



by Annika Büsing
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Fiction

🏆 Shortlisted for
Literaturpreis Ruhr

We'll manage

Wir kommen zurecht

review

Annika Büsing's 'We'll manage' is an empathetic and beautifully written coming-of-age novel that quietly transforms the everyday into something luminous. The novel will appeal to fans of the hit Netflix series, *Adolescence*, as well as readers of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (Simon & Schuster, 1999) and *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher (Penguin Group, 2007).

Told mostly from the perspective of seventeen-year-old Philip, the book explores male adolescence in a seemingly ordinary suburban setting, but does so with emotional intelligence, literary finesse, and a refreshing sensitivity to male friendships and emotional interiority.

Philip is not your typical teenage protagonist. Reflective and considerate, he lives in a well-off but fractured household with a successful surgeon father and a much younger stepmother. His biological mother, who has mental health issues and hovers at the margins of his life, returns toward the end, just as his stepmother departs. These shifts unsettle Philip but also push him toward independence. He ultimately finds solace and quiet autonomy living with his grandmother, where his world narrows but deepens.

At the heart of the novel lie Philip's relationships – with his peers, his family, and several older men. The friendships between Philip and other adolescent boys are particularly well-rendered: intimate, understated, and cliché-free. Whether they are smoking pot in a

romantically atmospheric cemetery or navigating the challenges of daily life, the bonds between them have a rare emotional honesty. Sporadic mentions of sexual relationships with young women mostly provide background detail; the emotional and psychological growth of the protagonist remains central.

Büsing's third novel (following two award-winning earlier works) demonstrates an effortless literary style that captures the beauty and tension of adolescence. Her writing carries subtle allusions to nineteenth-century German Romanticism – particularly in the scenes in the cemetery and in the book's exploration of male friendship – but these references are light and accessible. Although the narrative structure is straightforward and chronological, occasional flashbacks and shifts in point of view provide variety and insight.

'We'll manage' offers an intelligent, thoughtful look at growing up male in a world that often discourages vulnerability. This is a quiet yet compelling book that lingers long after the final page. English-language readers would embrace its warmth, clarity, and emotional depth.

Find out more:

<https://steidl.de/Buecher/Wir-kommen-zurecht-2530505458.html?SID=9VurVasca180>

about the author



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Annika Büsing was born in 1981 and lives in Bochum, where she teaches at a secondary school. She studied Evangelical Theology and German Philology in Dortmund and has lived in Iceland and Hamburg. She was awarded the Literature Prize Ruhr for her first novel, *Nordstadt* (North town, 2022), and was nominated for the Debut Prize at the Harbour Front Literature Festival and the Bavarian Book Prize.

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