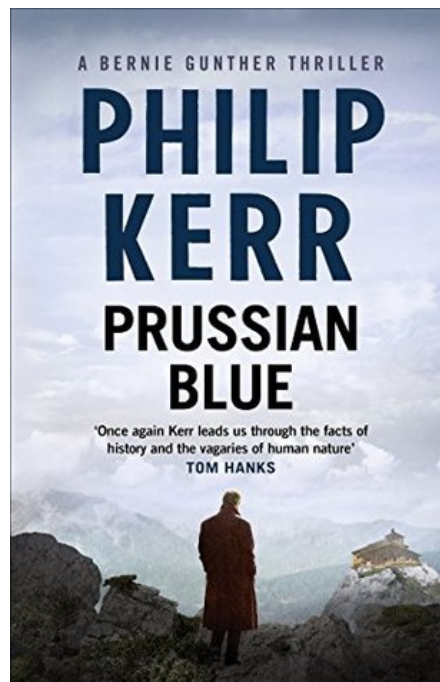




Prussian Blue

Philip Kerr

Download now

Read Online ➔

Prussian Blue

Philip Kerr

Prussian Blue Philip Kerr

It's 1956 and Bernie Gunther is on the run. Ordered by Erich Mielke, deputy head of the East German Stasi, to murder Bernie's former lover by thallium poisoning, he finds his conscience is stronger than his desire not to be murdered in turn. Now he must stay one step ahead of Mielke's retribution.

The man Mielke has sent to hunt him is an ex-Kripo colleague, and as Bernie pushes towards Germany he recalls their last case together. In 1939, Bernie was summoned by Reinhard Heydrich to the Berghof: Hitler's mountain home in Obersalzberg. A low-level German bureaucrat had been murdered, and the Reichstag deputy Martin Bormann, in charge of overseeing renovations to the Berghof, wants the case solved quickly. If the Fuhrer were ever to find out that his own house had been the scene of a recent murder - the consequences wouldn't bear thinking about.

And so begins perhaps the strangest of Bernie Gunther's adventures, for although several countries and seventeen years separate the murder at the Berghof from his current predicament, Bernie will find there is some unfinished business awaiting him in Germany.

Prussian Blue Details

Date : Published April 4th 2017 by Quercus

ISBN :

Author : Philip Kerr

Format : Kindle Edition 546 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Fiction, Crime, Thriller, Cultural, Germany

 [Download Prussian Blue ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Prussian Blue ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Prussian Blue Philip Kerr

From Reader Review Prussian Blue for online ebook

Georgia says

Review can also be found in Chill and read

“Prussian Blue” is the twelfth book in the “Bernie Gunther series”, yet again, it can be read as stand alone.

This book finds Bernie in the French Riviera, working on a hotel, as he receives a dinner invitation from his wife. It sounds rather strange to him, as it would be a little difficult for her to be there at the time, but he accepts the offer. When he arrives at the date, he finds himself having dinner with the head of Stasi police. It is 1956 and the Eastern Germany Police is shuffling the cards of the deck. Bernie is asked to handle a loose end of an agent, he is not so fond of. Given his integrity and honesty, he cannot commit murder, even to someone he dislikes. Therefore he is on the run, trying to escape being captured by an old partner.

The whole situation brings him memories of 17 years ago, 1939, when he was investigating a murder in Berghof, in Hitler’s country house, and actual headquarters of the chancellery and the Nazi Party, just before the invasion to Poland. It was not out of his fondness for the Nazis or Hitler that he agreed to this investigation, but rather of the self preservation feeling that kept him alive in the coming years.

This is a hell of a detective’s story that Kerr is up to with this novel. History is around the trenches at all time and the whole pre and post World War II atmosphere is vivid in the air of this Bavarian village. The narration is split between two eras with 17 year difference between them. It starts at 1956, with the reality of the East German Police, Stasi, leading their way around the world, committing their own crimes, just like the Gestapo. That is because, the same people that were in the police forces of Hitler’s Germany are still pulling the strings after the war. Nothing new for those who study history. It continues back in 1939, going back and forth really smoothly and not confusing the reader, as all the events from one era connect to those of the other.

Kerr’s narration is well known to his fans and so is Bernie’s integrity. The author tries really hard to keep his main character unchanged throughout the years and the difficult times, and he accomplishes it nonetheless. It is a remarkable job so to speak, being able to support your hero after 12 books!

It’s an atmospheric long but enjoyable read, destined to put the reader into some thought. Human nature is not far from the savage times. Given the current situation in Europe and around the world in general, where the right and fascist parties are getting strength and power, it is a reminder to us all of what has happened and what can become of people in power. Even the slightest power can make man hungry for more, can make him greedy, can make him think low of human life. Do we really want to see another Hitler dominating our world? Cause we are really not far from that...

Peter Jones says

Prussian Blue is #12 in a series of which I have not previously read any.

Does that make it difficult to follow what is happening, or work out who the characters are? Not at all. Bernie Gunther, a German detective, is a strong character, and the book works well as a stand alone.

The novel is set over two timelines, 1939 and 1956. I admit to struggling with this concept somewhat to

begin with, hence only 4 instead of 5 stars, but in the end you can see why the author wrote in this way. It is quite a long book, I think it probably could have been a little shorter with little or no detriment to the storyline.

Thank you to Quercus Books via Netgalley for providing a digital copy of Prussian Blue by Philip Kerr for review. All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own.

Paromjit says

With Philip Kerr on his twelfth Bernie Gunther book, you might think that this is a series that should by now be running out of steam. Not a bit of it. This is superb and atmospheric reading with two concurrent storylines from different eras separated by seventeen years. Yet, in essence, so little has changed. It begins in 1956 with the charmless Deputy Head of the Stasi, General Erich Meilke, an old foe, cornering Bernie into a meeting at the French Riviera. He wants Bernie to poison an agent he previously encountered, Anne French, in Britain with thallium for which the only known antidote is Prussian Blue paint.

Whilst Bernie is less than fond of Anne, he is not really keen to carry out Meilke's orders, only to discover Meilke is leaving little to chance by deploying an old Kripo colleague of Gunther's, Friedrich Korsch, and other Stasi agents to ensure that Bernie follows orders. Bernie manages to escape intending to go to Germany. This triggers Gunther's memories of Friedrich Korsch when in 1939 he assisted Gunther on a murder investigation in Hitler's exclusive mountain retreat of Obersalzberg with its community of high ranking Nazis. Karl Flex, a low level engineer, is shot on the terrace of Hitler's home and Martin Boorman wants the best detective on the case. Heydrich sends Gunther to investigate and to find dirt on Boorman. This is a real headache of a politically charged case which places Gunther amidst the ambitious jostling for power by high ranking murderous and corrupt Nazis. The two tales converge in a tense finale at the same place in some quartz caves.

The secret to the success of this series is the battle hardened, courageous, wily and complex character of Bernie Gunther. He is a good man trying to do the right thing but forced into moral compromises by the ruthless men and the tumultuous times he lives in. So he does things he is not proud of but given the amoral cesspit he is barely surviving in, a pawn in the political intrigues of the Nazi and Stasi big men, he only does what he has to do. He speaks the truth to monstrously insane, ruthless, mendacious and corrupt men which ironically makes him a valuable commodity to them. The similarities between the Nazis and the Stasi are plain to see in the novel. Philip Kerr creates a wonderful and compelling narrative using history and real life characters. At the end of the book he gives us a rundown of the actual fates of the characters in the story. Simply brilliant storytelling and a stupendous series. Thanks to Quercus for an ARC.

Hanneke says

Sadly, this will be one of the last Bernie's I read, since Philip Kerr died a few months ago. I do not know whether the knowledge of Kerr's demise influenced my feeling about the book, but I thought it was more sad and desolate than previous ones. But, luckily, there were many Bernie wise-cracks to chuckle over now and then. And, as usual, much interesting information to be absorbed. Kerr certainly did his usual extensive research, this time on the Berghof and surroundings. Only two Bernie's to go after finishing this one. Such a pity. Philip Kerr died much too young.

Mark says

It is a grand time of the year when a new Bernie Gunther is released, this 12th installment continues delivering quality as one expects from this series. While the original series started with the infamous Berlin Noir trilogy, which I found well written but unnecessary crude and misogynistic, I found the continuation by its original writer 15 years later a lot better and actually more interesting.

Prussian Blue is the 12th book and once again we meet Bernie Gunther at the French Riviera in Oktober 1956 and as usual in a dual-narrative a story is told about Bernie at Berchesgarden in April 1939. Bernie gets drafted in a plot to kill a female character from the previous novel, one does not have to read this earlier book to understand the plot [even if you should because the series are so good and give such a different insight in Nazi Germany]. This is done by the East-German Stasi and of course Bernie is not given a choice in cooperating. And Bernie would not be Bernie if he had his own ideas about cooperating. In the story that contains most of the book Bernie Gunther is send to Adolfs Bavarian mountain home because somebody has been shot at the sight and this murder warrants the best police investigator being send to have a look into the matter. Bernie gets once more drafted by Reinhard Heydrich a leading Nazi bigwig, considered to be the architect of the holocaust, to do his bidding. And as we have learned in the Bernie Gunther series the job of investigating the murder is secondary to Bernie finding dirt on other high-ranking German Nazis. And as you follow Bernie in his investigations in the murder you learn more about the seedy underbelly of Nazi Germany. That is what makes this series so interesting another look on the affairs of Nazi Germany through the eyes of a former Berlin police officer who never was a Nazi but is forced to survive among them and you wonder about his soul and sanity.

The two story-lines connect in the end and makes for a satisfying finale and leaves you wanting more Gunther books. Which is a very possible.

Well worth you time if you are interested in Historical whodunits with as subject Nazi Germany during their years of ruling and in some books the direct aftermath. This one is again a tour the force that keeps you reading when you have to do other more important things to do in & around the house.

Ted says

P-review (ie, Preview)

Never heard of the author until a couple days ago, this book (and the whole series of twelve of which it's the latest) was tantalizingly reviewed in the New Yorker by Jane Kramer. I see many friends of mine who have got into this series. Very tempting!

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/201...>

.....

Previous review: Timetables of History

Random review: The Sense of an Ending

Next review: The Kingdom

Previous library review: Basil Street Blues

Next library review: The Pebble Chance *feuilletons & other prose*

Manchester Military History Society (MMHS) says

Bernie Gunther in the pay of the Stasi

Another great outing for Bernie Gunther and keeping up the high standard of Philip Kerr's previous works.

This time Bernie falls out with Stasi Chief Erich Meilke, not the best of things to do. Kerr continues his rich grasp of period detail as his anti-hero moves into the 1950s.

I found the final sequences were somewhat implausible, but overall a very entertaining return for this great literary character.

Kathy says

I am somewhat puzzled that I seem to forget about this series since this is only the third Bernie Gunther book I have read out of the 12 published and I really liked the other two as well. Anyway, this book is excellent. Gunther is called in to investigate a murder on Hitler's "mountain" because he is not a party member and they supposedly want to find the culprit to make all secure before Hitler arrives for his 50th birthday celebration. The narrative goes between the mid 1950's and the late 1930's and our narrator, Gunther, somehow survives beyond all reason in both eras despite every threat thrown at him. That is a good thing since he can live another day in yet another book perhaps?

It kicks off in the 50's with Bernie being hanged "by two human bollards, each with absurdly blond, master-race hair of the kind that Himmler's favorite barber would have put up on his hero-haircut wall" along with another vaguely familiar dude with eye patch who apologizes saying he is under orders - "this is just how the comrade-general wants it." Gunther struggles against "the iron grip of the two Stasi men, but to no avail. Like Christ ascending into heaven I felt myself already rising up from the cobbled ground to meet the noose, where another obliging Stasi man, wearing a gray suit and a hat, was holding on to a street lamp like Gene Kelly to help lasso my neck with it." I will stop there. It is somehow laced with humour as all of Gunther's descriptions are, but what a start!

As Gunther manages escape from these goons, he begins to recall cases he had worked on with the man with the eye patch. "Clearly, as if it were yesterday, I remembered a dark and wintry night in early April 1939, and being driven halfway across Germany in the general's own Mercedes..." And so the story unfolds. The book is a long one, but it is dense with wit (in the form of sarcasm), intelligence, honest depictions of real war criminals and life reflections that are probably more plentiful than some readers may prefer, e.g. "Most of all I remembered being almost twenty years younger and possessed of a sense of decency and honor I now found almost quaint. For a while back there, I think I sincerely believed I was the only honest man I knew."

Some of my favorite highlights: "the devil was wearing a uniform that was the same color as his heart: black."; "Hitler places great store on family values and on the personal morality of senior Party men."; "you live long enough you realize that everything that happens to us is all the same illusion, the same shit, the same celestial joke."; "Hitler, Stalin, Ulbricht, Khrushchev--they were all the same, the same monsters from the neurological abyss we call our own subconscious."; "Sometimes that was all it took to be a real Nazi; the absolute and unscrupulous desire for preferment and promotion."; "Perhaps I would only be free of these monstrous people on the day I went to hell. That's the trouble with being an eyewitness to history; sometimes history is like an avalanche that sweeps you down off the face of the mountain and into the oblivion of some hidden black crevasse."

Susan says

A new Bernie Gunther novel is really an event – I have read every book in the series since “March Violets,” and they never lose their appeal. This is the twelfth in the series and takes place in both 1956 and 1939. We begin in 1956 and Bernie is still working at the Grand Hotel Cap Ferrat on the Riviera, as he was in the last book, “The Other Side of Silence.” It is winter – a Nice winter and not quite the same as Berlin, but the Riviera is quiet and Bernie has time on his hands. However, things are going to get busier. Bernie is approached by the Deputy Head of the Stasi, relating to events in the last novel (although Bernie’s life skips about in these books, it is best to read them in order). Bernie is keen to go back to Germany and finds he is offered a new passport and a new start, if only he will carry out a little job first...

Of course, things rarely go smoothly in Bernie’s life and he finds himself on the run. The events of the present remind him of a case from the past and then the story diverges, as he recalls events from 1939 when he was sent on a mission by Heydrich, who informs him that, “turning you into my stooge is going to be one of my long term projects...” Karl Flex, a civil engineer, was shot on the veranda of The Berghof; Hitler’s retreat. Heydrich is keen that Hitler should feel safe at the Berghof and that Bernie is the least corrupt person he knows and who he can rely on to discover the real murderer before the Fuhrer returns to celebrate his birthday.

With war in the air, Bernie sets off to the bizarre mountain retreat, where he finds that members of Hitler’s entourage have been buying up all the local houses around the Berghof; much to the disgruntlement of the dispossessed local populace. Indeed the area is like a town, with Martin Bormann presiding over it and a level of corruption that surely the Fuhrer has no idea about. It soon becomes apparent that, although Flex seems a fairly lowly minion on the Fuhrer’s mountain, there are those who are keen for the murder not to be solved.

It was apparent to me, reading this, that some of the novel links to a non-fiction book I read about Hitler’s Germany recently, which was the excellent, “Blitzed: Drugs in the Third Reich,” by Norman Ohler. When Bernie first arrives at the Berghof, he is introduced to a drug, called Pervitin, which was known as the ‘people’s drug.’ Kerr makes full use of this new research, with Bernie being introduced to the pills, which allow him to keep going. If you are interested in this aspect of the novel, then you may well enjoy reading, “Blitzed,” which is fascinating. Overall, this is an excellent addition to the Gunther books, with Kerr deftly handling all the strands of the storyline and tying them up perfectly. I also really enjoyed the setting of this novel and, as always, the atmosphere, and the era, was captured expertly. I really enjoy this series and hope there will be many more books featuring Bernie Gunther.

Nigeyb says

From mid-October 2016 through to early January 2017 I read all eleven of the Bernie Gunther series. Helpfully (in March 2017) a new, 12th instalment in the Bernie Gunther series - 'Prussian Blue' - has just arrived to help with my withdrawal symptoms.

Whilst there are rich rewards for any reader who has followed Bernie throughout the 12 novels, 'Prussian Blue' can also be enjoyed as a stand-alone novel.

'Prussian Blue' picks up, in 1956, exactly where previous novel 'The Other Side of Silence' left off, with

Bernie still living and working in the French Riviera.

Bernie cannot refuse a dinner invitation from Erich Mielke, the Stasi chief, who long time readers know as an old adversary. Before long Bernie is being hunted through France by a group of Stasi agents, one of whom is a former Kripo colleague, which prompts a detour back to 1939, when both men were tasked with solving a murder at Hitler's Berghof, his mountain retreat in Bavaria, prior to the Fuhrer's 50th birthday celebrations.

As usual Philip Kerr skilfully weaves to the two stories together, illuminating day-to-day life in Nazi Germany and the high levels of brutality and corruption, whilst simultaneously providing readers with interesting new developments, and plenty of excitement too, for Bernie in his "present day" life.

'Prussian Blue' is a splendid addition to the series which will satisfy long-term fans but leave them wanting more. This series appears to have plenty more mileage. As always Philip Kerr finishes by explaining a bit more about the real historical characters who populate this gripping novel. Hopefully we won't have to wait too long for the next one.

4/5

Toni Osborne says

Book# 12, in the Bernie Gunther Mysteries

This story moves back and forth between Nazi Germany in 1939 and the French Riviera in 1956. We follow Gunther match wits with German officials in two suspenseful stories that at first seemed to go their own ways but meshes nicely by the end. Mr. Kerr brings once again a renewed life to the monsters of the Nazi era and at the same time gives us a thrilling adventure, a deadly cat and mouse game in the French countryside....

Nothing is more frustrating for a cop with a conscience than to work under the Nazis and not end up in prison. "Prussian Blue", swings around between a plot that trails the reluctant Gunther's from France in the 50's being pursued by his old enemies of the Reich, narrowly escaping the noose by doing dirty deeds to save himself. Then the plot brings Gunther to the days when he worked for Martin Bormann to clean up a messy situation at Hitler's vacation home before he shows up for his birthday celebration in a week. The two plots go back and forth.

Mr. Kerr has a real talent in capturing the mood and misdeeds and once again brilliantly created a whodunit to bring the horrors of life during the Nazi's regime. The shrewd and acute interpretations of facts blended with fiction makes for a believable depiction. The research and the accuracy of the historical setting can only match the best of the best authors; Mr. Kerr is definitely a master. I am a huge fan of Bernie Gunther and have devoured in gulps of fright and pleasure all of them to date. The plot is an entertaining adventure that takes in high crime, scandals, fraud, drugs and murder and features one of the most successful anti-heroes in crime fiction, Bernie Gunther: a WW1 veteran, a Kripo detective during WW11 who now roams the world like a wanted criminal. Gunther is not a young man how long can he stick around....only Mr. Kerr knows...but in the meantime I will be faithful to him....

I like this book but on the down side, although the pacing is steady it lacks the suspense I was hoping for. It is a bit overwritten, descriptions of people and places and long paragraphs stretch the plot over many pages unnecessary, making a meaty book to read.

Good story but not one at the top of my list.

Cathy says

I seem to make a habit of coming to book series late on in the sequence but I don't believe I've ever come in as late to a series as book twelve! That's the situation I was faced with when reading *Prussian Blue*, the twelfth outing for Philip Kerr's leading character, Bernie Gunther. Although I was familiar with the author's reputation and the existence of the series, I have The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction judges to thank for making me read *Prussian Blue* as it was one of the thirteen books on the longlist for the 2018 prize (although it didn't make the shortlist). Safe to say, I now have books one to eleven added to my wish list- oh, and book number thirteen, *Greeks Bearing Gifts*, which was published recently.

The book has a dual timeline structure, opening in 1956 with Bernie being made an 'offer he can't refuse' by the Deputy Head of the East German Stasi. As it happens, being at a kind of crossroads in his life, it's an offer Bernie does decide to refuse meaning he's soon on the run from the agents sent to track him down. 'When you go on the run you have to believe it's worth it, but I really wasn't sure about that. Not anymore. I was already tired. I had no real energy left for life, let alone escape.' Bernie being Bernie he does find the energy to escape, a decision which will need all his experience and guile because one of his pursuers is someone he worked with when investigating a very singular case back in 1939 – a murder on no less a place than the terrace of Hitler's mountain home in Obersalzberg. (Unfortunately, Hitler wasn't there at the time but there are shades of *Rogue Male* by Geoffrey Household here.)

Although, as I've said, this was my first foray into the world of Bernie Gunther, I didn't feel at all at a disadvantage. With some series I find that if you come late to them you already get to know pretty much everything that's happened in previous books making reading the earlier books redundant. That's not the case here. Yes, there are little references to earlier cases and events in Bernie's life but these only served to whet my appetite to find out more.

I really felt I got to know Bernie's character. He's stubborn (pigheaded even), persistent, tough, resourceful and perceptive of human nature. He has a bit of a problem with authority. 'Making a nuisance of yourself is what being a policeman is all about and suspecting people who were completely above suspicion was about the only thing that made doing the job such fun in Nazi Germany.' Back in 1939 he was also no fan of the Nazis. 'The one thing about the Nazis you could always rely on what that they were not to be relied upon. None of them. Not ever.'

What I really loved about Bernie and the writing in general was the dry, pithy humour. Here are some of my favourite Bernie bon mots from the book:

On the Stasi: 'The Mounties might have had a reputation for always getting their man but the Stasi have always got the men and the women and the children too, and when they got them they made them all suffer.'

On Martin Boorman's lair: 'A log the size of the Sudetenland was smoking in the grate and on the walls were several electric candelabra that looked as if they'd been placed there by a mad scientist's faithful retainer.'

A little in-joke by the author: 'This case had it all, I told myself: absurdity, alienation, existential anxiety, and no shortage of likely and unlikely suspects. If I'd been a very clever German of the kind who knew the difference between the sons of Zeus, Reason and Chaos, I might have been dumb enough to think I could

write a book about it.'

I'm not going to go into detail about the plot but I'll just say the book is brilliantly structured. Both storylines are compelling and the way in which the book switches between the two never feels forced or out of place. I really did feel I was in a safe pair of hands with this author; that I was in the presence of a master storyteller. At one point, one of the characters says: "The end has to satisfy everyone, does it not?" Well, this reader was definitely satisfied at the end.

In reflective mood, Bernie muses, 'I'd always thought there was plenty of time to do things and yet, now I really thought about it, there had been not a moment to spare.' Sadly, there was very little more time for the author. Philip Kerr's death in March robbed the book world of further Bernie Gunther adventures. However, what a wonderful legacy the author leaves for future readers to enjoy. I intend to savour every one of the other books in the series.

HBalikov says

As Nate Heller is to American P.I. noir; as Arkady Renko is to Russian P.I. noir; Philip Kerr's Bernie Gunther is to Nazi-era P.I. noir.

Here is how one of the characters sees Gunther: "Your trouble is that you're the worst kind of detective there is. A German detective. No, it's worse than that; you're a Prussian detective. You don't just believe in your competence and efficiency, you make a damn fetish out of it. You think your devotion to the job is a virtue, but it's not. With you it's a vice. You can't help yourself. It's something that runs through your character like the black stripe on the old Prussian flag. That's your problem...If you investigate a case you have to do it scrupulously and to the very best of your ability. Realism and common sense are powerless against your pigheaded devotion to doing the job as efficiently as it's possible to do it. And this takes away all your better judgment about the wisdom of what you're doing. You just don't know when it's in your own interest to stop. That's why Heydrich uses you. Because you always stay the course. You're like Schmeling; you keep getting up even though the fight is lost. To that extent you're the most Prussian man I've ever met. I admire you, Bernie. I also can't help but think that there's a real danger you're always destined to be your own life's saboteur."

I believe that Philip Kerr shares most of this view of Bernie Gunther. The words come fast; the cultural references are piled on one another; and our P.I. gets the worst of many encounters. In this book (#12), Gunther is skating on the edge of disaster from the start.

And here I am going to have to disclose part of the plot.

The novel weaves together two separate incidents almost 20 years apart. It opens in October 1956. Gunther is on the French Riviera barely getting by. An incident occurs and he finds himself in front of one of the chief Stasi agents (and, it should come as no surprise that many of the East German secret police had Nazi backgrounds). Gunther is forced to agree to carry out an assassination. This isn't something that fits with his personality so very shortly he is trying to find a way to get out of it. But they pursue him. "I estimated once that the Gestapo had employed less than fifty thousand officers to keep an eye on eighty million Germans, but from what I'd read...the Stasi employed at least twice that number....to keep an eye on just seventeen million Germans. "

As this plot plays out, Gunther is confronted by a character from his past who worked with him in 1939 on a particularly stressful case. Obergruppenführer und General der Polizei, Reinhard Heydrich orders him to

leave Berlin for Hitler's retreat at the Austrian border. There has been a death, on Der Fuehrer's back patio and it better be solved before Hitler arrives for his birthday celebration. Gunther must work under Martin Bormann at the same time as serving Heydrich's desires to find ways to undermine Bormann. Tick-tock.....is there any way in which Gunther can do any of this without finding himself imprisoned, assassinated or discredited?

[Information that may be relevant: Martin Bormann was Hitler's "second in command" for many functions of the Nazi government. Reinhard Heydrich worked just under Himmler and was the moving force for much of what became known as The Holocaust.]

Kerr gets the plot up to maximum speed very quickly and events tumble after events in a veritable train wreck until the final few pages. Kerr is a master storyteller who can juggle both characters and action with the best. And, he can do this while portraying the enormity of the evil that was Nazism. He also provides some nice nuance between the Bernie Gunther of 1939 and the man of 1956. This novel is one of his best.

Nick Brett says

A book you try to savour, but end up devouring. Prussian Blue features the author's brilliant Bernie Gunther, and is set in 1956 with considerable sections set back in 1939. In 1956 Bernie is asked to murder someone by the East German Police and decides to go on the run. As Bernie tries to get to somewhere safe, he is reminded of the events of 1939...

In 1939, before the Germans invade Poland, Germany is full of the Nazi's that have risen to power and the arrogance, greed and cruelty underpins their invincibility. Heydrich has a need for a detective to investigate a murder in the Bavarian mountains, a favourite area of Hitler's and one where Martin Bormann has a mini kingdom. Bernie is not being given much time while he tries to identify a murderer in a place where powerful people do not want the truth to come out.

More of a detective story than any other of the Bernie novels, but still plenty of significant real life characters in this and a real feel for the atmosphere (and fear) of the time. Of course, Bernie's past and present collide in the manner we have become gratefully accustomed to.

I doubt if I will read many better books this year.

Evelyn says

If Goodreads allowed a 4.5 rating, that would be more accurate...perhaps even 4.75.

Yes, it was that good. Bernie Gunther and Philip Kerr at their best. And if I'm not mistaken this is the closest yet that our hero has come to actually coming face-to-face with Hitler, as he goes to Berchtesgaden at Heydrich's request to investigate a murder at the Berghof, Hitler's retreat in the Bavarian Alps.

Although Gunther doesn't actually meet the Fuhrer in this book, he's tasked with finding out who shot one of Martin Bormann's aids while he was standing on the terrace of one of the buildings within Hitler's private, and supposedly highly secure, compound. In the course of the investigation, which takes place during April 1939, pre-Hitler's 50th birthday, Gunther discovers just how corrupt Bormann, a member of the Nazi party Chancellery and Hitler's private secretary, and Bormann's inner circle were.

At the same time, and in typical Kerr fashion, there's a parallel story taking place in what's considered

'present day' Bernie Gunther time, April 1956. How Gunther keeps his powder dry against a host of violent characters and life threatening circumstances--during both events--is, of course, what makes these books so terrific and terrifically engaging.
