

Marcel Beyer**Kaltenburg - Novel****Sold to**

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Marcel Beyer was born and raised in Cologne. The author of several novels and collections of poems, he has received numerous awards and was named one of the best young novelists in the world by *The New Yorker*. He lives in Dresden.

About

Marcel Beyer has written a grand new novel, a panorama spanning German history from the 1930s up to the present. Like in his successful *Flughunde (The Karnau Tapes)*, Marcel Beyer so skilfully interweaves the personal with the historical that we follow spellbound the catastrophic course of events in 20th-century Germany.

The ornithologist Hermann Funke, the first-person narrator, relates two histories: his own, and that of the zoologist Ludwig Kaltenburg. Born in 1903, Kaltenburg is working in Poznan when he first meets Hermann, then still a child, in the late 1930s. After the collapse of the Third Reich, they meet again in Dresden, to where Hermann fled with his parents in 1945. The traumatic night of bombs experienced after his arrival leaves him orphaned, and determines his future: the child who in February 1945 watched birds drop in flames from the sky goes on to become an ornithologist.

In post-war Dresden, Ludwig Kaltenburg establishes a zoological institute that wins international renown. He becomes a kind of father figure to Hermann Funke, who is now the institute's most important employee. How do the two scientists – one established, the other with his future before him – experience in Dresden the founding and subsequent strengthening of the GDR, what unexpected turns do their lives take, why does Kaltenburg turn his back on the GDR, and how does Funke see the ultimate collapse of his state?

Marcel Beyer describes in detail the situation in East Germany through the activities of the biologist and the ornithologist and their circle of acquaintances. The end is the story with which the book begins: The ornithologist, pensioned, sits alone in the natural science museum in Dresden.

Praise

»*Kaltenburg* is a masterly recollection of modern history with the means of the novel,

a book which surpasses Beyer's much-praised *Flughunde* (*The Karnau Tapes*) of 1995.« *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

»A novel written against the grain of the comfort offered by storytelling. The considered and durable construction makes it scarcely comparable with any other recent work of German literature. And precisely for that reason, *Kaltenburg* cuts the ground from under the reader's feet.« *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

»A book of stories that promises to remove a curse on history through the power of language - the curse of silence.« *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

»*Kaltenburg* is a touching, thrilling and suggestive novel that meanders through the times remote from any shouting, and in the process brings to light the human being in all his poverty, passion, rage, sadness. « *taz*

»This challenging, beautifully written metafiction - to some extent based on the life of Nobel Prize winner Konrad Lorenz - examines the workings of science and the nature of academic competition. Award-winning German novelist Beyer ranges over the decades from Nazism to communism to a reunited Germany to reveal our ability both to remember and to recast unpleasant memories in a more favorable light, and to show what people must hide in order to survive.« *Library Journal*

»This mesmerizing foray into postwar Germany by celebrated author Beyer (*Spies*) is both a singularly researched work of historical fiction (with an ornithological bent), and a postmodern examination of the nature of memory. [...] Beyer paints an engrossing and terrifying picture of Dresden during the war and later under the Communist yoke. Yet it is Beyer's complex interpolation of daily memories - sometimes fused or distorted in a Proustian vein - complete with highly detailed ornithological observations that give this work its exquisite flavor.« *Publishers Weekly*

»Beyer's deeply philosophical, lyrically complex depiction of this harrowing period draws refined parallels between aberrant animal behavior and its human counterpart in the aftermath of armed conflict and government repression.« *Booklist*