Daniel Mellem
The Invention of the Countdown

A story of human longing and failure, German history, and the ethics of science

Against his father’s will, Hermann Oberth moves to Göttingen in 1920 in order to study physics – the most exciting science of his age in the most exciting city there is. Hermann wants to turn the human dream of sending rockets to the moon into reality. The young man is considered very talented, but right before his major breakthrough, funding for his research is stopped.

It now falls to Hermann’s wife Tilla to keep their lives above water until Wernher von Braun, a member of the SS Corps becomes interested in Hermann’s work. Instead of moon rockets, Hermann is invited to help develop a retaliatory weapon for the Nazis to use. Hermann and Tilla are suddenly confronted with the question of their own personal responsibility when faced by the march of history. This question becomes all the more important when they lose both their son Julius and their daughter Ilse to the war.

In a countdown from 10 to 0, we follow a narrative about human errors, setbacks, and people picking themselves back up again. Scientific ethics come alive in this story plucked from modern history.

- The improbable, yet true, story of physicist Hermann Oberth
- A young, prize-winning author
- Daniel Mellem (Ph.D., physics) is able to conceive and write about science in an intriguing and relatable manner

Alena Schröder
Young Woman, Standing by the Window, Evening Light, Blue Dress

The heritage of our mothers

Berlin, 2017: 27-year-old Hannah finds a letter from a lawyer, identifying her as possible heir to a Jewish art collection which had been confiscated under the Nazi regime. However, this is the first time the young student hears anything about possible Jewish roots. And why has her beloved grandmother Evelyn, her only living relative, never lost a word about the past?

Rostock, 1924: 18 year-old Senta Köhler unintentionally falls pregnant by a highly decorated war hero from WWI. They do get married but the marriage fails within two years. In the end, Senta’s husband will only agree to a divorce if Senta leaves their daughter, Evelyn, with him, thus forcing her to decide between her freedom and her child.

Berlin 1927: The metropolis is the hub of life itself and more specifically of a new life for Senta who has found work at a newspaper and quickly rises from typist to journalist. She marries a Jewish colleague, Julius Goldmann, whose father is a respected art dealer and enters Berlin’s vibrant art and culture scene. When the Nazis rise to power, Senta and her husband decide to flee abroad, leaving everything behind… their family as well as priceless pieces of art. Young Woman, Standing by the Window, Evening Light, Blue Dress by Vermeer becomes the epitome of loss for Senta, as she will not see any of them ever again.

Interweaving the fate of these women, Alena Schröder empathically traces the question of how we deal with our personal history and the legacy of our ancestors.

- A page-turning read for fans of Dörte Hansen and Annette Hess
- An exciting setting well-known and beloved from the series Babylon Berlin
Ricarda Raspe and her fiancé are delightedly expecting their first child. But then the birth at a Dresden hospital takes a turn for the worse, and Ricarda’s baby dies. According to the regulations, she can’t even see her child’s body one last time. Such is daily life in the GDR in 1973. And yet Ricarda Raspe doesn’t believe that her baby has died. She is more firmly convinced that her child has been the target of a government-sanctioned abduction. Young police officer Thomas Rust, an eyewitness of the dramatic incident, is also suspicious and jumps headfirst into a very dangerous investigation. Sixteen years later, young Claudia Behling starts her own search for the truth of her heritage and for the woman who supposedly gave her away at birth – her mother.

The sea is the source of all life – and it conceals a deadly threat

In her company car, highly respected scientist and Minister of the Interior Dr. Patricia Kohlbeck hurries without stopping into the Spree River. Her daughter Maja is sitting in the passenger seat and the last sentence she hears before her mother drowns is: “You can't trust anyone. They're all involved.”

Maja dies as well, but a short time later, she wakes up unhurt – in a body bag in the hospital. How could this happen? She sets off in search of answers, which she gets from various people, including Prof. Arthur Stein, her mother’s long-time research partner and lover. And then there is Efrail, who pulled Maja out of the sinking car. She feels strongly attracted to the young man – but she doesn’t know yet that he is actually the enemy.

As Maja tries to find answers, one devastating natural disaster after another happens. And against her will, she ends up caught up in a conflict generated by lies, intrigue and power struggles, the consequences of which will be fatal.

- Brilliantly written, bestselling author Anne Freytag focuses on one of the most controversial topics of our age: environmental destruction
- Deep, authentic characters and special twists
Clarita von Trott zu Solz sets a pail beside her bed in which she can quickly burn dangerous documents if needed. Annedore Leber has fought for years to get her husband freed from prison. Freya von Moltke and Marion von Yorck transport secret documents back and forth between their estates in Eastern Germany and Berlin. However, more than anything else, the women provide the facade of private gatherings behind which their husbands grapple with what a sustainable post-war future for Germany and Europe could look like. When Count von Moltke is arrested, most of the others throw their lots in with von Stauffenberg, deciding that the future cannot be ushered in without an assassination.

A fascinating novel about the members of the Kreisau Circle and the civilian arm of the July 20 conspiracy. Thoroughly researched, this book provides a powerful commentary on what counts as “something worthwhile” through its diverse narrative perspectives.

- A deeply moving novel about the people – particularly the women – involved in the German Resistance
- Vivid, lived history in an intriguing novel

IN THE SAME SERIES

But Some Did (vol. I)
448 pages
Pub. date 2019

The Night has Twelve Hours (vol. III)
To be published in 2021

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Things We Said Today
- Shortlisted for the German Book Prize

480 pages
Pub. date 2012
WOMEN’S FICTION

Marlene Averbeck
Lichtenstein’s –
Department Store of Dreams
The Lichtenstein Trilogy (vol. I)

Where dreams are at home

“There it was again – that inner trembling, the flickering anticipation, the burgeoning pride. This was where the heart of Berlin’s fashion world beat.”

1913. In the heart of Berlin, Lichtenstein’s offers a wide assortment of items, mainly in the category of respectable women’s clothing. The small department store is a diverse microcosm in which the paths of vastly different people cross. Shop girl Hedi plunges into the world of fashion, while seamstress Thea only has eyes for Ludwig, the younger Lichtenstein son, who wishes to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, his brother Jacob has big plans for how he will lead Lichtenstein’s into the future against the overwhelming competition within the city. Despite widespread resistance, he starts to implement his ideas. But then Lichtenstein’s goes up in flames – along with the livelihood of all its employees and owners ...

• The dramatic opening to an epic trilogy about a Berlin department store
• A shimmering world full of wishes, hopes and fears
• For readers of Anne Jacobs and Carmen Korn, and fans of Downton Abbey

480 pages
August 2020

Felicity Whitmore
The Thread of the Past
The Hampton Hall Trilogy (vol. I)

Lady Abigail’s secret diaries

Who was Lady Abigail Hampton, and what actually happened 180 years ago? Did she leap to her death after her lover Oliver Rashleigh was hanged for the murder of her brother-in-law George?

When Crown prosecutor Melody Stewart relocates to an old family property, an industrial-era villa called Abigail’s Place, she stumbles across her ancestor’s diaries in a secret chamber. Fascinated, she follows the threads of her past back to the year 1841, to Hampton Hall and the smart, resourceful woman who rebelled against her fate.

• The first volume in a trilogy about the strong women of Hampton Hall
• Romantic and opulent woman’s fiction structured around artfully intertwined time periods
• For readers of Lucinda Riley and Kate Morton
• Felicity Whitmore’s total sales at dtv: 87,000 copies

464 pages
November 2020

Press Acclaim

“A romantic, suspenseful page-turner.” Bild

“A combination of a modern mystery and a historical novel. Felicity Whitmore’s style is both tense and captivating.” Fantasía
**Astrid Ruppert**

**Wild Years (vol. II)**

480 pages  
October 2020

"I wish I had been a good mother to you"

In the waning years of the 1960s, young Paula – chomping at the bit to escape the provincial world of her Hessian hometown and the clutches of her bitterly silent mother Charlotte – runs away. She lands on her feet as a singer and actress in London during the wild Seventies. Even when she becomes pregnant and her husband leaves her, she refuses to tell her parents the truth.

The only kindred spirit Paula has is her aged grandmother Lisette. Against all disapproval and reproof, Paula raises her daughter Maya on her own. However, she fails to notice that the girl is increasingly growing apart from her… until the day Maya announces that she is moving to Germany immediately to live with her grandmother Charlotte, to the town that Paula left years before in protest.

- A novel about the special bond that holds grandmothers, mothers and daughters together despite all differences
- For readers of Elena Ferrante

**Astrid Ruppert** worked as a dramatic consultant and producer for television productions after completing her degree in literature. She lives in the countryside, and works as an author and screenwriter.

**Linus Geschke – Alexander Born series**

**Tannenstein (vol. I)**

When the Hiker comes, people die: eleven in the remote town of Tannenstein near the Czech border, then a gas station attendant in the Harz region, and a real estate agent in the Allgäu area. The killer materializes out of nowhere, murders without warning, and vanishes without a trace. The only person who stands in the Hiker’s way is Alexander Born, an ex-cop turned criminal. Years ago, the Hiker killed his girlfriend, and now Born wants revenge. He soon finds himself embroiled in a hunt that will end where everything started: in Tannenstein.

Rights sold: Poland

**Finsterthal (vol. II)**

Young women are being abducted and then murdered despite the payment of ransoms. Is this an act of revenge against their fathers, who have made their fortunes through illegal business dealings? Ex-cop Alexander Born appears on the scene, along with his former colleague Carla Diaz, to hunt down the man who calls himself “The Darkness”. However, in this game of lies and betrayal, nothing is as it seems, and Born is forced to eventually admit that it would have been better if he hadn’t opened the gates to hell.

**Engelsgrund (vol. III)**

Highly alarmed, Carla Diaz, Born’s former colleague from the vice squad, turns to the ex-cop. Two prostitutes, members of the Cernunnos sect – to which Carla’s daughter Malin also belongs – have been found murdered. Carla cannot reach Malin inside the cult. Born’s attempt to rescue her also fails. And so Born brings his old adversary Andrej Wolkow, who owes him a favour, on board. The Russian sends in a young killer who manages to slip into the cult. But Wolkow is playing a double game on the side...

- A sweeping family saga and touching read

**Press Acclaim**

“A cool cop thriller about street justice.” Playboy

“A thriller that plays in the same league as Jo Nesbo and Stieg Larsson.” Aachener Nachrichten

“A sensation!” BR

“A knockout thriller.” WDR 2 Krimittipp

- Spiegel bestseller trilogy: 40,000 copies of vol. I & II sold
- For readers of Ian Rankin and Tess Gerritsen
- Intense suspense and explosive action guaranteed: with ex-cop Alexander Born who follows his own moral code

**In the same series**

**Days of Light** (vol. I)

480 pages  
Pub. date 2019

**A Place Called Home** (vol. III)

464 pages  
January 2021

To be published in 2021

**IN ENGLISH**

**SAMPLE TRANSLATION AVAILABLE**

**Press Acclaim**

“A sweeping family saga and touching read.” www.literaturmarkt.info
You escaped. But your nightmare has just begun.

A windowless shack in the woods. Lena’s life and that of her two children follows the rules set by their captor, the father: meals, bathroom visits, study time are strictly scheduled and meticulously observed. He protects his family from the dangers lurking in the outside world and makes sure that his children will always have a mother to look after them.

One day Lena manages to flee – but the nightmare continues. It seems as if her tormentor wants to get back what belongs to him. And then there is the question whether she really is the woman called ‘Lena’, who disappeared without a trace over thirteen years ago. The police and Lena’s family are all desperately trying to piece together a puzzle that doesn’t quite seem to fit.

- **Spiegel** bestseller: 250,000 copies sold
- Best sold thriller debut in Germany in 2019
- For fans of *Gone Girl* and the Academy Award-winning motion picture *Room*

Rights sold to 19 languages:

- English World Rights, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey

**PRAISE**

- “A peerless exercise in suspense”
  *Financial Times*

- “Claustrophobic, terrifying and fiercely compelling”
  *Daily Mail*

- “Hausmann makes you care about her characters even while they keep you guessing”
  *Sunday Express*

- “Intelligent and original”
  *Sunday Independent*
Helene Sommerfeld

Those in Darkness Drop From Sight

After the dark years of World War I, the glamour and new-found radiance of the metropolis Berlin is attracting people from all over the world. Among them is Magda Fuchs, who hopes for a fresh start in life after losing both husband and child. However, working for the police as a pediatrician and gynaecologist, she is confronted with the underbelly of the dazzling city. Every day she sees the bitter fate of orphaned and starving children. Realizing that these are virtually sold into slavery with the police looking the other way, Magda decides to fight for those who have to live in the shadows.

The doctor courageously takes on this world of corruption and crime, thereby reclaiming her own life and, unexpectedly, receives support from the abrasive social worker, Ina Dietrich, as well as the rather erratic but dedicated young police inspector, Kuno Mehring.

Helene Sommerfeld’s novel unfolds with a caleidoscope of strong women struggling to find their place in a world of extremes – Berlin in the Roaring Twenties.

c. 432 pages
To be published in February 2021

---

Christoph Wortberg

Trauma – No Escape (vol. I)

Into the abyss of the human soul

A body has been found in a quarry pond close to Munich. Superintendent Katja Sand and her assistant Rudi Dorfmüller head the investigation. The victim was a petty officer on a naval corvette – and couldn’t swim. Was it suicide? Then another corpse is discovered, this time in a refrigerator at a recycling facility.

The detectives soon learn that both men had been clients of well-known psychoanalyst Dr. Alexander Hanning, who was helping them cope with personal traumas. The parallels between the two causes of death are also striking: In both instances, a severely traumatized man died under strange circumstances which were reminiscent of the catalyst event that had caused his personal trauma. In order to figure out the role Dr. Hanning might have played in these crimes, Katja becomes a patient at his practice. And finds herself in mortal danger.

c. 352 pages
To be published in February 2021