



## Sacrifice

*Hanna Winter*

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**Sacrifice** Hanna Winter

*He must hunt her down. Kill her. Destroy her . . .*

In her very first case, criminal psychologist Lena Peters is confronted with a killer on a murderous vendetta. And though she is unaware, Lena will play a prominent role in his deadly mission, because Lena knows what makes killers tick - she also knows all about obsession, for she has been close to the edge herself.

**For now she is the hunter, but soon she will become the hunted.**

## Sacrifice Details

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Author : Hanna Winter

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# From Reader Review Sacrifice for online ebook

## Carol Peace says

A fast paced debut into crime writing I read this book in one sitting.

Lena Peters is a criminal psychologist and has joined a new team in the Berlin police. She meets her boss in unfortunate circumstances when she thinks he is an intruder at her home, the rest of the team seem to be welcoming but she feels she really isn't being given all the information about the spate of gruesome murders that they are trying to solve. As the murders escalate Lena tries to do her job but will she be given the chance to prove that is the case. When she finds herself outside the loop of pertinent information she is desperate to follow the case but will that be her downfall. I did connect with the characters and found myself rooting for Lena, there were a couple of things that didn't quite ring true but I looked past them and found that I really enjoyed the book and I will definitely look out for the next one.

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## Mairead Hearne (swirlandthread.com) says

*'He must hunt her down. Kill her. Destroy her . . .'*

*Sacrifice* is the latest novel from German author Hanna Winter. Hanna writes under a pseudonym, her real name being Eva Rehberger. A successful catwalk and fashion model in her native Germany, she now has many successful novels to her name.

Published by Manilla, a new imprint of Bonnier Zaffre, I received my copy in return for my honest review.

*'In her very first case, criminal psychologist Lena Peters is confronted with a killer on a murderous vendetta.*

*And though she is unaware, Lena will play a prominent role in his deadly mission, because Lena knows what makes killers tick – she also knows all about obsession, for she has been close to the edge herself.*

*For now she is the hunter, but soon she will become the hunted.'*

*Sacrifice* is the first novel in a new crime series from Hanna Winter.

The main protagonist in the novel is Lena Peters, a criminal psychologist on her first case. New to the Berlin police unit, Lena is faced with the most brutal of cases.

A person, who has been tagged 'The Mutilator' is on the hunt. Women are disappearing and been rediscovered later abandoned and left for dead. The gap between these incidents is narrowing and there is frustration within the police force. No stone is being left unturned but yet the perpetrator of these horrendous crimes outwits them every step.

Lena, recently graduated, has an uncanny ability to get inside the minds of these psychotic individuals.

*'The abysses of the human soul hold a kind of fascination for me'*

But....The Mutilator's actions go beyond anything Lena has witnessed before.

Lena has a very secretive past that she keeps very close to her chest. Lena has been through some very traumatic experiences, the memories of which come over her in waves. She has been through tough situations which have contributed to her development as a criminal expert.

During the course of this very intense investigation, Lena partners up with Wulf Belling. Wulf is a cop who had been pushed into early retirement and is not happy to stay lying down. Lena and Wulf become unofficial partners as the search for 'The Mutilator' continues.

I'm not going to lie to you, this is a very gruesome and rather sadistic tale. The perpetrator of these crimes is a very unstable character, with a past that has left them a very twisted, psychotic and rather vile character.

Hanna Winter has written a novel with a very obvious view to sequel. The chapters I feel could have been that bit longer. Lena's past is not fully developed and I'm left wondering was that part of the plan? Was Hanna holding back more for the next book?

*Sacrifice* is a book that I'm sure will appeal to many fans of the 'serial killer' genre. As it is translated from German, I feel some of the personalities of the characters may have been lost in translation.

It will be interesting to read how these characters develop and how the partnership between Lena and Wulf is cemented in the next book in the Lena Peter's Series.

Thank you to Bonnier Zaffre and NetGalley for providing me with this ARC.

### **New Joint Book Imprint Manilla**

*A publishing home for books translated into English from throughout the Bonnier Books world.*

*In a new cross-border joint venture, Bonnier Books is bringing some of the top authors of its non-English publishers to an English-speaking public with Manilla, a new imprint that is a joint venture of Bonnier Zaffre in the U.K. and Ullstein in Germany.*

*The new imprint kicked off with six books from some of Ullstein's top authors during the spring, followed by another six later in the year for a total of 12 during 2016.*

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### **Candace says**

I liked the book for the most part. It seemed fairly simplistic, but it never really got deep into the killer's motivations. I understand that he was trying to preserve his sister by taking parts, but we don't really learn that until the very last few pages. I feel like the book scratched the surface of the case and didn't really delve into it like it could have. I gave it a four star rating, because it kept me reading. I breezed through it pretty quickly, wondering what would happen. Normally though, I don't care for mystery type books where you really have little chance of guessing who the killer is. I mean, we were supposed to guess it was the kid from her swimming lessons so many moons ago? Not likely, but entertaining nonetheless.

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## **Hermien says**

Not bad but a bit formulaic.

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## **Justine says**

\*3.75/5

This book was interesting and I read it very quickly, however I found that there was a big build up to the climax for it to end very quickly. I would have liked for the author to go into a little bit more into depth about the reasons behind the killings, especially as the main character specialises in the criminal mind. Overall, a great read and I'm looking forward to picking up the second one!

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## **Courtney Stewart says**

Couldn't put it down! One of my favourites

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## **Petra says**

Criminal psychologist Lena Peters is asked to assist in the hunt for a serial killer who collects body parts. New to the city and to the team, Lena tries to find her footing but isn't welcomed by everyone and soon clashes with her boss, Volker Drescher, a seemingly shady detective.

Sacrifice is the first book in this series set in Berlin. It was originally published in German in 2012. The follow-up, Seelenriss, is so far only available in German. As you would expect from a first in a series, Lena's background is introduced, which, unsurprisingly, isn't happy. Lena has a volatile relationship with her twin sister and leads a rather isolated life.

Told from multiple perspectives, including the deranged killer's, there were plenty of red herrings and a couple of developments that didn't make an awful lot of sense to me and when the culprit was finally revealed, it kind of materialized completely out of the blue. Still, this wasn't bad. Lena teams up with a retired detective, Wulf Belling, and gets some help from her neighbor, Lukas, and I quite enjoyed all their interactions. There was no cliffhanger as such, as the case was solved, but the end of the book leads immediately into the next one.

As with most translated work, the prose didn't always flow perfectly, but I've certainly read a lot worse. It was lacking suspense and considering Lena is a criminal psychologist, I would have liked to see more of the psychological aspects. She almost turned more into a private detective during the story. However, I felt invested enough to try the next one.

Many thanks to Bonnier Publishing for providing me with an ARC via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Katherine Sunderland says**

This is the first in a series from German author Hanna Winter and translated into English.

The book opens in Berlin with Lena Peters - our protagonist- feeling as if she is being chased. We hear how she "briefly considers calling the police" but then decides to deal with the situation herself, "just as she had always done". From these scant details, it is clear Lena is a woman who thinks nothing of putting herself at risk, of facing danger and obviously feels strong and capable enough to defend herself. The phrase "just as she had always done" suggests there is possibly a dark, hidden past to Lena which is compounded by the way a few drops of blood evoke a memory of the day when her parents had been burned to death in a car crash while herself and her twin sister Tamara were crushed in the back seat.

"All the time the fire-fighters were trying to free Lena, she clung to her mother's bloodied hand....refusing to let go....not even as the flames burst up around her mother."

So Winter sets the scene with our main character; a criminal profiler, a single woman who has moved to a new flat, new area and a new job investigating a series of murders. Lena is clearly talented. She has an "impressive academic background....outstanding marks in psychology and criminology but also excellent research into criminal profiling." However, there is an implication that Peters is damaged as "there are certain people that think this series of murders might be too much for you to handle," as well as Lena's own thoughts that she has her "own strategies" for solving the situation. Therefore the reader is comfortably prepared for a story in which the mystery behind the protagonist will be as intriguing as the mystery they are trying to solve. As the story progresses, Lena frequently has a feeling that she is being lied to or not being informed by the police of everything that is relevant to the case. This encourages empathy from the reader and a desire for her to succeed.

Peters pairs up with retired Police Officer Belling. It is an unlikely partnership but one that works well and gives Winter a chance to add a little more complexity to the plot as they both have backstories and interesting personal situations.

The murders are gritty and graphic, sadistic and perverted. The "Mutilator", as he comes to be called, uses drugs to inflict temporary paralysis of the muscular system so the victims cannot scream but can still feel pain. His anonymous voice which narrates some of the chapters suggests this is a man deluded and ultimately being controlled by someone else - or trying to impress someone else. He appears to be someone "outwardly conventional" who will behave in an "inconspicuous manner" which means he may be harder to catch. Lena's profiling is astute and Winter describes her exceptional observational skills which rival Sherlock Holmes.

As Winter clearly plans more books in this series, we are only given some details about Lena's past and her relationship with her twin sister. I actually found this part of the book really interesting and would love to read more about their history - I think it would make a good novel in itself!

The chapters are exceptionally short giving the book pace. The last line is a complete cliff hanger-obviously paving the way for part two- but it really is a killer ending! The language is clear, simple, blunt and makes for a very easy read. I don't know how much of this is down to the translation from the original or whether it is a fair reflection of Winter's prose, but it is very accessible and straightforward. For me personally, I didn't feel Berlin had quite the appeal of some of the "Nordic Noir" novels but the book doesn't really focus much on the setting or location and Berlin didn't feel like a "character" in the book. In fact, I felt that when the story moves to Edinburgh, there was much more physical sense of place.

As this is an honest review I feel I need to say that although I found the ending exciting and I did like Lena

as a character, I would have liked to see a bit more character development and a little bit more about her back story. However, I am certain this is to come in the subsequent novels and "Sacrifice" is a mere teaser of what is still to come. Occasionally the prose was a little stilted and cliched which again, could be due to translation, but I'm sure that this will also become more polished with the next novel. Winter evidently understands the necessary ingredients for a captivating crime thriller and can employ them effectively; I'm positive that she is a writer to watch out for.

Winter definitely has enough here to develop a series. I don't think this is the last we've seen of Lena Peters and I for one will be keeping an eye on her career as a criminal profiler.

My thanks to Bonnier Publishing for providing me with a ARC via NetGalley in return for an honest and fair review.

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### **Liz Barnsley says**

I had to DNF this one at 20%. It will appeal to fans of "serial killer" novels but I found the writing too simplistic (possibly some depth to characters and plot was lost in translation but thats not something I can quantify) and the story a little too cliché. Women stalked and killed (tick) Police investigators with issues (tick) which is actually fine if you connect with the characters or the story, I still love books like this, just not this one. A reader/story lack of sparkle.

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### **Naima says**

**\*\* I received this book through NetGalley and Bonnier Publishing in exchange for an honest review\*\***

I officially feel bad for giving this book three stars when I'm the only one that's reviewed its English version. I don't speak German, I know very little about Germany (aside from, you know, the racism my Muslim and Arab extended family has received within it), so I can't speak for the authenticity or the translation of German word to English sentiment. I *do* know that my general assessment of the book (3/5 stars) lines up with its German counterpart, Opfertod.

This book suffers from, well, a lack of substance. The characters were dry, the action mechanical, and I couldn't even get myself interested in the killer... which is a problem for a thriller that explicitly shows the killer's narrative. As a reader, I was lead in so many different directions (Lena's sister, Belling, that cop guy whose name I forgot) that I really just got lost and just let myself go along with the ride without getting too invested into the characters.

There's also a weird theme of misogyny in the book- which has to be internalized on Winter's part, because it's so subtle that it made me squirm. No female character other than Lena is portrayed in a positive light- and even Lena is only good because she's more 'traditionally masculine' (whatever the hell that means). You get tired of hearing about the woman (view spoiler) and feeling threatened by Lena because, in the end, the entire plot is stalled because of a manufactured jealousy plot that could've been subtracted without losing anything of value. I also didn't highlight it in my book, but I do faintly recall some weird racism and xenophobia in the book? Mainly with the (view spoiler).

It got really hammy and cheesy with lines about chess, and I still don't buy into the fact that (view spoiler)

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### **Maggie says**

If you like plenty of gore and blood this is for you I did not enjoy this book too graphic with severed body parts just horrid

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### **Emma says**

This was good, it was a little slow at the beginning. The twists and turns were great I enjoyed the friendship formed in this book and I'm exited to read more of Lena Peters in the future. ?

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### **Christine says**

Sacrifice is a promising debut by German author Hanna Winter. It has been translated into English and is the start of a series.

Psychologist Lena Peters has moved to Berlin, with her cat. She has a new job, as a profiler with the police. There is a sadistic and predatory killer, removing body parts from victims, at work in the city of Berlin. Unfortunately Lena finds herself on the wrong side of her boss, the erratic Volker Drescher, once too often. Lena get the sack. When she recognises one of the victims as an old school friend, it all starts to get personal. She is determined to capture the killer. She teams up with a retired detective, Belling, after an accidental meeting. Can she identify the killer? Has the killer already targeted her? Is she safe in Berlin?

This feels very much like the start of a series, like an author finding her feet and setting characters in place. We meet Lena and get to see how she thinks. She is almost what you would expect; slightly damaged, single and bad at relationships, with a complicated family history. Lena loves her cat though, which redeems her slightly in my eyes. It is only when she teams up with Wulf Belling, the ex-police officer and her computer nerd neighbour Lukas, she starts to come into her own. She is hunting a killer. I feel like we have only just touched the surface with Lena and her capabilities.

Now I love a good serial killer. I really do! This killer is at his most interesting, when we see him stalking his prey and incapacitating them. Nice touch! Not a man, I would hope to encounter on a dark night. I would have liked to have known more about the killer; to feel more outrage, more disgust, just more everything. I wanted his thoughts and his inner dark world. I ended up slightly distanced from him, hoping that he would shock me.

It will be interesting to see where this series goes. Lena shows great deal of potential as a character and I love the setting of Berlin. I was drawn to her and her side kick. This is definitely worth a read, if you are in the mood for a serial killer thriller.

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## **Breakaway Reviewers says**

A very promising crime debut

This is the first novel about Lena Peters a young criminal psychologist who has been asked to help profile and catch a serial killer in Berlin. His modus operandi is to mutilate each victim by removing a particular part of her anatomy, lips, nose, eyes, but even worse he uses a chemical on his victims which means they cannot move but are able to feel the excruciating pain.

Lena herself is a complicated character, she is revolted by the sight and smell of blood and we subsequently discover that her parents had burnt to death in a car crash with Lena and her twin sister Tamara crushed in the back seat.

Tamara is one of the characters that reoccur throughout the book, she has completely gone off the rails taking drugs and also has an 8 year old daughter who seems to be conveniently looked after by friends when Tamara turns up on Lena's doorstep with a baby boy. One of the other main characters is Wulf Belling, a police officer who has been pushed into early retirement, he has his own family problems but is desperate to return to his job and helps Lena with the search for the murderer. The previous psychologist working on the case, Cornelia Dobelli, has mysteriously disappeared together with her files and Lena suspects this has something to do with her current employer Volker Drescher.

The book moves at a smart pace, short chapters written from various character viewpoints including the murderer which is interesting as it gives some insight into why he is doing these crimes. However I always had the feeling that the author was holding some information back on all the characters and all the background stories and this becomes obvious at the end when although this murder is solved there is an obvious follow up to come when Lena receives a particular gift.

I will definitely be looking out for the next book in this series and hope it will provide more background surrounding the main characters. I feel the author has a lot more to tell us and I for one would like to read it.

Dexter

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review

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## **Themistokeles says**

Ich kann bei diesem Roman weder behaupten, dass mir die Spannung gefehlt hätte, noch, dass sie wirklich da war. Insgesamt ist es einfach bei mir eher so gewesen, dass ich den Roman irgendwie interessant genug fand, weiterlesen zu wollen, aber auch nicht wirklich spannend. Genau sagen, woran das lag, dass bei mir keine wirkliche Spannung aufkommen wollte, kann ich aber auch nicht.

Der Fall war auf jeden Fall vom Grundsatz her spannend und interessant und vielleicht hat bei mir nicht so recht Spannung aufkommen wollen, da ich sowohl den Kommissar nicht wirklich verstanden habe, von allen seinen Handlungen und Gedanken her, als auch Lena irgendwie nicht so wirklich in die Ermittlungen eingebunden wurde. Ich hatte die ganze Zeit das Gefühl Lena wäre nur eine Einzelkämpferin und auch die

Polizei würde sie eigentlich nicht haben wollen. Das führte daher dazu, dass die Geschichte nicht wirklich zusammenwachsen konnte. Sehr viel war einfach in Einzelteile zerstückelt, manche Bezüge waren nicht wirklich vorhanden und eigentlich wirkte es fast, wie zwei unterschiedliche Erzählungen, die nebeneinander laufen und durch großen Zufall irgendwann ein Treffen veranstaltet haben, das aber fast schon ein bisschen unglaublich wirkte.

Manche Dinge waren dann zudem im Verlauf der Geschichte einfach zu leicht zu durchschauen und andere, manchmal noch relevantere, konnte ich teilweise selbst nach der Auflösung nur schwer verstehen, da sie zwar irgendwie noch logisch erklärt wurden, aber es in der ganzen Geschichte keinerlei Hinweis in eine solche Richtung gab und es dann einfach wie aus den Wolken gegriffen wirkte. Ganz besonders die Auflösung des Ganzen fiel in dieses Vorgehen, was mich an dem Roman mit am meisten gestört hat, wirkte das Ende einfach extrem weit hergeholt.

Zudem konnte mir Lena noch nicht so recht nah kommen, da ihre Persönlichkeit irgendwie ein wenig abwesen bis unvollständig wirkte und ich hoffe irgendwie, dass diese in den Folgebänden noch ausgebaut wird und Lena einen tiefer gehenden Charakter bekommt, sowie auch die Fälle mehr Sinnzusammenhang bekommen, denn ansonsten wären die weiteren geplanten Teile nichts für mich.

Insgesamt zwar ein Thriller, den man gut lesen kann, bei dem mir aber manches gefehlt hat und daher auch kein wirklich erinnerungswürdiges Buch.

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