



## Hour of the Wolf

*Håkan Nesser , Laurie Thompson (Translator)*

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**The master of Swedish crime fiction returns with this latest entry into the internationally acclaimed, award-winning mystery series—one of the darkest tales yet in the series that is, as well, an electrifying stand-alone novel.**

In the middle of the night, a boy is struck by a car after leaving his girlfriend's house. The driver, drunk, leaves the boy's body by the side of the road and, wrestling with guilt, tries to put it all out of his mind—until a blackmail note arrives. In the meantime, Reinhart, the new chief inspector of the Maardam police force, has set his team to work. But a second, possibly related killing proves that this is no ordinary case. The police, desperate for answers, struggle to decipher the clues to these appalling crimes, but as the killer becomes increasingly unhinged and unpredictable, Van Veeteren, now retired, is compelled to re-enter the world he left behind. He will face the greatest trial of his career as he seeks vengeance for the death of someone who was close to him. Told with Håkan Nesser's trademark eye for detail, breakneck plotting, and gut-wrenching moral tension, *Hour of the Wolf* finds the Nordic noir superstar spinning one of his most spellbinding tales yet.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## Hour of the Wolf Details

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Author : Håkan Nesser , Laurie Thompson (Translator)

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## From Reader Review Hour of the Wolf for online ebook

### Margaret Wichorek says

Another great one from Nesser. This one is about a man who makes a decision to drive home after an evening with friends, even though he has had too much to drink. So this, including the dark and rainy night, leads him to hit a young boy walking home that evening because he missed the last bus. He stops, but the boy is already dead, having hit his head on the concrete culvert beside the road. So, he makes another bad choice and drives off. Several days later, he receives a letter. The writer drove by the accident and recognized the driver and, of course, wants money, which leads to yet another bad choice. This is a very absorbing mystery by one of the best of the Scandinavian writers. It's also a very sad story, as one of the victims is Insp. Van Veeteren's only son. He is retired now, but gets very involved in the case, naturally. Loved it.

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### Lynn says

My favorite so far in this great series. This is a police procedural with heart and teamwork. The Chief Inspector is the emotional center even if he's retired. Excellent.

Hopefully the next books will be published in the U.S. soon.

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### Roman Clodia says

*'Life is a tangle of remarkable connections.'*

My first Nesser and I wonder how he's managed to evade me till now - thanks Jola and Rachel for correcting this!

As someone who gets very grumpy when faced with the more gothic and spectacularly melodramatic end of the crime spectrum (insane psychopaths driven by pop-psychology explanations of childhood trauma, serial killers who commit murders by tying their victims to giant clock mechanisms in order to tear them apart...), this book suited me perfectly with its normality. Make no mistake, there are some horrible killings here but they're rendered all the more impactful precisely because of the way the narrative doesn't detract from them by over-accessorising.

Nesser's prose is bare and pared-back throughout, but his police team are given real lives, histories and personalities - even though I've come to the series mid-way through, it's clear from the banter and personal interactions that they continue to 'live' outside of, and between, the books.

The plot itself is an unusual one - one which is focalised alternatively via the killer and the police. Despite it not following a conventional whodunnit formula, the narrative remains tense and a page-turner as we watch the police catching up with, and filling the gaps in, the story we've at least partly seen for ourselves.

Making use of chaos theory and pacing its revelations, this is an adult book in that it swaps gore and B-list

'twists' for something all the more chilling precisely because we can kind of understand how everything happens in a dark, nightmarish way.

Hakan Nesser, I'm glad I've found you!

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### **Sharon says**

Håkan Nesser. Number 7 Van Veeteren mystery series.

If there is a librarian out there that can help sort out the messed up listings of HAKAN to Håkan Nesser...please help. I will do anything you need to assist. It is a mess...

This was the best Håkan Nesser VV books yet even though he is retired to the bookshop he comes into the story again and again. Truly a story of chilling circumstances that lead to consequences that ruin five lives and affect many others. Highly recommend it as a very good read,

I read iBook and his books are good priced and available in the iBook Store. The trick is knowing that most of his books seem to receive more than one title in English so it becomes important to follow the number in the series in my view. This was VV 7 and I have just downloaded 8 due later in April The Weeping Girl to be followed in September with The Strangler's Honeymoon VV #9!

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### **William says**

audio I liked this even though I knew the story from the tv program. The homicide department seems to be back in proper performance. This is probably the end of VV's participation which is what should happen to main characters with a semblance to reality.

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### **Claire says**

Van Veeteren is not my favourite detective, but the thrillers that have him as MC are very decent. Good pace, attention to details and lifelike persons.

In this novel everything starts with an ordinary, stupid accident which is the start of a lot of violence. The starting point is ok, but the thoughts and the actions of the characters are illogical at times.

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### **Christie says**

Excellent. I will be reading all other books by this author

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## Rachel Hall says

As a long-term fan of this series, I have found plenty to admire in the previous six instalments, however *Hour of the Wolf* is one of the most magnetising outings yet, both for the horrific devastation unleashed by one single action, and the very personal responses it evokes from within the Maardam CID when one of their own is affected. After fifteen-years at the helm of CID, former Chief Inspector Van Veeteren is approaching two-years since his retirement and new role as part-owner of Krantze's antiquarian bookshop. Since calling time on his thirty-year career, Van Veeteren has advised and never quite detached himself from his former colleagues or his vocation. However, when he is personally affected and subject to the travesty of burying his own son, he is gripped by an inability to come to terms with Erich's fate and is driven back by the determination to right a highly personal wrong. Despite his blossoming relationship with new love interest, Ulrike Fremdli, he finds himself filled with an emptiness, unable to sleep and at a loss as to how to cope with a very different chapter in his life. It is also not until Erich is murdered that Van Veeteren has reason to be pulled back into the police arena in a more determined capacity, regularly meeting with Reinhard and privy to recordings of the discussions within the team. However Nesser does not begin this story with the demise of Erich but the sobering reality that means his death is a necessary consequence of a man acting on his own terrifying rationale to salvage something of his life after what he increasingly justifies as a mere accident.

From the opening pages Nesser makes clear his intention to deliver a tense encounter with an insight into the chaos that one moment of madness can unleash on society and what begins with extinguishing one life sets in motion a sequence of events that go on to touch the lives of many. Sixteen-year-old Wim Felders leaves his girlfriend's house with the intention of returning to his family home, until his encounter with a drunk driver leaves him dead in a roadside ditch. When his conscience initially prevails the driver stops to check on his accidental victim and seeing that the body is clearly dead he makes an exit under the cover of pelting rain and woodland darkness. His drunken thinking is that compensating for a ruined life by sacrificing another, specifically his own, gains nothing. When there are no repercussions after an appeal for information, his anxiety is allayed and he begins to tell himself that the whole business has simply been down to factors beyond his control. But the minute he thinks can let his guard down and make the most of his own remaining years he is subject to an extortion attempt by an unknown blackmailer. From that moment onwards the killer decides to scupper the blackmailers plans and approach things an alternative way by hijacking the intended cash pick-up and in turn taking a second life, specifically that of Erich Van Veeteren, but as the financial demands are reasserted, the driver is faced with the dawning realisation that he is caught in a much bigger web of complications. In the event to identify the killer that a resolve and frustration amongst the remaining CID department as a series of dead-ends bring them no closer to answers (as Reinhard eloquently states, "our case is about as substantial as a vegan on laxatives"). As CID stumble on without any significant leads it takes a third death for pathologist, Meusse, to suggest a concordance between the two intentional murders and open up future avenues for exploration.

After returning from paternity leave, Chief Inspector Reinhart leads this investigation with Detective Investigator Ewa Moreno at his side and Rooth and Jung heavily involved. Notably after the frisson of chemistry between Moreno and Münster in the last outing, Münster's enforced medical absence means that this story takes a backseat. However given that this is a team who have all been consistently well-depicted and whose lives have steadily evolved there is always a comfortable rapport. *Hour of the Wolf* is dually compelling from the perspective that the reader is privy to far more information than the police and that Nesser offers an insight into the mind of the killer as he finds himself lured into a game of complex strategy with a blackmailer which causes him to resort to drastic lengths. The title is taken from the Ingmar Bergman film and refers the hours between night and dawn when the sleepless are haunted by their worst nightmares and the reality of their actions strikes anew with each fresh day.

In terms of structure, this bears much resemblance to the unfolding investigation in *Woman with Birthmark*, which combined multiple perspectives and proved similarly powerful. Nesser's narrative is typically crisp and helps to engender a hard hitting storyline, which brings some typically weighty reflections, flashes of intuition and eventual conclusions from Van Veeteren which prove crucial to breaking the horrific sequence and bringing resolution to several grieving families. Methodical, entirely logical and frequently futile, *Hour of the Wolf* shows that even with a plethora of resources behind an enquiry, luck often plays an enormous role.

Whilst *Hour of the Wolf* will undoubtedly work as standalone it is as ever best approached with a background knowledge of the characters who comprise Maardam CID and with Van Veeteren's own personal relationship with his son in mind. Although in essence a police procedural, this is a novel very much grounded in the psychology and logic of a killer with nothing to lose and although he progresses rather too swiftly from accidental killer to intentional murderer to be plausible, the novel offers an insight into the very long journey of making those that are accountable face the consequences of their actions. What is especially poignant is the harrowing knowledge that some individuals are merely collateral damage in a chain of events and the fact that without the son of the esteemed Chief Inspector caught up in the crossfire, the hit-and-run incident would have gone unresolved and left Wim Felders parents in the dark surrounding his tragic death.

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### **Richard says**

Wonderful story in this strong cannon of detective fiction around a fiction place where intelligence and intuition go hand in hand with old fashioned leg work. The key player is Chief Inspector Van Veeteren, retired, but compelled back to an investigation when a murder happens closer to home than he could ever imagine.

The story is about chance events and encounters and how various decisions can impact on your life and the future of complete strangers beginning with the missing of a late bus.

Well written of course, reflecting on various characters and their motivations. This is never difficult to read and quickly reaches an end that arrives when you could easily go another 100+ pages at a canter. I am a real fan of Hakan Nesser and his detective although retired still looms large in the consciousness of the detective force he left behind. I enjoy the true to life situations and dilemmas his characters face.

As always another book awaits one to read in this terrific series.

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### **Truman32 says**

Apparently when not constructing IKEA furniture with tiny Allen wrenches, eating scrumptious round chokladbolls, or dancing to Ace of Bass, the Swedish folk are committing heinous acts of murder. Thankfully there are talented writers such as Stieg Larsson, Henning Mankell, and Hakan Nesser to warn the rest of the world that we all need to stay as far away from this hellish Nordic land of deviant slaughter and bloody barbarity as possible. Their well-conditioned (and very very soft) blonde hair and the fuzzy hoods of their winter jackets only mask the savage brutality of the average Swedish citizen's true inner character.

**Hour of the Wolf** is Hakan Nesser's newest crime novel. It tells the story of an ordinary Swedish man who one night while driving home inebriated, hits and kills a young man with his car. Despite a moment of guilty indecision, he leaves the accident and continues home hoping to forget the entire horrible mess. But soon notes come in his mail, blackmail notes demanding money in exchange for keeping his terrible crime a secret and he is drawn down a terrible path of violence, bloody clubbings, and multiple murders. One of the casualties is the son of retired chief inspector Van Veeteren and soon the entire Maardam police force is on the case, hunting this killer before he can strike again.

**Hour of the Wolf** is my first novel from Nesser, one of Sweden's most popular crime writers. The chapters are told from the perspective of both the police detectives investigating the crime as well as the agitated point of view of the killer. This along with the large cast of characters on the Maardam police team involved in the inquiry reminded me of John Sandford's Prey series. But while Sandford's stories of his Minneapolis police detectives are more humorous and procedural, Nesser's team—led by new Chief Inspector Reinhart—are more atmospheric and somber in tone. Maybe it is the cultural gap (or the fact I am starting this series 10 books in), but his team came across as withdrawn, and not well differentiated. The mystery is shelved several times as Nesser instead focuses on the human impact of the violence and the sorrow felt by the loved ones of the dead. This gives the story a level of compassion and empathy that is seldom found in the more straightforward and easily disposable mystery titles. Overall, a good read, and I find it interesting to discover through fiction how our international brothers handle their crime.

...particularly in such a crime-ridden cesspool like Sweden where no amount of umlauts or extra vowels in their words can hide the stink of delinquency in this god forsaken country of scoundrels. Seriously, if you take only one thing away from this review it's to stay the heck away from Sweden.

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## **Mridu aka Storypals says**

You can read kind my review here as well: <http://storypals.net/book-report-hour...>

### **HOUR OF THE WOLF**

I was in one of those moods where I wanted to read some good mystery, something psychotic and something very dangerous.

The blurb of the book said that it got someone howling in pain which is why I instantly picked it up.

Also, Håkan Nesser has been on my radar for a while now and it all went like uh what the heck let's just read this book.

NO spoilers, will not reveal who killed who and what happened in the book.

Okay, so. Let's get into it.

### **WHAT HOUR OF THE WOLF IS ABOUT?**

In the dead of night, in the pouring rain, a drunk driver smashes his car into a young man. He abandons the body at the side of the road, but the incident will set in motion a chain of events which will change his life forever. Soon Chief Inspector Van Veeteren, now retired from the Maardam police force, will face his

greatest trial yet as someone close to him is, inexplicably, murdered. Van Veeteren's former colleagues, desperate for answers, struggle to decipher the clues to this appalling crime. But when another body is discovered, it gradually becomes clear that this killer is acting on their own terrifying logic.

#### MY THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT HOUR OF THE WOLF.

"The ritual works. The forms overcome doubts. We have learned over the centuries to weave meaning around emptiness and pain. A meaning and a pattern. We have been practising that for a very long time."

It wasn't the best of the mystery books that I have read. Honestly, I have read much better mystery and a much better plot. However. The book is so well written that you just can not keep the book down. You will want to read the book for the writing and not the plot.

Strange but that happened to me.

#### LISTING OUT THE THINGS THAT I ABSOLUTELY ENJOYED IN THE HOUR OF THE WOLF.

Starts out strong as a Hitchcockian thriller involving a hit-and-run killer, a blackmailer, and a detective all with their own mindset and drive hunting one another. I remember reading the first chapter at 2 in the night and that too on a working night, I literally had to force myself to stop reading and go to sleep, however that intrigue in the book was murdered with a number of murders in the book.

I LOVED HOW PSYCHOTIC OUR MAIN LEAD WAS. Hahaha, yeah. It's true, I loved the devil side of him, I loved the way he was thinking and I wanted so much more from him, I wanted more from his perspective and not other people, uurgghh, reading about any other character was just getting on my nerves because they were so darn boring. I do wish the book was just told from his perspective and the mystery/thrill was built around it.

Yeah, pretty much that.

#### WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IN THE HOUR OF THE WOLF?

This book had potential which is why, if it ever gets auctioned for a movie, they should definitely contact me because I have some pretty great ideas as to how to pitch the story/ storytelling.

First and foremost, the storytelling should be linear and avoid the too many details which weren't really needed. ( I know it is a part of a series and some characters have been developed over the time and people wanted to know about them and blah blah, but I found that information to be really boring and not relevant- HENCE AVOID.)

I want the lead/ villain to be shown in both the lights but his darker side to being completely inhumane like he will do whatever it takes to save himself and just himself.

Police/ detectives to be not dumb but actually intelligent with good case studies for the audience to consume and actually confuse them more with what is happening.

Exploring the psychology of our main lead/ villain.

Pacing to be more fast paced with better character understanding. The introduction of the characters to be done in a completely different way.

I think that's all.

This book can do so- so much with the cast of characters and the plot it had. But you wouldn't be completely disappointed with the book as the writing is something you would delve yourself in. would

I would definitely pick up another Håkan Nesser book in the future.

RATING: 3/5 STARS



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## **Sari Gilbert says**

### **A great Swedish police procedural**

This is Nesser at his best! Great plot, unexpected, built around the murder of a retired Van Veeteren's somewhat estranged son. Well written and fantastically translated by the late Laurie Thompson.

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## **Lukasz Pruski says**

I am reluctant to assign five stars to a mystery novel that is in no way a literary masterpiece. Hakan Nesser's "Hour of the Wolf" does not have the sociological depths of Denise Mina's "Gartnethill". It does not have the simple beauty of some of Karin Fossum's best work. Yet it is such a darn good book. On the surface it is a police procedural, one in Mr. Nesser's Chief Inspector Van Veeteren series, which is located in a fictitious country in Northern Europe that seems like a cross between the Netherlands and Sweden, with some neighboring countries mixed in. When one looks deeper though, the novel is a treatise on guilt and human weakness, a contemplation of this side and the other side of our existence and non-existence.

I think that older people will appreciate this novel more than the young ones. One has to acknowledge the unavoidable proximity of the other side to understand some of the undercurrents present in the book. I was stricken by a beautiful sentence: "The dead are older than the living." I first thought it a quote from some famous philosopher. Not so. It seems to be Mr. Nesser's own. Beautiful. And wise.

To me "Hour of the Wolf" is the best of the six Nesser's novels I have read. It has an engrossing plot, economical and simple writing, and everything that happens in the plot leads to the final solution. As an icing on the cake it has an extremely funny ending, happening in New York, with Mr. Nesser having a field day writing about the U.S. culture. Some readers will complain that the denouement is predictable. Yes, it is. I do not care, with the book being so excellent in so many other ways.

A disclaimer: In some sense Mr. Nesser's work reminds me of novels by the great Nicholas Freeling, whose plots were located mainly in the Netherlands or France, but the locations felt just like "in Europe". Maybe I am biased, being a European.

Still, I have not had so much fun with a book for quite a long time.

Five stars.

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## **Gail says**

Wow. Wow. Wow. I have read all the books in the series around Chief Inspector Van Veeteren and I have loved each and every one, but this one is simply breathtaking. The story starts off with a terrible accident and the events that unfold after that just becomes a complete nightmare. The pace never lets up and thankfully today has been an immensely hot day so I sat in the garden and I devoured this cracking book. The only

downside is that I sorely missed Munster but the reason he isn't featured I won't go into for fear of spoiling the storylines for everyone reading them. I understand there are three more in the series but haven't been translated into English as yet. Hakan Nesser is just a wonderful crime writer but praise must also be given to the translator, Laurie Thompson, who has done a brilliant job in introducing us to Swedish crime writing at its best. I cannot wait for the next and am feeling deflated now I have actually finished them. Highly recommended.

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## **Ellen says**

Hour of the Wolf by Hakan Nesser.

A SHOCKING JOURNEY. This novel in the Inspector Van Veeteren series has more than just twists & turns. It has more than mere surprises. It is a series of the worst choices a person could make that establish a journey into the abyss for one man. And the end of other lives in the wake of this journey.

Inspector Van Veeteren is retired and the new Chief Inspector is Reinhart. Rooth, Moreno, and the rest of Inspectors former colleagues work together as they did so many times in the past with the exception of Munster. Inspector Van Veeteren is brought into this investigation due to a grave and lamentable situation.

This is perhaps the best Van Veeteren book to date. It is one with shocking elements that add up to a descent into the abyss of no return. This is not just a highly recommended book for all followers of Van Veeteren and/or mysteries...it is a seriously MUST read addition to the already world wide acclaimed series.

Hakan Nesser is the recipient of The European Crime fiction Star Award, the Swedish Crime Writers' Academy Prize (3 x's), as well as the Scandinavia's Glass Key Award. His novels are published in more than 25 countries and as many languages.

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