



Sommerlügen

Bernhard Schlink

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Lebensentwürfe, Liebeshoffnungen, Alterseinsichten – was ist Illusion, und was stimmt? Was bleibt, wenn eine Illusion zerplatzt? Die Flucht in eine andere? Weil das Leben ohne Lebenslügen nicht zu bewältigen ist? Sieben irritierend-bewegende Geschichten von Bernhard Schlink.

Sommerlügen Details

Date : Published August 2010 by Diogenes (first published 2010)

ISBN : 9783257067538

Author : Bernhard Schlink

Format : Hardcover 280 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Fiction, European Literature, German Literature

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Natxo Cruz says

Un bon llibre, al qual val la pena dedicar-hi temps. Sota l'aparença d'un recull d'històries quotidianes hi ha un petit assaig sobre la psicologia de les persones que les impulsa a enganyar-ne altres o a si mateixes i les justificacions que en sorgeixen. Recomanable.

Kristy says

"Can you point me in the direction where I can find more books like this/" I ask the Booksoup salesman.

"And how does a little girl like you come to favor Schlink?"

He had a point. The author, a mid 60-year old Jewish professor of Law or something like that managed to think about love and marriage and torment and jealousy to fit inside the head of a thirty something woman from Los Angeles. It's brilliant and touching. The way he can manage that I mean. The stories leave you itching for more, hoping he will come back to them and fitting yourself right in whether its a jealous man on a budget or the fantasy of a marriage for someone who never gets beyond it. These stories are all from the male perspective, which I totally dig, and reminded me why we not only devour stories like these, but why we share them. We are all connected. It's the only thing that keeps the pulse moving.

Chris says

In the beginning I hated this book. The stories seemed far fetched, the characters self centred and no plot resolution. I almost gave up when the stories started to pull me in. You need to slow down and just absorb without analysis to appreciate this one. Midway through I'd finish a story and look around for someone to discuss it with. Why did the wife walk out? Why is the guy afraid to leave? I hope you enjoy this one too.

Victor Carson says

Although I do not usually read collections of short stories, I have read two of the author's novels, *Homecoming* and *The Reader*, and I did not want to miss any new fiction from Bernhard Schlink. Each of the selections in *Summer Lies* is really a novella, rather than a "short" story. A couple of the early selections seem somewhat incomplete or unresolved, as if they were meant to be only portraits of a particular character and his shallow relationship with his wife or lover. The later selections are much more satisfying, exploring relationships that are much more complex and moving. I particularly like the last three selections, all which deal with much older characters, both men and women, who are confronting end-of-life emotions, while trying to define who they are, how they have lived, the life-altering decisions they made, and their relationships with parents, spouses, children, and grandchildren. The last two selections are particularly intense: a man trying to reconcile with his 82-year old father, with whom he shares only one passion, the love of the music of Bach; and the story of a woman living in an assisted-living facility who has fallen out of love with her children and grandchildren, but leaves on a trip, accompanied by a grown granddaughter, to revisit the town in which she attended university, more than fifty years earlier. This relatively short

audiobook (about 8 hours long) is well worth the reading just for the very best of these selections. The rest is intro and bonus!

Catherine Davison says

I love Schlink's writing. This collection of short stories is unlike another other I've read in that each story explored a similar theme, what does it mean to love, to live with and love another person. The writing is tight and beautiful. I've read it in German & in English, a full five stars in each language!

Metodi Markov says

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Melda Dinçel says

As it would match with the title, I read the book on my summer holiday. Within two days I was travelling from New York to Norway, Frankfurt to Amsterdam. Each story was perfect with its plot, characters, setting

I noticed in some of the reviews that different readers liked different stories. I think this owes to the fact that Schlink has such masterful control over his characters. He creates fascinating but realistic situations for them and it is only human that some of these situations, more than others, will reverberate for his readers.

“It was the following evening before Kate asked him why the phone and the Internet weren’t working. In the mornings and early afternoons she allowed nothing to interfere with her writing, and didn’t pay attention to her emails until late afternoon.”

In *The Last Summer*, a terminally ill man, Thomas Wellmer, looks back on his life. Finally he has found some happiness, particularly in regards to his grandchildren and plans how he will end his life and minimise the impact on his family. He will just slip away. “When he had imagined his last evening, he had imagined it as being pain free. Now he realised it wasn’t simple to decide on the right evening. The longer it went on and the worse he got, the less often there would be pain-free evenings, and the more welcome and indispensable they would be. How could he relinquish such an evening to death?”

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Then we come to my favorite stinker: "The House in the Forest." Here a male writer who is overshadowed by his more successful spouse, also a writer, moves the family five hours out of New York so her fame won't

distract her so much. Kind of him. He even goes as far as knocking out the telephone line to their house so no one will tell her she's won "the American Book Award." All this ends up in a car accident and a split. Some marriage.

Throughout these tales, the question of control often presents itself. Our writer friend clearly is a controller. The jealous girlfriend? A controller. In the next story, "Stranger in the Night," a con artist bewilders an otherwise intelligent chap...in other words, he controls him, quite implausibly.

Same thing in spades in "The Last Summer." Here we have a man dying of cancer who wants his family around him at his country house for one last summer before the pain becomes so great that he will drink a potion that will kill him as kindly as falling asleep. Of course, he doesn't want anyone to know this is his plan. And of course, his wife finds out. End of his control over the situation. The wife and the family abandon him. Really? He's quite ill, can barely peck out a letter apologizing, but somehow he manages to do so, and in addition, he locks up the poison and throws away the key.

I had hopes for "The Last Summer" until this peculiarly happy unhappy ending presented itself.

The same control-freak reappears in the next story, "Johann Sebastian Bach on Ruegen". Here he's a father with a son desperate to get to know him. The son batters him pretty hard about this, but no luck; when dad cries over a Bach CD's beauty, a true show of emotion, he offers no explanation why.

Now the last story, "The Journey to the South." This is another end-of-life story that does have an interesting twist when a granddaughter snookers her highly controlled grandmother into meeting, after decades, the man who was the true love of her life. This is hard on the old lady, but good for her. After facing her own role in undermining a passionate youthful romance, she confronts many of the highly controlled consequences that followed: chiefly, becoming a dutiful, exploited, betrayed wife and grandmother. The way she snaps at her kids and grandkids about this is shocking but actually happens from time to time. Be wary of old folks ready to tell the truth. Their tongues can cut.

Fiction is "made up," of course, but it can't read as though it's "made up." It has to emerge from psychic ground to which it remains true. Schlink almost has the life experience and writing skills to slip past this requirement, but not quite. His fame in Europe and the U.S. rests on a novel called *The Reader*, which I haven't read. It's possible that a novel's requirements for sustained commitment forced him to turn out good fiction in *The Reader*. In the case of the short story, however, he may simply be writing with too much facility and too little heart.

To read more of my comments on contemporary fiction, please take a look [Tuppence Reviews](#), recently

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I love a good collection of short stories. Bernhard Schlink is a fabulous writer. Some of these stories were fantastic, and others failed to live up to their promise.

Takové rychlé žetní. Pár povídek o trapných, malých, velkých, neškodných i zraňujících lžích z nevěry. Všechny příběhy i poškozených tu nehraje roli.

I absolutely loved this book, and will be reading more of this German author in the future. His stories present

a masculine perspective on a variety of relationships; married, single, and dating. Looking back, these stories, while serious, were also quite touching and humor surfaces here and there. Each story had a male narrator except for one, and this elderly woman character is herself quite manly. I found her most fascinating as she reflects on her choices in life and how she chooses to go on. I think this is really the theme tying all the stories together, which is... how do we choose to go on? Do our choices really matter?

Dacko says

Vešto napisane priče, od onih u kojima zaista možemo mariti za junake, i sve što je opisano baš je dobro opisano, s lakoćom se može zamisliti, ali meni nekako ne odgovara Šlinkov senzibilitet, otud tri zvezdice: priče su školski dobre i sa zadovoljstvom sam ih pročitale, ali me ne pomeraju i kao da sam ih zaboravila već kad sam sklopila korice.
