



LIGHT / DARK

By JULIA ROTHENBURG

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hell/dunkel
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» *Just a moment ago, she'd desperately wanted him to leave, but now she's overcome by a strange feeling. As if she'd only just noticed that she is in fact lonely. Loneliness is one of the few feelings that are stronger than anger.*

From one moment to the next, he's there. On the couch, surrounded by smoke. Like a Fata Morgana. Valerie had not expected him to be here, but it is him: Robert. He is twenty-three, she is nineteen, she's the pale type, he's darker – no one ever thought they were brother and sister. Half-siblings, that's what they were. And now he's here, just like he'd never up and left. But now he's returned, just like her mother's illness and he's promising to stay.

There are no easy answers to the difficult questions they are now facing together: how to deal with a moment of departure that is approaching so excruciatingly slowly? How to deal with anger that has nowhere to go? Valerie and Robert are looking to each other for support. They hope that by getting closer to each other, they will also get closer to themselves and the inconceivable events that are taking place around them. Their intimacy has many faces: it is gentle and painful, wild and comforting – and dangerous.

Julia Rothenburg's novel about letting a loved one go is told in a straightforward, untamed, sincere and moving manner. She shows grief as an emotion that is both vivid as well as deeply contradictory, endowing her characters with an inner world that is disarming in its intensity. Julia Rothenburg's literary talent is remarkable. Thanks to her empathy, her instinct for nuance, her razor-sharp diction, »light/dark« is an extraordinary and beguiling reading experience.

Julia Rothenburg, born in 1990 in Berlin has studied sociology and political science. She received a stipend from the writer's workshop of the Jürgen-Ponto-Foundation and received the Retzhof Award for young literature for her book »Koslik is ill« which was later published with the Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt and is currently made into an audiobook for German national radio. The author lives in Berlin and works at »Ocelot, not just another bookstore«. »light/dark« will be published in the spring of 2019 with Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt.

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