admitted to the Berlin Society of Surgeons, storm clouds gather on the horizon. The Nazis have seized power, and suddenly the Waldfriede clinic and its staff are under surveillance. But the young paediatric nurse Lilly is less concerned for herself than for her little patients who need her protection, and for her friends and colleagues. In the meantime, she has realised that she likes Dr Rudolph Kirsch more than just as a colleague. But she suspects that she isn't the only one harbouring a secret. These are dangerous times, and Lilly grows ever more desperate: should she risk everything – even if it means losing everything she cares about?

Bestselling author Corina Bomann's new novel set in and around Berlin's Waldfriede clinic is inspired by the real-life story of a paediatric nurse working in 1930s Germany.



Hour of Glory (Vol. 1) [Sternstunde]

The Sisters of Waldfriede Hospital (Vol. 1)
Penguin, 608 pp, December 2021

Spiegel bestseller: more than 55.000 copies sold

Historical Fiction

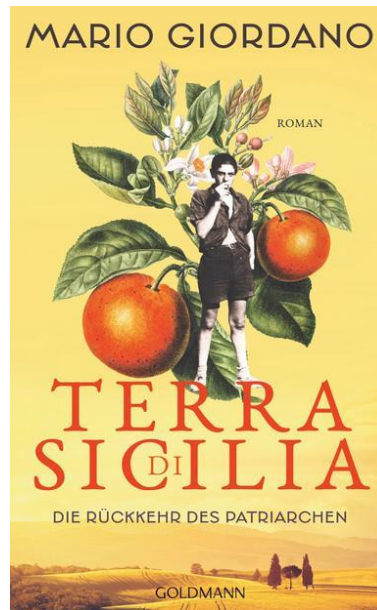
A German-Italian family epic: sensuous, colourful, striking

Spiegel
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR

English sample translation
available

Rights sold prior publication to:
The Netherlands (Signatuur)

Mario Giordano, born in 1963, is an author and screenwriter whose work has been translated into more than 15 languages. His *Auntie Poldi* crime novels are regular bestsellers in Germany and the US, and he is the author of the novel *Das Experiment* ('*Black Box: The Experiment*'), which he later adapted for the big screen. He has also written picture books and YA novels. *Terra di Sicilia* is based on his family's story.



Mario Giordano Terra di Sicilia: Return of the Patriarch

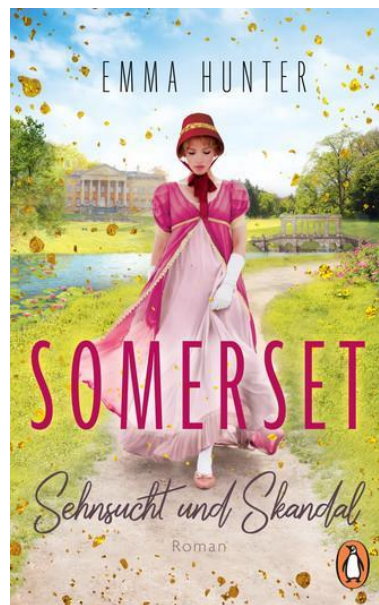
[Terra di Sicilia. Die Rückkehr
des Patriarchen]
Novel

Goldmann
544 pages
March 2022

Barnaba Carbonaro, a young man living in Sicily at the end of the nineteenth century, has a head full of dreams of wealth and plans to create a dynasty. And his dreams come true: clever and courageous, he rises from illiterate pauper to dandy, and ends up a highly regarded citrus fruit merchant. His life is an odyssey marked by both triumphs and utter failure, driven by an insatiable longing. Barnaba has twenty-four children, becomes a rich man and loses everything.

At the end of his long journey, the patriarch looks back at the hungry boy he once was, who went into the world seeking happiness and success. And he realises that, between all those goodbyes and fresh starts, between sweet tangerines and the Bavarian snow, he has achieved something even greater.

The dances are big, the scandals even bigger: welcome to Somerset



Emma Hunter Somerset: Longing and Scandal

[SOMERSET. Sehnsucht und Skandal (1)]

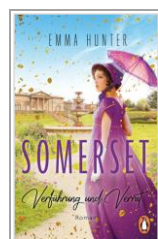
The Somerset saga (Vol. 1)
Novel

Penguin Verlag
560 pages
April 2022

Emma Hunter is the pen name of a popular German author who loves coffee more than anything, just like her heroine Isabella. Emma needs a walk in the fresh air at least once a day (ideally among trees and flowers), and her greatest weakness is probably cream cake – she just can't say no to it. She watches her favourite films and TV series over and over, until she knows the dialogue by heart. Her favourite book is *Jane Eyre*, and England is her favourite holiday destination.

England in the late 18th century. Isabella Woodford has a problem: following a passionate, forbidden night of love with an army officer, her reputation as a virtuous young aristocrat is at risk. She has to cover up the scandal and quickly secure a husband. Equipped with a list of likely candidates, she goes to live with her aunt in the worldly city of Bath, where English high society lights up the night with its glamorous balls. It doesn't take long for Isabella to find her first suitor. But then she meets the rich, stand-offish textile merchant Alexander, who makes her feel something she's never felt before. But Alexander is a confirmed bachelor, determined never to marry. When the army officer reappears to blackmail Isabella about the night they spent together, she has to decide what's more important: her reputation, or love...

Upcoming:



Somerset: Temptation and Treason

Penguin, ca. 500 pp, October 2022

The history of the Lagerfeld family



Heike Koschyk

Happy Days: The Story of the Lagerfelds

[Das Glück unserer Zeit. Der Weg der Familie Lagerfeld]
The Lagerfeld saga (vol. 1)
Novel

Goldmann
416 pages
March 2022

English interview on the historical background of the saga available

Heike Koschyk was born in New York in 1967, and worked in fashion before embarking on a career as an author of thrillers and historical fiction. She travels widely for her books, to visit the locations of real events and scour through archives and old libraries. Under the pseudonym Sophie Bonnet, she has published a number of bestselling crime novels set in Provence.

Hamburg, 1902. Young Otto Lagerfeld emigrates to South America, dreaming of making his fortune as a merchant. On a visit to his family back in Hamburg, he meets his best friend's sister again. Otto is enchanted by Theresia but decides to travel to Vladivostok to sell tinned milk imported from the US. When he finds himself in a Siberian prison – with the four-leaf clover Theresia gave him as ever in his pocket – he knows he has no choice but to break out of prison, if he ever wants to see his family again and fulfil his dreams...

Upcoming:



Happy Days: The Legacy of the Lagerfelds

Goldmann, ca. 400 pp, August 2022

Stunning and atmospheric: against the odds, a woman realises her vision of a world-famous garden on a hill above the Elbe river



Marion Lagoda The Garden Above the Elbe

[Ein Garten über der Elbe]
Novel

C.Bertelsmann
384 pages
March 2022

English reader report available soon

After graduating with a degree in History of Art, **Marion Lagoda** joined the *Rheinische Post* as an intern, and has since contributed to the *Frankfurter Rundschau* among others. She now specialises in nature and garden features for various magazines, and is the author of several gardening books.

Hamburg, 1913. When Hedda takes on the position of head gardener to the Clarenburgs, a Jewish banking family, she has her work cut out. She's the first woman to hold the post at the estate on the Elbe river, and her colleagues – who are all men – regard her with suspicion. The job is physically demanding, too: she's a talented gardener, but the property is vast, and the advent of the First World War brings with it its own challenges. Nevertheless, Hedda succeeds in turning her vision into reality, including the Roman-style amphitheatre that becomes the focus of splendid parties and stage performances. But during the dark days of the 1930s, Hedda, who has Jewish ancestors, and the Clarenburg family find themselves in a precarious position.

Marion Lagoda's expertly researched, vividly written novel – with fascinating descriptions of the garden's flora – tells the fictionalised story of the woman whose real name was Else Hoffa, who created the Warburg family's famous Roman Garden in Hamburg's Blankenese neighbourhood.

From our backlist:



Penguin Verlag, 272 pages
March 2021

English sample translation
available



Dana Grigorcea:

Those Who Never Die

Eerie, profound, archaic – a breathtakingly atmospheric image of post-Communist Romania

Present-day Transylvania. After studying art in Paris, a young Bucharest artist returns to her home in the Romanian Carpathians – the small town of B., where she had spent every summer vacation during her childhood and teenage years with her great aunt among chandeliers and Persian carpets. Today, B. has outlived its glory days. Too many have left for good after the revolution to seek their fortune in Western Europe. The artist returns to an estranged world, one to which she is solely linked to through a few close friends and the strings that tie up her family history.

When a defiled body is found upon the grave of Vlad the Impaler, better known as Dracula, she realises that the past still holds B. tightly in its grip. She wants to tell the place's story even though it eludes her. While, in the beginning, she is afraid of mixing up the chronological order of events, she eventually comes to realise that every order makes sense. Because a story is not about causes and effects but about one thing only: Fate.

Dana Grigorcea paints a breathtakingly atmospheric image of a post-Communist society which still to this day appears to be caught in an intermediate realm. Without any warning at all, she leads her readers into the heart of a horror which can only be conjured by one's own imagination – or by the exigent Count Dracula.

- **Rights sold to:** France (Les Argonautes), Greece (Kichli), Poland (Kobiece), UAE (Kalima), UK/World English (Sandstone Press)
- **Longlisted for the German Book Prize 2021**
- **Awarded the Swiss Literature Prize 2022**
- **Selected by *New Books in German***

Press (selection):

"[Grigorcea] conjures up a new literary genre – the political Gothic novel – and all we can do is wonder why it hasn't been done before." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

"Sure-footed like a sleepwalker and stunningly intricate, Grigorcea's novel weaves numerous historical and narrative threads and layers into and around each other." *taz*

"A marvellously scintillating comedy." *ZEIT Literatur*

"A fantastic, free-floating but rational look at the horrors and everyday life of Romanian society before and after Ceausescu." *Frankfurter Rundschau*

"Grigorcea's vivid and powerfully written novel is a nightmarish fairy tale, thriller and bleak social commentary rolled into one." *kulturnews.de*



btb, 304 pages
September 2021

English sample translation
available

Khuê Phạm:

Brothers and Ghosts

"A groundbreaking work in German literature." *Ocean Vuong*

She is 30 years old and her name is Kieu, like the girl in the most famous work of Vietnamese literature. But she prefers to go by "Kim" because it's easier in Berlin. In 1968, her parents had come to Germany from Saigon. She often wished for a family that didn't have to become German first, but simply was. The loss of her Vietnamese roots has never bothered her. On the contrary. Until she receives a message. On Facebook. From her uncle. Who has been living in California since he fled.

The whole family is supposed to meet for the reading of Kieu's grandmother's will. Kieu does not know these people. To her, the uncles and aunts are as unreal as the spirits of departed ancestors for whom her parents light a few incense sticks on Vietnamese New Year. It becomes a journey full of revelations – about her family, her origins and about herself.

- **Rights sold to:** Iran (Hezar-e Qoqnoos)
- **25.000 copies sold**
- **Selected by *New Books in German***
- **Selected for *Books at Berlinale***

Praise & Press (selection):

"A groundbreaking work in German literature, Phams novel marks a seminal accomplishment that tells the dignified, thorough, and epic story of a Vietnamese family through clear, gem-like sentences and unflinching observations. With Pham's vision, nothing is left unturned and all things are salvaged and lost at once. A courageous and bold achievement by a bright new voice." *Ocean Vuong*

"What Phạm has to say about transgenerational trauma, losing your home and working out who you really are bears comparison to [...] Saša Stanišić." *Deutschlandfunk Kultur "Lesart"*

"One of the most touching aspects of this excellent debut is seeing how Kieu's attitude to her origins slowly changes. [...] A wonderful read." *Der Tagesspiegel*

"An exciting new voice in German literature!" *Emotion*



Blessing, 320 pages
August 2021

Complete English translation
available

Spiegel
BESTSELLER

Jan-Philipp Sendker: *The Rebel and the Thief*

**The moving story of a forbidden love, desperate courage,
and compassion in the face of catastrophe**

18-year-old Niri, his parents and his siblings are living a modest, but secure existence as employees in a wealthy family's villa. But then the pandemic arrives: Niri's whole family is made redundant, and facing abject poverty. Niri has always been a good boy, but he doesn't understand his father's unwillingness to do something about their increasingly desperate circumstances, and refuses to wait for help from an indifferent government.

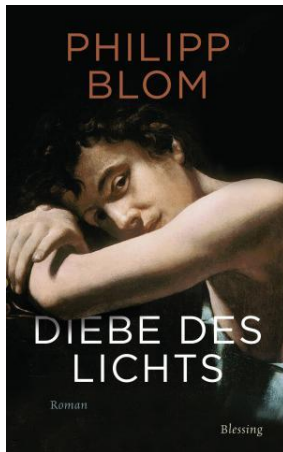
He returns to the villa by night to find food for his family, sneaking past patrols through a city under curfew. At the villa, his childhood friend Mary is waiting for him – and she not only gives him food, but has a plan that will change the city, and them, for ever.

- **Rights sold to:** Albania (Pegi), Finland (Aula & Co.), Iran (Ana Pol), Israel (Armchair Publishers), Italy (Neri Pozza), Latvia (Zvaigzne), Norway (Cappelen Damm), Romania (Prestige), Sweden (Modernista), US/World English (Other Press)
- **Spiegel bestseller: 35.000 copies sold**
- [English video pitch](#) by the author available

Press (selection):

"A bit of Bonnie and Clyde, a touch of Robin Hood – Sendker once again hits his readers deep in the heart, soul and mind!" *WDR 5*

"A rousing novel and perhaps Sendker's most personal book to date."
Buchjournal



Blessing, 480 pages
October 2021

English sample translation
available

Philipp Blom: *The Light-Thieves*

A brilliant historical novel about murder, revenge, love, loyalty and betrayal, set in war-torn sixteenth-century Europe

Sander has been on the run ever since 1572, when he saw his father murdered at the hands of the Spanish invaders in Flanders. He meets a master who teaches him how to paint flowers, while his brother Hugo, who hasn't spoken a word since their parents' death, mixes the paints for him.

But Hugo is as unreliable and quick to anger as he is gentle, and when he commits a violent crime, he and Sander have to flee. They find refuge in an artist's studio in Rome, witness the Pope's dissipation, are caught up in the intrigues proliferating in the Neapolitan cardinal's palace, and – both in their own special way – experience the joy of forbidden love. In the course of their adventures, Sander repeatedly finds a way out of seemingly hopeless situations ...

A major new novel that vividly portrays the Renaissance and its key players, including Giordano Bruno, Caravaggio and high-ranking clerics.

Press (selection):

"[...] a fluently written and immersive epic novel – located somewhere between Umberto Eco's sophisticated literary historical fiction and Iny Lorentz's broad-strokes historical entertainment [...]." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

"Blom's first work of historical fiction is a sensuous panorama of the Italian Renaissance, painted realistically and with old-school dedication, in skilfully mixed colours [...]." *Buchjournal*

"Voluble, atmospheric throughout and written with a light, vivacious touch. [...] An accomplished novel that's a pleasure to read." *Wiener Zeitung*

"Blom once again proves himself an eloquent and intelligent storyteller. [...] His opulent, baroque portrait of this brutal era is sensuous and multifaceted. [...] A luxurious pageturner." *Kleine Zeitung*

"As captivating and compelling as all of Blom's books." *Rainer Volk, SWR2*

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