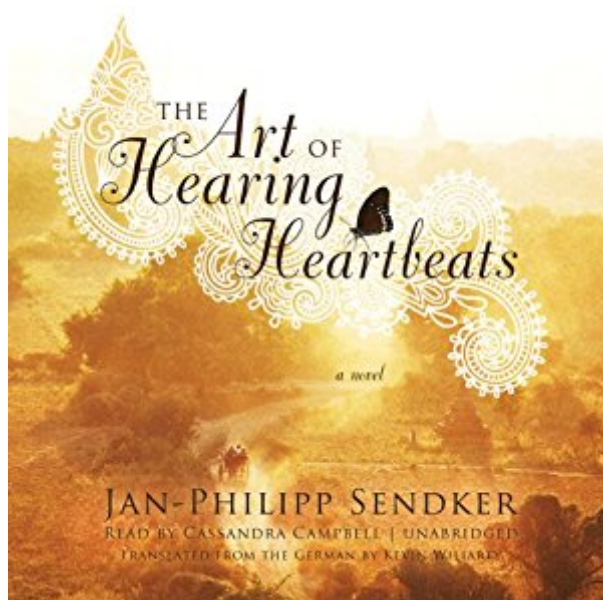


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# The Art Of Hearing Heartbeats: A Novel



## Synopsis

A poignant and inspirational love story set in Burma, *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* spans the decades between the 1950s and the present. When a successful New York lawyer suddenly disappears without a trace, neither his wife nor his daughter Julia has any idea where he might be - until they find a love letter he wrote many years ago to a Burmese woman they have never heard of. Intent on solving the mystery and coming to terms with her father's past, Julia decides to travel to the village where the woman lived. There she uncovers a tale of unimaginable hardship, resilience, and passion that will reaffirm the listener's belief in the power of love to move mountains.

Jan-Philipp Sendker, born in Hamburg in 1960, was the American correspondent for *Stern* from 1990 to 1995 and its Asian correspondent from 1995 to 1999. In 2000 he published *Cracks in the Great Wall*, a nonfiction book about China. *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* is his first novel. He lives in Berlin with his family.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The first third of *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* is enthralling. The remainder of the novel is problematic; it sustained my interest but not my enthusiasm. After telling her that he was leaving for an appointment in Boston, Julia Win's father boarded a flight to Thailand and disappeared. The *Times* described him as "an influential Wall Street lawyer" but the police suspect he had a hidden past. Burmese by birth, Tin Win became an American citizen in 1959. Julia, a recent law school graduate, viewed her father as staid, reliable, out-of-date -- not the sort of person whose life is filled

with mystery or who takes an unannounced trip to Thailand. Four years after his disappearance, Julia finds a letter he wrote to a woman named Mi Mi. Julia travels to Kalaw, determined to find Mi Mi, the only clue to her father's past. There she meets U Ba, who has been waiting to tell her the story Tin Win told him, a story from which "a life emerged, revealing its power and its magic." Just as we're settling into Julia's quest, the story shifts to the one told by U Ba. It starts with Mya Mya, a young Burmese woman who regards the birth of Tin Win as a calamity. An astrologer's prediction that he will lose his sight is soon fulfilled. After his parents die, Tin is taken to a monastery. It is there that he first meets Mi Mi -- or, more precisely, that he first hears her heartbeat. Mi Mi was born with "crippled feet"; their disabilities draw Tin and Mi Mi together. Hearts and heartbeats are frequent images in the novel. Jan-Philipp Sendker also makes good use of the imagery of balance: Mi Mi, for instance, is emotionally well balanced even though she is incapable of balancing on her misshapen feet. Tin balances his blindness with exceptional hearing.

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