



Helvetesilden

Karin Fossum

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Et barn blir funnet drept på brutalt vis i en gammel rusten campingvogn. Også moren er økset i hjel. For Konrad Sejer blir dette sterke kost. Den døde er Bonnie som arbeidet som hjemmehjelp og sønnen Simon. Vi treffer også alenemoren Mamma Mass og sønnen Eddie, og mange av Bonnies klienter. Historien veksler mellom tiden før og etter drapet, og leseren kan dermed være med å gjette på hvem morderen er.

Helvetesilden Details

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From Reader Review Helvetesilden for online ebook

Bonnie Brody says

I love Karin Fossum's novels and this one is no exception. It is a continuation of her Detective Konrad Sejer series but is quite different from previous books in this series. Like the others, it takes place in Scandinavia, mostly Norway and Denmark. It opens up with a brutal murder but focuses primarily on two parallel character studies of very different people. From the outset, the reader wonders how the characters are connected and it takes virtually the whole novel to figure this out.

Bonnie Hayden and her young son Simon are murdered brutally with a knife at beginning of the book. They are spending the night in a trailer on a farmer's property when the murder occurs. Bonnie is a single mom who works as a 'home help' in Norway. She and her son are very close and every day when Simon is let off at daycare, he cries for his mom.

Eddie Malthe and his mother Mass are very enmeshed. Eddie is 21 and his mother is 56 but Eddie acts like he's a child with a mean streak in him. Eddie is on disability for some obscure psychiatric disorder. They have a dog named Shiba who is old and ill and is much-loved by Mass. Eddie takes joy in pulling Shiba's tail every chance he gets because he is jealous that Shiba takes his mother's attention. Eddie is obsessed about finding out about his dead father who left Mass for a younger and prettier woman when Eddie was a young boy.

Sejer is the detective assigned to Bonnie's murder and, unlike previous books in this series, he does not play a very prominent role. There is the usual police work and interrogations but the novel focuses on the character studies of Bonnie, Eddie and Mass. Chapters alternate between Bonnie and Eddie's past, working up to the present time when the murder occurred.

There appears to be an underlying political theme to this novel as Sejer and his crew discuss repeatedly how criminals are let out of prison after 2 years or so rather than serving adequate sentences for their crimes. I think that Fossum is trying to send a message that there is too much leniency in Norway with punishments for gruesome crimes.

What I especially loved about this book is that no character is left unexamined. Every person who is on these pages is brought to life by Ms. Fossum. I felt like Eddie, Mass and Bonnie could be in the next room. I envisioned little Simon pining for his mother at the nursery. I even appreciated how the author brought to life the people who Bonnie worked for as a home help. This is a literary mystery, with unusually fine characterization. I await Ms. Fossum's next book eagerly!

Jessica Woodbury says

I love the Inspector Sejer series, it's been my favorite Scandinavian crime series by far. But in the last few years Fossum's gone in a different direction. She no longer wants to take you through a procedural, she wants to examine the killer in more detail. So there's no more question of who did it. (You figure it out pretty early here, since otherwise there's no reason for the character to exist in the story.) And just like last time with *Bad Intentions*, that's fine, but I still preferred the old Sejer novels and spending more time with Sejer himself.

Hell Fire and the more recent Fossum novels are a good fit for the person who enjoys knowing a crime has happened and then seeing the circumstances that led up to it play out in great detail. And this is a worthy effort in that way, especially because of the parallels between the killer and the victims' families, two single mothers with sons. It just wasn't quite the right fit for me.

Lora says

Caregiver Bonnie Hayden, a single mother with a preschool son, Simon, is scraping by financially. When they are found viciously murdered in a neglected trailer, Inspector Sejer, wonders who might of wanted them dead, since Bonnie had no apparent enemies. The story of the investigation into the killings is alternated with the tale of the last six months of Bonnie's and Simon's lives. Fossum also adds a third storyline, that of loner Eddie Malthe, who lives with his mother, Mass. Eddie has a cruel streak and seems psychologically unstable. In Hell Fire, Fossum depicts the daily lives of these characters as they proceed to their shattering conclusions. A heartbreak tale of fate, love, and loss.

Anne-Jan says

Karin Fossum, met inmiddels 15 boeken op haar naam, is een zéér geliefd schrijfster van thrillers. Lange tijd bleef het stil en sommigen vroegen zich af of ze wellicht gestopt was met schrijven. Nu, 4 jaar na haar laatst verschenen boek, is dan eindelijk het 12e deel verschenen in de populaire serie met inspecteur Konrad Sejer ; Veenbrand.

Uitgeverij Marmer brengt samen met deze nieuwe titel ook een aantal eerder verschenen titels uit de Sejer serie opnieuw uit, met prachtige nieuwe covers in een voordelige editie. Internationaal behoort Fossum tot de top van de Scandinavische thrillerauteurs en haar werk is in meer dan twintig landen vertaald.

Op het terrein van een boer, worden in een oude afgedankte caravan, 2 lichamen gevonden. Een jonge vrouw is samen met haar 5 jarige zoontje op gruwelijke wijze vermoord. Wie er verantwoordelijk is voor deze laffe daad is voor Inspecteur Konrad Sejer en zijn collega Jacob Skarre een groot raadsel. Vijanden leek de vrouw niet te hebben, dus over het motief van de dader tast men vooralsnog in het duister.

Lange tijd heb ik er naar uitgekeken, een nieuw boek van deze Noorse thriller-koningin. Ik was dan ook ontzettend blij, samen met vele andere Fossum fans, toen er eindelijk nieuws was over een nieuw boek. Via de uitgever kreeg ik de kans het boek al eerder te lezen. Vandaag is het 24 maart 2016 en vanaf nu ligt Veenbrand in de winkel.

Veenbrand voelt als een feest van herkenning. Het begint met de vondst van de 2 lijken van een jonge moeder en haar kind. Een vrouw die altijd voor iedereen klaarstond en nooit iets teveel was. Waarom had iemand zoveel woede en haat in zich, dat juist zij en haar onschuldige kind uit de weg geruimd moesten worden?

Het verhaal speelt zich af in 2005 en Fossum gooit 3 prachtige verhaallijnen uit in haar prachtig beeldende en kenmerkende schrijfstijl. Een verhaal waarin ze ook dit keer weer al haar gevoel en inlevingsvermogen in gestopt heeft. Ik zou het boek niet zo zeer omschrijven als een thriller maar een prachtige misdaadroman. Het is dan ook geen boek dat bol staat van de spanning maar Fossum weet ons wederom te verrassen met een

literair pareltje. De zoektocht van Sejer en Skarre naar de dader. Een moeder die haar dochter wil beschermen voor de geheimen die ze wellicht had. En de wat vreemde, 21 jarige jongen en zijn moeder. Fossum weet deze 3 fijne verhaallijnen op een prachtige wijze tot elkaar te laten komen en naadloos in elkaar te laten vloeien.

Veenbrand zal de vele Fossum fans hun (thriller)hart weer sneller doen kloppen, maar ook nieuwe lezers die voor het eerst kennis maken met haar werk zullen hierna smachten naar de rest van haar boeken.

★★★★

Maud says

Schitterend boek van Karin Fossum en alweer een fantastisch verhaal met inspecteur Konrad Sejer. Zeer ontroerend ...ik heb er heerlijk van genoten !

Viv JM says

I was in the mood for a bit of a murder mystery so I picked this one up from the library. In many ways, it was very good. For crime fiction, I thought the characters were very detailed and well drawn - I especially liked that the elderly home care clients were portrayed so compassionately, even though they were minor characters. However, for a thriller it just wasn't terribly, well, *thrilling*. It was pretty obvious from the start who the murderer was and the red herrings thrown in along the way seemed a bit half hearted (ooh, this person has a red car too!)

Lukasz Pruski says

"It was always the small things, the links between people and where they could lead."

Another great book from Karin Fossum, one of my most favorite mystery writers. So far I have reviewed nine of her books on *Goodreads*, and rated two of them (*Black Seconds* and *The Murder of Harriet Krohn*) with five stars, a very rare rating for this very picky and fussy reader. Of hundreds of authors in the crime/mystery genre that I have read in over 50 years, Ms. Fossum joins only Nicolas Freeling and Denise Mina in the select trio of mystery writers for whom I feel a deep, total, and virtually uncritical admiration. They just seem never to have written anything that I wouldn't at least like a lot. (After the rating I am trying to explain the reasons why I love Ms. Fossum's books so much.)

As far as I know *Hell Fire* (2014) is the newest work by Ms. Fossum to appear in English translation. Inspector Sejer is on the scene of a brutal murder of a young woman and her five-year-old son. The story shifts to half a year earlier and we meet a single mother, Mass, living with her adult son, Eddie, who has not quite adapted to societal norms and is unable to hold a job. We follow the two parallel and interleaving threads: one of Bonnie and Simon, the future victims, and the other of Mass and Eddie.

Of course we know almost right away who committed the crime, but the mystery lies in the reasons and motives. Many readers will not be disappointed in the denouement, which is one of the most unexpected for

Ms. Fossum. I prefer her usual unsurprising ones.

Bonnie is employed as a home health aide; to me the best thing in the novel is the portrayal of her work with the elderly and handicapped. The scene of cleaning Erna's house, after first dressing the table legs in multiple pairs of socks, is unforgettable. Erna, one of the background characters, is painted so vividly that I could swear I know her. Also, the novel is desperately sad. It shows, without being overtly didactic, the social consequences of broken families and unwanted children.

Translation is far from stellar. Not being a native speaker of English I have been able to spot numerous awkward phrases. I have doubts about several words: for instance, the alcohol that characters drink in the novel is likely the Scandinavian specialty, *akvavit*, for some reason translated as *eau de vie*. Sure, it means the same thing, but they drink akvavit in Norway, not *eau de vie*.

Hell Fire is certainly not a five-star book. While I loved reading it - I will probably never not love anything written by the author - there is not much in it that wouldn't feel as just another instance of a standard template of a Fossum's novel. It sort of reads as the author's manifesto "all my novels are like this."

Four stars.

(I revere Ms. Fossum's novels for four reasons. First, she is not much interested in the whodunit aspect of the story. People and their motivations are her main focus. This is precisely what interests me: I want to know **why** rather than trying to figure out **who** did it. Second, and perhaps most important: Ms. Fossum is never judgmental: even the brutal murderers of children are portrayed in her novels as human beings. It would be so easy to condemn the evil beasts that they are, but instead she tries to comprehend what made them commit the acts of brutality. To grossly oversimplify, I don't think she believes people are born evil.

The two other reasons for my adoration of Ms. Fossum's work are related to her writing. Other than the crime that sets up the plot, nothing much seems to happen in her stories. We do not have any "twists or turns"; we read about ordinary, everyday events, and ordinary life. Inspectors Sejer and Skarre thoroughly and patiently do their work, and Sejer then conducts his slow questioning of the accused. Finally, I love Ms. Fossum's quiet, understated writing style: no big words, no flourish, no hyperbole. Just the "small things.")

Diane S ? says

3.5 Had a hard time deciding what to rate this one because I did admire what the author did here. Somewhat of a departure in format from her others. Starts with the finding of a mother and son stabbed to death in a caravan and it is not graphically described for the squeamish, or at least not overly so. So from the beginning we know the who, and shortly will know who the killer is but not why nor how they connect. Then the back stories of these characters are described in alerting chapters. Of course Inspector Sejer and his team are investigating so we learn about the current investigation. Two mothers and two sons relentlessly marching toward their unknown fate.

Missed seeing more of Sejer, but this is a tightly plotted and well written story. Not as dark as many of hers but just dark enough to entice. There are still many secrets to be revealed, but I am not a big fan of knowing who did it at the beginning of the book. Still, well worth reading especially for Fossum fans and those who like solid, well done stories.

ARC from publisher.

Lynn says

Another sad murder in rural Norway. Inspector Sejer police procedurals always seems especially tragic and sensitive.

Dana Jepson says

What a heartbreakin suspense novel! It's like a train wreck happening that you can't look away.

Linda Branham Greenwell says

There are two separate narratives that each focus on a single mother and son.

One story is of the victims--Bonnie Hayden and her son, Simon. Bonnie is an attractive woman who has made the best of her hardships. She's very protective of Simon, who suffers from separation anxiety when she drops him off at nursery school. To barely make ends meet, she works cleaning homes and running basic errands for the elderly and disabled.

The 2nd story is about twenty-one-year-old Eddie Malthe lives at home with his single mother, and barely remembers his father. He has no formal diagnosis, but is clearly on the autism spectrum (I am a psychiatric nurse, specializing in autism, and I recognize Eddie's key features). Abandoned by his now deceased father, who ran off with another woman, Eddie is obsessed with finding his grave somewhere in Copenhagen
Not enough Sejer

switterbug (Betsey) says

Norwegian writer Karin Fossum never fails to impress me with her diverse varied format approaches in writing crime fiction. My favorite, THE INDIAN BRIDE, transcends genre and fits more squarely into literature. Her focus is on characters and/or communities, but her novels have such varied design that you can be sure of a fresh structure to each book.

HELLFIRE is an Inspector Sejer story, like most of Fossum's books. Konrad Sejer is a laid-back, middle-aged widower-detective who is both thorough in his work and benevolent in his humanity. He is trying to solve the murder of a mother and her five-year-old son who were found in an abandoned caravan, stabbed to death. The bloodied knife was left at the crime scene, without fingerprints. In this crime, the questions are who and why.

There are two separate narratives that each focus on a single mother and son. One storyline is of the victims--Bonnie Hayden and her son, Simon. Bonnie is an attractive woman who has made the best of her hardships. She's very protective of Simon, who suffers from separation anxiety when she drops him off at nursery

school. To barely make ends meet, she works cleaning homes and running basic errands for the elderly and disabled.

Twenty-one-year-old Eddie Malthe lives at home with his single mother, and barely remembers his father. He has no formal diagnosis, but is clearly on the autism spectrum (I am a psychiatric nurse, specializing in autism, and I recognize Eddie's key features). Abandoned by his now deceased father, who ran off with another woman, Eddie is obsessed with finding his grave somewhere in Copenhagen.

As the storylines alternate, and Sejer pursues the investigation, the reader is pulled deeper into the lives of the mothers and their sons, and the secrets that can shatter families. Fossum, as always, does a meticulous job of rounding out her characters. But, as fleshed out as the cast is, I wasn't that invested, because they didn't compel me. The lack of early intervention for Eddie seemed more urgent than the sharing of family secrets, but I don't think Fossum intended it that way. I was more concerned with the medical resources he was lacking than the need to hear the truth about his father.

As for Bonnie and her parents, the past devastation had an impact on her life, but the ties to the theme felt late and forced. Fossum generally hooks me in more fruitfully to her social issues, but in this book, I thought it sputtered. The plot advancement occasionally stalled, and was redundant, and at times I just wanted to get on with it.

It took a while for the tension to mount, while moving toward a few surprise twists towards the end. But, despite a late reveal being organic to the characters, it was also less imaginative and nuanced than the Fossum books that have grabbed me in the past. It could be just individual preferences, but I wasn't rewarded in the end. It lacked the understated charisma, or the impact, that I usually associate with her books. There was satisfactory closure, but I merely sighed at the end.

Andy Weston says

It's a gamble to read something late in a series. This is the 11th Inspector Sejer novel, but with Fossum's work that really doesn't matter.

I have previous experience with the author. I started with the very tremendous *I Can See In The Dark*, and then moved to *Sejer 7 - The Murder of Harriet Kohn*.

Actually Sejer has a remarkably small role in this, as in *Harriet Kohn*. Fossum's writing is so different than your stereotypical crime mystery. Her books are so much better for it. She manages to create tremendous tension, even though there is very little about the investigation, and the book is certainly not a whodunnit.

Hell Fire is written in particularly simple language. That suits her characters, Bonnie and Simon are a mother and young son finding hard to make ends meet, and Mass and Eddie, another mother and son with social problems. It is that familiar contrast between innocence and evil though that she concentrates on, and as the novel progresses.

Another real appeal of Fossum is that her story is not fantastical. This is our society, and every reader will admit that this sort of dreadful incident could and does take place around our towns and cities.

Ken Fredette says

Inspector Sejer seems to never get out of his late 50's but he goes constantly after the murder. This book was about secrets and how they played out in the lives of different people. They all came back to haunt two people. A 5 years old boy and his mother.

Kerrie says

I'd almost forgotten how very readable this series is.

We see the action of the novel from three points of view: Bonnie works as a home help. She has a small son Simon and is a single mother. Christmas is approaching. Bonnie visits ten homes a week, and there are little vignettes from each of her visits. In the same time frame we meet Mass and her 21 year old son Eddie. Eddie appears to have something similar to Asbergers and is unable to work. He is very anxious to know more about his father whom his mother says died in Denmark some years earlier. But in reality what Mass tells Eddie is a tissue of lies. In the third scenario we jump to Inspector Sejer and the investigation into a double murder six months later.

The interesting thing for me was that this police procedural felt almost pedestrian until the breakthrough came. Sejer fairly quickly discovers the identity of the bodies in the caravan but when he contacts the family they give him edited versions of the facts, leaving out bits they didn't think he needed to know.

The fact that the novel jumps between three narratives and a time frame that spans over six months keeps the reader on their toes. A couple of red herrings are thrown in just to create some false trails.

Easy to see why Karin Fossum is so highly thought of. As you will see from the list below, I generally enjoy her books.
