



The Fifth Woman: A Kurt Wallander Mystery

By Henning Mankell

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In an African convent, four nuns and an unidentified fifth woman are brutally murdered, and the death of the unknown woman is covered up by the local police. A year later in Sweden, Inspector Kurt Wallander is baffled and appalled by two strange murders. Holger Eriksson, a retired car dealer and bird watcher, is impaled on sharpened bamboo poles in a ditch behind his secluded home, while the body of a missing florist is discovered strangled and tied to a tree. The only clues Wallander has to go on are a skull, a diary, and a photo of three men. What ensues is a case that will test Wallander's strength and patience, for in order to solve these murders he will need to uncover their elusive connection to the earlier unsolved murder in Africa of the fifth woman.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

At the start of this Swedish version of the station-house police procedural, set in the Sk?ne district in the south of Sweden, Det. Kurt Wallander, who has just returned from an idyllic vacation in Rome, joins the hunt for the missing Holger Eriksson, an elderly poet. Finding the man's corpse in a ditch, impaled on sharpened bamboo stakes, brings Wallander back abruptly to the realities of crime in modern Sweden. While Wallander and his colleagues investigate the murder, another man is found dead in the local woods, making it clear that they have a brutal serial killer on their hands. The killer plans each murder carefully to ensure that the victim suffers for several days before dying. Who could hate these innocent-seeming men so much as to want to torture them to death? The police detectives must delve deeply into the victims' lives to find out what links them together and what might have made them a deadly enemy. Mankell takes the reader slowly and meticulously through the long investigation's progress, including frequent reversals. The policemen are constantly overworked and exhausted, but they make acute deductions and chase down every lead relentlessly. Mankell is a talented writer, and the translation by Steven Murray is graceful and colloquial, but the narrative is so bleak and brooding that it certainly qualifies as the darkest of Swedish noir. (Aug.)

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From Library Journal

The fourth book in Mankell's excellent series opens with the bloody killings of four nuns and a Swedish tourist (the fifth woman) in Algeria, then switches to the carefully staged murder of a wealthy retired car dealer in Ystad, Sweden. Even as Inspector Kurt Wallander and his cohorts tirelessly work the car-dealer case, the perpetrator obsessively plots her next murder, dispatching the victim as if all her life were meant for this killing moment. Wallander somehow uncovers the ties that bind these apparently disparate events together. The intricate plotting, chilling psychological divination, and thrilling police procedural are all seamlessly translated. Fans of Maj Sj?wall and Per Wahl? 's mysteries will enjoy this crime novel by their fellow countryman. Highly recommended.

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From Booklist

Much of the attraction of the American hard-boiled hero has been his (or her) unfailing ability to do what we could only dream of doing: stand up to danger with competence, courage, and a smart mouth. Recently, the European hard-boiled novel has taken the subgenre in a largely new direction: the heroes of this new breed of crime novel respond to the chaos of the modern world with sinking shoulders; they persevere but always with a sense that they--and their troubled countries--won't be able to take much more. Listen to Swedish cop Kurt Wallander: "He saw himself as a pathetic figure, a police officer in a thin sweater, battling the wind in a desolate Swedish town in the fall." In the fourth Wallander novel to be translated into English--all with remarkable fluidity by Steven Murray--the sense of the center failing to hold is stronger than ever. While grieving the sudden death of his father, Wallander is confronted with an incredibly gruesome murder: a man impaled by sharpened bamboo sticks. More killings, nearly as grisly, follow, but Wallander is unable to find a connection. The unfathomable case puts even more strain on Wallander's always tenuous personal relationships--"I live my life always disappointing people." This sense of being on the edge of overwhelmed, of always falling just a bit short, is utterly alien to, say, the world of Sam Spade, but it feels very much like ordinary life in the new century. Remember Kurt Wallander: his exhaustion may signal more than a literary style. *Bill Ott*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Barbara Stewart:

This The Fifth Woman: A Kurt Wallander Mystery book is not really ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is actually information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper anyone read a lot of information you will get. This particular The Fifth Woman: A Kurt Wallander Mystery without we realize teach the one who reading through it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't become worry The Fifth Woman: A Kurt Wallander Mystery can bring whenever you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even cell phone. This The Fifth Woman: A Kurt Wallander Mystery having good arrangement in word and layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

Kurt Hooper:

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Francisca Varney:

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the free time or they will get large amount of stress from both day to day life and work. So , once we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely yes. People is human not only a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity do you have when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will certainly unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, the actual book you have read is actually The Fifth Woman: A Kurt Wallander Mystery.

Jeffrey Cooks:

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