



by Thomas Hürlimann
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Fiction

The Red Diamond

Der Rote Diamant

review

The Red Diamond is a philosophical literary comedy set in a Benedictine Abbey during the second half of the twentieth century. It follows a group of teenage students as they search for the legendary red diamond, believed to be hidden in the abbey.

The combination of its immersive atmosphere and colourful characters, and its mix of comedy and philosophy, make this novel an instant hit. *The Red Diamond's* historical and religious background and philosophical overtones will appeal to fans of Umberto Eco's *The Name of The Rose*, with which it shares themes, characters, and settings.

The plot begins with the protagonist Arthur's arrival as a teenage student at the abbey known as 'Maria zum Schnee' (Mary of the Snows). The opening scenes of the novel also establish Arthur's relationship with his mother. This relationship, as well as Arthur's interactions with his fellow students – who give him the nickname 'Nose' due to his heightened sense of smell – and the religious figures in the abbey, are rich sources of humour in the novel.

During his school years, Arthur develops a close friendship with one of the other students, known as Viper. It is with Viper's encouragement that Arthur becomes embroiled in a hunt for the red diamond, a priceless jewel believed to be hidden at the abbey. Together with a handful of other students, Arthur and Viper go to

great lengths to discover the whereabouts of the diamond, following various tantalising leads from the religious figures at the abbey.

The novel then jumps forward to a later period in the boys' lives, when Arthur returns to the school. These are some of the most atmospheric scenes in the novel, with Arthur describing the unnerving silence of the abbey whilst reminiscing about his schooldays. He encounters Viper again, who is as intently focussed on uncovering the legendary diamond as ever.

The Red Diamond is an evocative novel with a strong sense of place. Thomas Hürlimann's gifted storytelling, sharp wit and philosophical talents come together to produce a compelling and thoroughly enjoyable read.

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press quotes

This author overwhelms.

Jochen Hieber, FAZ

Hürlimann's latest book is a masterpiece.

Martin Ebel, Basler Zeitung

*[A] book you won't forget any time soon: *The Red Diamond* is an almost breathtakingly good, highly intelligent novel."*

Christoph Schröder, Deutschlandfunk Kultur

*The Swiss writer's novel *The Red Diamond* is a masterpiece.*

Jochen Hieber, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

The Red Diamond is a downright breathtakingly good, highly intelligent novel.

Christoph Schröder, Deutschlandfunk Kultur

about the author

Thomas Hürlimann was born in 1950 in Zug, Switzerland. He studied philosophy in Zurich and at the FU in Berlin. He has written several plays as well as the novels *Heimkehr*, *Vierzig Rosen* and *Der große Kater* (made into a film starring Bruno Ganz), the novellas *Fräulein Stark* and *Das Gartenhaus*, as well as the short story collection *Die Tessinerin*.

He has received numerous awards for his drama, fiction, and essays, including the Joseph Breitbach, the Thomas Mann, and the Hugo Ball prizes. He was awarded the Gottfried Keller Prize in 2019.

Hürlimann is a corresponding member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, the German Academy for Language and Poetry, and the Academy of Arts in Berlin. His work has been translated into 21 languages. After many years in Berlin, he has now returned to his homeland.

Other works: Abendspaziergang mit dem Kater (An Evening Walk with the Tomcat), S. Fischer Verlag (2020); Heimkehr (Homecoming), S. Fischer Verlag (2018); Nietzsches Regenschirm, S. Fischer Verlag (2015); Der Sprung in den Papierkorb, Ammann (2008); Himmelsöhi, hilf!, Ammann (2002); Fräulein Stark, Ammann (2001); Dämmerchoppen, Ammann (2009); Vierzig Rosen, Ammann (2006); Der große Kater, Ammann (1998); Die Satellitenstadt, Ammann (1992); Das Gartenhaus, Ammann (1989); Die Tessinerin, Ammann (1981).

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