

Christoph Hein

Portrait of a Son With Father

Novel



(German title: Glückskind mit Vater)

ca. 527 pages

Clothbound

2016



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Born in 1944, Christoph Hein lives in Berlin. He has written novels, novellas, short stories, plays, essays and children's books. His most recent novels were on the *Spiegel* bestseller list for weeks. His recent awards include the 2019 Prix du Meilleur livre étranger (for *Glückskind mit Vater*), the 2019 Samuel Bogumil Linde Prize and the 2017 Grimmelshausen Prize.

Awards (selection):2019: Prix du Meilleur livre étranger (for *Glückskind mit Vater*)

2019: Samuel Bogumil Linde Prize

2017: Grimmelshausen

Sold to

Arabic world rights (Sefsafa), **France** (Métailié), **Italy** (e/o), **Denmark** (Gyldendal), **Bulgaria** (Atlantis)

Domestic Rights Sales: **German Audiobook** (DAV), **German Entire Radio Reading** (MDR)

Winner of the Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger 2019

About

What does Konstantin Boggosch, whom his mother described as »child of fortune«, owe to his father? In Christoph Hein's new novel, which mobilises all the registers of his storytelling prowess and his historical diagnostic skills, the father is the driving force. But by no means in a positive sense: ever since his birth in 1945, the son, now growing up in the early days of the GDR, has been trying to get away from his war criminal father: psychologically, physically, professionally, geographically, even in his love life.

He makes numerous attempts to step outside his father's shadow: he assumes a new name, tries to join the Foreign Legion in Marseilles, moves back to the GDR just after the Wall had been built, but isn't allowed to finish secondary school there; nevertheless, he is able to make the most of fortunate circumstances – he is a »child of fortune« after all – to become the principal of a grammar school by the end of the GDR. A success story... almost.

In the end he realises that an emancipation from collective and his personal history is doomed to failure. The imbrications of past and present make the child of fortune into a child of misfortune. And in this way he comes to embody all the political, social, and private realities of Germany. With irony and humour, movingly but without sentimentality or sarcasm, Christoph Hein tells the story of an extraordinary and yet paradigmatic life over more than sixty years of German history.

Praise

»[A] compassionate and honest review of human failings – and virtues.« *New Books in German*

»Beautifully translated and an absolutely recommendable robbery novel.« *Weekendavisen* (Denmark)

»Warmly recommended« *Jyllands-Posten* (Denmark, four star review)

Literature Prize

2013: Stefan Heym Prize

2012: Uwe Johnson Prize

2010: Eichendorff Literature

Prize

2008: Walter Hasenclever

Literature Prize

2004: Schiller Memorial Prize

of the State of Baden-

Württemberg

2002: Austrian State Prize for

European Literature

2000: Solothurner Literature

Prize

1998: Peter Weiss Prize of the

City of Bochum

1994: Order of Merit of the

Federal Republic of Germany

1990: Erich Fried Prize

(Vienna)

1983: Deutscher Kritikerpreis

»Stirring« *Politiken* (Denmark, four star review)»Detailed storytelling with clear psychological depth and resonance.« *Information*»*Portrait of a Son With Father* is a grand realistic novel.« *Kristeligt Dagblad*
(Denmark, four star review)»Christoph Hein has written a great, intelligent, a gripping novel about the time since World War II up until our present, about East Germany, which then becomes the GDR, and also about the Western post-war Germany.« Rose-Maria Gropp,
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung»Portrait of a Son With Father is a novel in sepia, a dystopia of the political and the private [...] It's the people living in a country so disfigured it is hardly recognisable, who make this novel so vivid.« Paul Jandl, *DIE WELT*»... a special kind of adventure novel, one from whose 500 gripping pages one cannot withdraw.« Katrin Hillgruber, *Der Tagesspiegel*»[Christoph Hein] sees himself as a chronicler, his narration close to reality, rummages in the quarry of his own biography and condenses 45 years of German history up until the reunification in 1989« Cornelia Zetzsche, *BR2 Kultur aktuell*»A great German novel« Christian Buß, *Spiegel Online*»With *Portrait of a Son With Father*, Hein presents a [...] profound novel on Germany« *Tip Berlin*»*Portrait of a Son With Father* truly is the ›new great novel on Germany‹ ...« *Südkurier*»A great novel by a great narrator.« *myself*