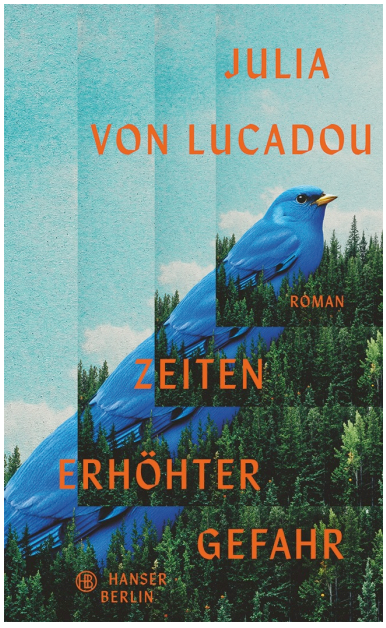


by Julia von Lucadou
Hanser Verlag
August 2026 / 224pp
Fiction

Times of Heightened Danger

Zeiten erhöhter Gefahr

review

Julia von Lucadou's novel follows Jot, a middle-aged man working for a company that sells physical security infrastructure, from panic rooms to large-scale bunkers, to wealthy clients. Jot is responsible for an important American client who wants his art collection housed in a converted former military bunker. His life is built around planning and control, both professionally and in his own private arrangements for emergencies.

As a boy, Jot attended a Christian boarding school, which allowed him to escape a difficult working-class family home. At a critical point, however, he failed to speak out against a teacher whose abuse of another pupil ultimately led to that pupil's death. Jot has since built mental defences to keep the memory contained. When, as an adult, he comes across a dead body during a morning run, this self-protective structure begins to break down. Police attribute the death to suicide, a conclusion Jot cannot reconcile with what he saw, and he becomes increasingly unable to trust his own memory and perception.

At a party held to unveil the American client's newly-installed art collection inside the bunker, a large Gerhard Richter painting of the Swiss Alps is revealed. Looking closer, Jot sees what appears to be an injured body at the foot of the painted slope. He is overwhelmed, and flees through the bunker's corridors until he comes up against a sealed steel door. The novel's structure mirrors Jot's

flight, tracing his continuing disorientation as he is drawn towards the sealed-off memories of his schooldays.

Narrated by an omniscient voice, the story stays close to Jot's perspective throughout. Chapters are short, with passages describing Jot's mental state written in an increasingly fragmented style that contrasts with the calm, formal register of the rest of the book. The natural world is important to Jot, and his decline is punctuated by recurring images, among them an unusual blue bird, swarms of ladybirds and red kites, and a dead wild boar on the road.

The novel draws on psychological research into false memory and eyewitness unreliability, alongside references to Kafka's *The Trial* and Luigi Cornaro's *Discourses on a Sober Life*, both of which occupy Jot's thoughts without offering him resolution. Questions of guilt, religious faith and inherited trauma run throughout, together with Jot's ongoing awareness of climate change and geological time.

The novel's restrained treatment of memory and guilt recalls Kazuo Ishiguro; its portrait of psychological collapse within controlled, engineered environments will also appeal to readers of J. G. Ballard.

Find out more:
https://www.hanser-literaturverlage.de/en/buch/julia-von-lucadou-zeiten-erhoehter-gefahr-9783446282995-t-6093

press quotes

> *Julia von Lucadou offers a razor-sharp portrait of fear and the need for protection, and of male aggression exercised from a position of power and strength. A finely drawn psychological chamber piece that also captures the anxieties of the present. Held in a state of taut suspense, the novel knows exactly how to strike every note of fear.*

Meike Feßmann, DLF Kultur

> *Julia von Lucadou manages to captivate us with this story from the first page to the last.*

Clara Gauthey, Bieler Tagblatt

> *Julia von Lucadou manages to captivate us with this story from the first page to the last.*

Martina Läubli, NZZ

about the author



© Guido Schiefer, 2026

Julia von Lucadou was born in Heidelberg in 1982, and has a PhD in Film Studies. She works as an assistant director, television commissioner and simulated patient, and lives in Cologne. Her debut novel, *Die Hochhausspringerin* (2018) (*The High-Rise Diver*, tr. Sharmila Cohen, World Editions, 2021), was shortlisted for the Swiss Book Prize and awarded the Swiss Literature Prize. Her highly-praised novel *Tick Tack* was also published by Hanser (2022).

Previous works: *Tick Tack*, Hanser (2022); Die *Hochhausspringerin*, Hanser (2018).

rights information

Carl Hanser Verlag

Contact: Friederike Barakat
friederike.barakat@hanser.de
Tel: +49-89-99830-509

https://www.hanser.de/