

## PRESS RELEASE

### **'Opi – The Two Lives of My Grandfather' by Andreas Pohl** **Can a Person ever truly change? A memoir about guilt, memory and love.**

In 1937, the Nazi propaganda machine feted Friedrich Wilhelm Hymmen as a literary star. A decade later, he gave up writing fiction altogether as an act of self-punishment for his complicity in the crimes of the Nazi regime.

Now his grandson, Melbourne writer Andreas Pohl, tries to find answers to the question of how a talented young man from an educated middle-class family was radicalized into joining the Nazi movement.

He discovers a story of how education, talent and keen ambition led to collusion with one of the most murderous regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A story about guilt, memory, and the joys and limitations of reinvention. And most of all, a story about whether the love of a grandson can withstand the revelations about his grandfather's past.

*'Andreas Pohl asks how his beloved Opi could have embraced that lethal ideology, and questions whether he ever truly atoned for his complicity in its crimes. A serious, probing memoir, written beautifully, with sensitivity and courage.'*

**Anna Lanyon, author of *Malinche's Conquest, Fire and Song, The New World of Martin Cortes***

*'In this eloquent, thoughtful memoir, Andreas Pohl seeks to understand why his grandfather, a promising young German writer, embraced the Nazi ideology. This is a cross-generational story with reflections on history, morality, and how our choices shape us. A compelling story, beautifully told.'*

**Nick Gadd, author of *Melbourne Circle: Walking, Memory and Loss, Death of a Typographer, Ghostlines***

'A meticulously researched and eloquently written memoir that tackles weighty issues -- bigotry, complicity, guilt, shame. Pohl delivers a compelling account of a man's efforts 'to fashion a different life from the wreckage of the first one'. It's left up to the reader to answer the critical question underpinning this memoir: Can a person ever truly change?'

**Angela Savage, author of *Mother of Pearl, Behind the Night Bazaar***

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### Bio



Andreas Pohl is a writer, researcher and educator. Born in Germany, he migrated to Australia in the late 1980s. During the last two decades he lived for long periods of time in Vietnam working in education and foreign aid and co-authoring three Vietnamese cook books with his wife and chef, Tracey Lister: *KOTO - A Culinary Journey Through Vietnam* (2008), *Vietnamese Street Food* (2011), and *Made in*

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