



Winterlude

Quentin Bates

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It's a bitter winter morning when Sergeant Gunnhildur is called to the scene of a violent killing in an abandoned industrial unit. Gunna and her sidekick Helgi quickly find that the battered victim had no shortage of enemies.

The case takes Gunna around Reykjavík's darker side and Helgi to the bleak rural district he grew up in as they work out who was prepared to take a grudge as far as murder.

Winterlude Details

Date : Published January 17th 2013 by Robinson

ISBN :

Author : Quentin Bates

Format : Kindle Edition 60 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Scandinavian Lite..., Nordic Noir

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From Reader Review Winterlude for online ebook

Karen says

If you've read any of the previous books, then you'll be familiar with the characters. This is just a wee stop gap in-between the 'proper' novels, weighing in at only 200 odd pages (and being e-book only), it was a short but sweet story and although it was much shorter than usual I was still left unsure of 'who dun it' until the end. Just waiting for the next one to arrive now..

Pat says

Love these characters...

Carol Alvarez says

a short crime novel with a terrific and sad story, you can feel the deep feelings in the characters. Amazing read!

Susan says

In this novella, Sergeant Gunna Gisladdottir and her partner Helgi are called to the scene of a violent killing in an abandoned industrial unit in Reykjavik. They discover that the victim had made no end of enemies due to his dishonest business practices. But the most plausible motive stems from the death of a child he hit while driving under the influence. The length of the story does not offer much scope for plot development but Gunna comes across as a very smart and likeable character.

Gary Van Cott says

It has been a while since I read the first two books in this series. This is listed as 60 pages on Amazon. It was only 99 cents for my Kindle. It was ok but not exciting and did not seem to advance our understanding of the main characters much. It is probably about the right length for a TV script, but I don't think it is interesting enough to be made into a TV mystery.

Paula Barrett says

Very predictable

No story depth here. Gunna should have been totally excluded and this could have been Helgi's story. There

was a buffet of interesting angles that should have been fleshed out with regard to Kjartan and his brothers. .All in all, a lot of missed opportunities.

IslandRiverScribe says

DISCLAIMER: For ease of typing and transferring content on specialized web pages, I have chosen not to use the accents that normally accompany the Icelandic names in this story. I do not mean any disrespect.

The Serious Crime unit in Reykjavik, Iceland, has been handed the case of a man found bludgeoned to death in a vacant warehouse. Normally, this kind of case would not come to Gunna Gísladóttir and her team, but it is not what was done but to whom it was done that prompts the assignment. About five years ago, Borgar Jonsson, a generally despised businessman with multiple enterprises, was convicted of vehicular manslaughter in the DUI death of a child riding a bicycle. Both the family of the boy and the public in general were outraged when Borgar received only eight years as a sentence. As a child killer, he had a less than stellar experience in prison; so, hoping to avoid a death on their hands, the prison authorities paroled Borgar after only four years. Now, two months later, Borgar is dead anyway.

With the victim the lead story in the news all over Iceland, Gunna and Helgi have their hands full sifting through the horde of suspects. To a man, they all declare that Borgar deserved what he got. They also declare that they did not give him what they feel he deserved. The most likely suspects, the boy's parents and Borgar's former business partner, have iron-clad, irrefutable alibis. But that doesn't mean that one of them didn't have someone do it for them.

At this point, Bates twists the storyline away from Gunna, our main series protagonist, to Helgi, when circumstances suggest that the killer resides in his old hometown. Helgi left there years ago for a reason and his return as a special investigator does not bode well.

It was good to experience more from Helgi's POV than usual. Bates has now given him an emotional depth to go along with the professional persona we have experienced previously. Like Gunna, Helgi was chosen for this special team because he possesses a unique skill set in terms of investigative technique. But he is not without flaws, and his trip back to his hometown is not without missteps. And these mistakes provide potential fodder for sub-plots in future entries to the series. Since Bates has already published two more books since this short story, I look forward to seeing if any of the hooks have caught their prey there.

Even though the majority of this 60-page short story revolves around Helgi's part of the investigation, Gunna has significant presence also, particularly as the de facto head of the team. Her respectful but straight-from-the-hip style of dealing with her team and with other cops as well as with suspects and witnesses is impressive and produces results.

To that end, Bates employs two scenes that are well worth watching for as you read. One takes place in the chapter titled, "Monday," when the executive director of the halfway house where Borgar lived ignores Gunna completely, assuming Helgi is the officer in charge simply because he's a man. Rather than taking public offense and correcting the man up front, Gunna and Helgi use the presumption to their advantage and manage, quite satisfactorily, to put the cretin back under his rock.

The other scene takes place in the same chapter. This scene involves Gunna and Saevaldur, the egotistical and shortsighted Chief Inspector who has been lobbying to become head of Gunna's unit. Forced by office

politics to take an elevator with Saevaldur, Gunna knows that some kind of devious verbal parlay is coming. Having learned the ramifications of criticizing this man in front of witnesses, she waits for the digs to commence, stops the elevator mid-flight and goes succinctly into “put-up-or-shut-up” mode. By the end of the short scene, you see how a year in her new position has matured her and you almost feel sorry for Saevaldur – almost, but not quite. And you will have a new expression for your verbal repertoire, particularly if you’re a Yank: “There’s no need to throw all your toys out of the pram!”

Bates has crafted a smartly paced bridging short story that is well worth the price being asked in spite of its small size. It is a concise tale that is more concerned with “who” than with “why.” According to every suspect, every interested party – and the killer – we already know why: He deserved it.

Camilo Rodríguez Gaviria says

His series is great. It reassembles Yrsa’s books. However, this one in particular felt rushed, quickly written as to fill a hole in the overall series. The lack of detail, suspense and the straightforward forward confessions made it too simple and plain.

Rosemary says

Winterlude - a review by Rosemary Kenny

At the Nesplasty warehouse that's part of and abandoned boatyard near Reykjavik a man's body is found by chance by Halldor, the local postman at the isolated village on the edge of woodlands, all of which is symbolic for the loneliness of society in rural areas, as well as in cities across the world. Sergeant Gunna and police partner Helgi are called to investigate and start by questioning the locals, in this tense drama by Quentin Bates.

Without a murder weapon or clue to what it may have been, the detectives' only real clue is a credit card in the name of Borgar Jonnson, that expired three years earlier. Helgi believes he's heard that name somewhere recently, but exact details evade his memory. Apart from that, post office owner Lara's statement that Jonnson used to be visited every few weeks by a mysterious stranger who didn't stay for long, is all they discover at that time, only noticed by chance, she insists.

What progress can be made without witnesses, suspect or weapon is a mystery, but the stylish mystery revealed within Winterlude, will haunt you for years to come!

Pamela says

Brothers

Gunna is a member of the serious crimes unit and stationed in Reykjavik. She sends Helgi, another team member, to the north of Iceland where he grew up, to assist in the investigation. This story is short, with major loose ends being tied up, and some minor ones being dropped. Helgi's work receives a larger part of

the focus of the story. Not as good as the first two books, and I still look forward to the next novel, which is full-length.

Laura says

I really enjoyed this novella, and found it more similar in pace and tone to the 2nd book than the 3rd - which is a good thing in my opinion. We get to know Helgi a lot better here, and the investigation proceeds at a good clip. I'd recommend this if you're a fan of the series - you don't really get much on Gunna here, and a lot of the Icelandic background is missing. I get the feeling he wrote this for fans - someone unfamiliar with the series wouldn't be likely to pick it up.

Charles van Buren says

Worth 99¢

Amazon describes this as having 60 pages, so it is a story not a novel. Working within that length Mr. Bates was still able to develop his characters enough to make them believable. I found it interesting that the murder victim had been convicted of killing a child while driving drunk, but was sentenced to only 8 years and served only 4. I am accustomed to sentences not being appropriate for the crime in the U.S., but was not aware that it was also a problem in Iceland. I did not find this story compelling enough to read it in one sitting. Instead, my reading was in bits and pieces over a period of two weeks. To me, only one of the police detectives was a truly sympathetic character. Other reviews have complained about the abrupt ending. The sudden end did surprise me to the extent that I looked to see if I had missed some pages. However, as several hours have passed, I find myself admiring the simple end of the story. Three and a half stars, but as I have to choose either three or four, I choose four.

COL(ret.) Frank J. Stech, PhD says

Bates does not disappoint, even in this short novella. He has really captured a lot of the uniqueness of Iceland and its amazing people. If course, there haven't been as many murders in Iceland as there are in the Nordic Noir genre. Amazing how civilized these Vikings are these days. Even the cops are pretty cool.

Kathleen says

Superbly written series with interesting characters and exposure to a different culture

Ken Fredette says

Helgi's the one who solved this mystery and a longer one that's been on the books unsolved for over 20 years. Gunna started him on this course of action because he grew up in the vicinity of the 4 men that had

been threatening to kill Borgar Jónsson, who ran over the son of one of them. You meet many characters who don't end up knowing the murder. A suspect is put under arrest but when Helgi tries to take his man in another brother says why he killed the man and why the brother had let him be believed as the killer stating another crime that had been committed 20 years prior. This was a good read if you like following all the leads that Gunna follows. It's a good story to read as following a police procedural. Read it, you won't be disappointed.
