



by Matthias Jügler

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Fiction

The English language translation rights to the book have sold.

This page will be updated once an English language translation is published.

Mayfly Season

Maifliegenzeit

review

A gripping and tense tale of a father-son reunion, dealing with a deeply sinister yet little-known GDR phenomenon.

Hans and Katrin have a son, Daniel, in 1978, but the day after the birth, doctors tell the couple the baby has died from a weak heart on the way to the children's hospital. Katrin is convinced the doctors are lying and Daniel is still alive; she leaves Hans a few weeks later.

Shortly before Katrin's death from cancer in 1987, she talks again to Hans again about Daniel, asking Hans to find him if there is ever the opportunity. When the GDR collapses, Hans requests the files on Daniel but is fobbed off.

Thirty years later, Hans tells his new partner, Anne, about the doubts over Daniel, and she urges him to go back to the hospital. This time he is given the files, but almost everything in them is blacked out. He visits a doctor who says that it looks as if the baby was healthy and is unlikely to have died. Delving further, Hans meets with resistance or silence and is forced to halt his quest again.

Anne joins a Facebook group aiming to connect adopted children with their parents and Daniel, now Martin, contacts her. Hans travels to Leipzig to meet him; Martin, very much in charge, proposes a walk around a lake but dismisses Hans's suggestion of bringing his fishing rods in order to share his hobby with his son. Martin's adoptive

parents have died; he is angry when Hans denies that he and Katrin gave him away. He refuses to see Hans again. Will the two of them ever be reconciled?

The tense narrative is interspersed with fishing tales that give a sense of the turning of the seasons and lighten the mood while maintaining the suspense. Jügler's clear and unemotional style is reminiscent of the sparse stories of Clare Keegan.

Listen to translator Jo Heinrich reading a sample translation from Matthias Jügler's *Mayfly Season*. This video is available as part of the [New Books in German playlist](#) on the [Translators Aloud](#) YouTube channel.

press quotes

Jügler gives an entire generation a voice, and finds words for the horrors of East Germany on which many families have remained silent for decades.

NDR Kultur

This edgy and empathetic tale, based around a little-known inhuman East German policy that tore families apart, is often interspersed with and lightened by some charming nature writing, and kept me on the edge of my seat until the very last pages.

Jo Heinrich

about the author



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Matthias Jügler, born in 1984, has degrees in Scandinavian studies and History of Art from Greifswald and Oslo and in Creative Writing from the Institute of Literature in Leipzig. His novels *Raubfischen* ('Predatory fishing', 2015) and *Die Verlassenen* ('The Forsaken', 2021) have been awarded numerous prizes. In 2022, he won the Klopstock Book Prize, and in 2023 he was appointed Halle's writer-in-residence. He lives in Leipzig with his family, and is also a freelance editor.

Previous works: *Die Verlassenen*, Penguin (2021); *Wir. Gestern. Heute. Hier.*, Piper (2020); *Wie wir leben wollen*, Suhrkamp (2016); *Raubfischen*, Blumenbar (2015).

Find out more: matthiasjuegler.de

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Contact: Gesche Wendebourg

gesche.wendebourg@penguinrandomhouse.de

Tel: +49 (0)89 41363313

www.penguinrandomhouse.de