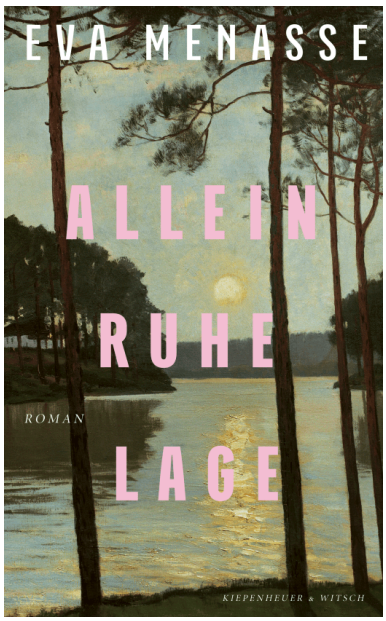


by Eva Menasse
Kiepenheuer & Witsch
August 2026 / 224pp
Fiction

Seclusion

Alleinruhelage

review

A poignant, witty novel about memory, home and the painful process of letting go, ‘Seclusion’ follows a woman as she prepares to sell the country house that has shaped her adult life.

Returning to her beloved but dilapidated second home in eastern Germany after a long absence, the unnamed narrator resolves to clear decades of accumulated possessions before finally putting it on the market. The house becomes a repository of memories as she sorts through cupboards, gardens and forgotten corners, recalling the collapse of her marriage, the raising of her children, later love affairs and the family relationships that have defined her life. Years earlier, determined to sell the property for the first time, she had hired Alla and Bolek, a resilient Moldovan-Polish couple, to restore the neglected house and garden. Their extraordinary efforts transformed the property so completely that she abandoned the sale. Now, over a decade later, she returns to finish what she began.

As the narrator revisits her memories, the house itself becomes a silent companion, bearing witness to decades of emotion and reinvention. The practical task of clearing and repairing the property gives way to reflections on inheritance, ageing and belonging. Alla and Bolek emerge as unforgettable characters whose humour and hard-earned optimism spotlight the novel’s exploration of migration, class and the lingering social divides between East and West Germany. The emotional power of the novel comes

from its accumulation of everyday moments that reveal how deeply people become connected to the places they inhabit.

Structured as a series of fluid, associative recollections, ‘Seclusion’ moves effortlessly between present and past, allowing objects and architectural details to unlock whole chapters of the narrator’s life. Menasse writes with characteristic intelligence, blending conversational warmth, understated melancholy and flashes of sharp comedy. The result is an elegant meditation on the ways in which houses preserve memory long after relationships have faded, and on the liberating, if painful, act of saying goodbye.

Following the international success of *Dunkelblum* (*Darkenbloom*, tr. Charlotte Collins, Scribe UK, 2024), Menasse once again demonstrates her remarkable ability to weave intimate personal stories into a broader reflection on contemporary Europe. ‘Seclusion’ will appeal to readers of Rachel Cusk’s *Outline* trilogy and Elizabeth Strout’s *My Name Is Lucy Barton* for its psychologically astute narrator, while its exploration of architectural memory and the lives embedded within a single house recalls Jenny Erpenbeck’s *Visitation*.

Find out more:
https://www.kiwi-verlag.de/verlag/rights/book/eva-menasse-alleinruhelage-9783462002621

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press quotes

> *Playful and sharp at the same time. A bow to Margaret Atwood's 'Moral Disorder'.*

Donna Kultur

> *A quiet and brilliantly told novel whose themes and imagery continue to resonate long after reading.*

Die Presse online

> *A novel that speaks volumes about life in the liberal middle class and the complexities of East-West German relations.*

Oberösterreichische Nachrichten

about the author



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Eva Menasse was born in Vienna in 1970 and has lived in Berlin for over twenty-five years. She has published several bestselling novels, short story collections, and essay collections. Her accolades include the Heinrich Böll Prize, the Friedrich Hölderlin Prize, the Jonathan Swift Prize, the Austrian Book Prize, the Ludwig Börne Prize, and a fellowship at the Villa Massimo in Rome. Her books have sold over 500,000 copies and have been translated into fourteen languages.

Previous works: *Alles und nichts sagen*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch (2023); *Dunkelblum*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch (2021) (*Darkenbloom*, tr. Charlotte Collins, Scribe UK, 2024); *Der Holocaust vor Gericht*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch (2017); *Tiere für Fortgeschrittene*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch

(2017) (*Animals: Eight studies for Experts*, tr. Simon Pare, Seagull Books, 2024) ; *Lieber aufgeregt als abgeklärt*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch (2015); *Quasikristalle*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch (2013); *Lässliche Sünden*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch (2009); *Vienna,* Kiepenheuer & Witsch (2005).

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