



by Jan Böttcher  
Aufbau Verlag  
February 2016 / 255pp  
Fiction

This book is outside of the five-year window for guaranteed assistance with English language translation. We suggest getting in touch with the relevant funding body for an informal conversation about the possibility of support. Please refer to our recommendations page for books that are currently covered by our funding

Y  
Y

### review

Jan Böttcher interweaves fiction and history in this gripping tale of a doomed love affair played out amidst Kosovo's turbulent recent history.

Jakob Schütte falls in love with Arjeta Neziri as a teenager, but it is some years before his affections are reciprocated. The couple's happiness is threatened almost immediately by the catastrophic events in Arjeta's home country of Albania as the Kosovo conflict enters its military phase. Once Serbian troops are finally expelled from Kosovo in June 1999, Arjeta's father decides to return to Albania after thirteen unsettled years in Germany. Torn between her life in Germany with Jakob and her desire to move back to Kosovo with her family, Arjeta eventually ends the relationship. The distraught Jakob follows Arjeta to Kosovo and establishes himself as a digital freelancer in the Kosovan capital, Prishtina. It is there, in 2001, that Arjeta and Jakob's son Leka is born. While Jakob is ready to support his son, Arjeta turns away from him and secretly marries an Albanian man.

Despairing of ever seeing his son, Jakob accepts a job offer in the London computer gaming industry and moves there in 2005. Böttcher successfully captures Jakob's profound experience of culture shock following his move. Meanwhile Arjeta turns to the art world and finally finds fulfilment in her relationship with one of the country's most influential artists. Jakob returns to Germany and sets up his own company. As a way of processing his traumatic time in Kosovo, he

guarantee.

develops the successful computer game *Namuna*, based on Kosovo's history and his own experiences. This introduces a fascinating new perspective to the story as Böttcher connects the development of computer games with the history of Kosovo – a country shaped by war and ongoing struggles for identity.

*Y* is a unique read with much to appeal to an Englishlanguage audience. Böttcher tackles the highly relevant contemporary topics of conflict and migration with a light touch, skilfully employing narrative detail to make the story come alive for his readers without overwhelming them with too much information. The personal, psychological cost of geopolitical conflict is subtly mapped out in the protagonists' struggle to navigate their romantic and familial relationships. Böttcher's style is reminiscent of that of Gavin Extence, particularly in his convincing depictions of his characters' psychological turmoil.

## press quotes

*'A novel that will be of international relevance.'*

– Saša Stanišić

*'As suspenseful as it is illustrative – [...] And one of the saddest love stories I've read in the last few years.'*

– Moritz Rinke

## about the author

**Jan Böttcher** was born in 1973 in Lüneburg. He worked as a singer-songwriter with the Berlin band Herr Nilsson. Since 2003 he has published four novels. His novel *Nachglühen* won the Ernst-Willner-Preis of the Ingeborg Bachmann competition. *Das Lied vom Tun und Lassen* was top of the SWR (Southwest Broadcasting) ranking list. Jan Böttcher lives in Berlin.

### Previous works include:

*Das Lied vom Tun und Lassen* (2013); *Nachglühen* (2011); *Geld oder Leben* (2006); *Lina oder: das kalte Moor* (2003)

## rights information

### Translation rights available from:

Aufbau Verlag  
Prinzenstraße 85

10969 Berlin, Germany

Contact: Diana Klessen

Tel: + 49 30 28394123

Email: [klessen@aufbau-verlag.de](mailto:klessen@aufbau-verlag.de)

[www.aufbau-verlag.de](http://www.aufbau-verlag.de)

**Aufbau** is an imprint of Aufbau Verlag GmbH & Co. KG. Focusing on German and international classics (Hans Fallada, Lion Feuchtwanger, Anna Seghers, Arnold Zweig, Victor Klemperer), exile and resistance literature and East German literature, Aufbau has a strong list of contemporary world literature. The original Aufbau Verlag was founded in 1945 and became the leading cultural and literary publishing house in East Germany.