



Death Sentence

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A murder committed on paper, safely within the confines of a novel, is one thing. To see that same crime in the real world, is something else entirely. . .

Frank Føns is a very successful crime writer. His novels, famed for their visceral descriptions of violent death, have made him a household name. But now someone is copying his crimes. For Frank what once seemed a clever, intriguing plot twist, has suddenly become a terrifying, blood-spattered reality.

In the novel, a redhead who was scared of water is drowned. In the mirror-image of the real world, she has become an ex-girlfriend chained and left to die at the bottom of the harbour. A corrupt police-officer tortured to death becomes a contact who dies with fear in his eyes. Someone is taking Franks' fiction and using it to destroy his life. The writer must become the detective.

In fiction, the bad guy always gets caught, but in real life there is no such guarantee. Fear becomes real. The knife cut hurts like hell. Our narrator may not survive. No-one is promising you a happy ending. For Frank what had once been a game is now a matter of life and death.

Death Sentence Details

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Author : Mikkel Birkegaard

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From Reader Review Death Sentence for online ebook

Beth Kemp says

This is easily the grisliest book I've read, yet it was terribly compelling.

It's hard to offer my feelings about this book without plot spoilers, so forgive me if this is vague in places (I'd sooner that than give away the plot).

The premise of this book is intriguing, and the writing is excellent, if a little detached in tone. This is somewhat unusual for a first-person narrator but it reflects the rather disconnected narrator effectively. The novel begins with the excellent opening line "Until recently I had only killed people on paper" and Frank continues to explain how this manuscript will be different to all his others, in dealing only with realities. The tension is managed and paced by interspersing the narration of current and murderous events with part of Frank's life story, particularly relating to his relationships.

I thought for quite a large part of the book that the excessive depiction of violence was a theme of the novel (since Frank explains some of his more grotesquely planned murders but without actual description, and discusses other characters' reactions to his work), but the closing sequence made me question this idea. This sequence is the most disturbing and graphic depiction of violence I have read and I didn't want to read it, but desperately wanted to get to the end to find out who was behind the murders. I enjoy crime fiction and am not normally squeamish, but the narration and graphic detail in this section was much more, er, 'colourful' than the rest of the novel. I had read other reviews saying that this was a violent and shocking book and was merrily disagreeing with them until this part of the story. It's told differently to the rest and has much more description and much more immediacy. I was compelled to read on and get through it, but I was breathing in sharply, covering my mouth and generally twisting myself up in tension right through it. And I have to say I'm not entirely glad I did, as I didn't find the ending very satisfying and unfortunate details of the book's violent climax keep revisiting me.

Overall, I'd say that it is done skilfully, and it certainly has a strong effect on the reader, but it wasn't my most enjoyable read this year.

Thanks to Transworld for sending me this as part of their Transworld Book Group promotion.

Bookish says

Became increasingly dismal with each chapter and I had to skip almost the entire final chapter - unnecessarily graphic gore and the ending! (sorely tempted to post spoiler :o)

Disappointment not so much at the content (despite promising premise) as being confounded that the same writer of an intriguing Library of Shadows can stoop to such baseless plot.

Waste of time and energy trying to complete this book... Wondering if this even deserves the single rating

Elisa says

Virkelig skuffende slutning med alt for mange løse ender og som blev for bizar og lidt for voldsom efter min smag.

Mel says

Frank is an alcoholic, writer of horror novels which specialise in extreme torture and gory scenes. He makes a living from it even if it has cost him his family and turned him into an isolated man with little human contact. Then someone starts to recreate his graphic murder scenes in complete detail using people close to him as the victim...

Frank is a difficult person to like. At first I just thought he was lonely and isolated but as I read further and find out more about his past I have to confess that I just didn't like him very much. But I was fascinated by his story. The way he is drawn into the murders is well done – even if you think he should have gone to police straight away. There aren't many characters introduced in detail outside of Frank himself, but this is more the study of the man losing his grasp than a crime novel. Crimes do occur but it is Franks reactions that keep you glued to the page rather than the mystery of who did it.

The details of Frank's books are gruesome and for the most part lacking in glamour. The detail is needed for the story but not lingered over – something I was grateful for as that level of detail would have turned me off! However, some of the scenes are not for those with a weak stomach. Alcohol, drug use and sex is prominent throughout but in keeping with the characters and the story.

The writing is easy to slip into – the translation from the Danish seems flawless. The ending will frustrate some people but I enjoyed the ambiguity. I hadn't read a crime or mystery book for a long time and now I realise I've been missing out on a genre I really enjoy. I won't be leaving it so long before I pick up another mystery.

Anto_s1977 says

Frank Fons è uno scrittore di gialli, con un matrimonio fallito alle spalle a causa proprio del suo lavoro. Nei suoi libri, infatti, Frank, prendendo spunto da persone e fatti della propria vita, ama raccontare di psicopatici torturatori e, gli elementi macabri sono più che abbondanti. Line, la moglie, ha paura che Frank nasconda un lato oscuro dentro di sé e possa far del male alle figlie, così lo lascia e non gli permette più di vederle.

Frank si rifugia nella sua casa per le vacanze e, in questo ambiente isolato e silenzioso, continua la sua carriera di scrittore, tornando a Copenaghen solo in occasione della fiera del libro.

Improvvisamente qualcuno comincia a mettere in pratica gli omicidi e le torture che Fons descrive nei suoi libri e le vittime sono tutte persone di sua conoscenza.

Per un attimo pensa di contattare la polizia, ma capisce che nessuno gli darà ascolto. Quando il "fan" minaccia la figlia, Frank non ha più scelta: deve capire il perché degli omicidi e fermare l'assassino.

Ma lo fa a modo suo...

Il libro non è sicuramente un capolavoro, ma si fa leggere. Però....solo coloro dotati di stomaci forti possono leggere le ultime orripilanti pagine.

Lander says

Hace mucho que no me sucedía pero señores aquí está, el mayor mojón que he leído. Aburrido, absurdamente goore, violencia sin sentido, falta de tensión y suspense. Un despropósito inconmensurable. Yo ya perdí mi tiempo. No lo hagas tú.

Denlillebogloblog says

2½ star.

Kristine Brancolini says

I picked up *Death Sentence* in a Copenhagen bookstore because I wanted to read another Danish mystery after finishing *Keeper of Lost Causes*, by Jussi Adler-Olsen (an infinitely better book than this one). Unfortunately, *Death Sentence* was a poor choice. At first I thought it was satire, but by the end I wasn't so sure. Lately, I've been reading books with an unreliable narrator and I kept thinking that author Frank Fons might be unreliable. I thought he might have descended into madness and begun committing the murders he only fantasized about in his novels. But then his daughter becomes one of the intended victims and by the end of the book, you know he's not the murderer. However, (view spoiler). Some other reviewers mentioned the gruesome descriptions of murders. I actually just skimmed them because they were so over the top. But here are the two most annoying aspects of the book:

1) Fons never goes to the police to report the relationship between the murders and his books. A real police detective could probably have solved the murders based upon information from Frank, but he persists in his delusions that he can solve the murders himself, and he never even comes close.

2) The second and third murders are never reported in the press, making Frank suspect that they never happened. But he knows they did and the reader knows they did. The first murder is reported immediately and the similarity to the fictional murder is recognized by the police. So, why weren't the second and third murders reported?

Did I like anything about the book? It's definitely a cautionary tale and it's sad to see Frank's marriage and life fall apart. He starts out as a relatively pleasant young man and develops into a creepster. Birkegaard's first book sounds interesting, but honestly, I'm a little leery and may try to borrow it from the library instead of paying for a copy.

Nicki says

Nah, not really my cuppa tea. Was not that impressed with the book and certainly did not like the way that is ended. Will not say any more, as not being a spoiler.

Cornelia says

2.5*

catwoman says

This book was given to me from Transworld Books.

This is an incredibly hard book to review and I have been sat at my computer wondering what I want to say and how I can truly convey what I am thinking right now.

You know the phrase 'It does exactly what it says on the Tin (Blurb)'? Well this book doesn't. By that I don't mean that it doesn't have a serial killer. It does. I don't mean that there aren't some truly grisly tails of murder, torture and death. There are. What I mean is that the story layout and it's main stance on this type of genre is totally different to what I expected and I am still unsure whether or not I liked it. I would say however that I devoured the book in a rate like I had never experienced a crime book before. I found that I was totally involved in all the emotions that Frank felt and all the experiences and problems that he put himself in. I felt hatred and repulsion for the man and then at other times I kind of empathised with him, and for that I would like to applaud Birkegaard. Unlike other people I found the book to be fast passed with short chapters. This like other books I have read lately, including another Transworld Book; Crippen, they had two narratives. One where you saw the life of Frank; From the beginning of his love of reading and writing, to falling in love, being a dad, to finding the demons that fame, fortune and power can bring and how those demons can change you and bring the life that you once had down. I found this storyline good, the characters were well executed and all rather memorable.

The other part of this was the storyline that you expected after reading the blurb. Frank who now lives alone gets a telephone call to say that a murder has been committed and that it looks like something out of one of his books. Frank goes to investigate and soon becomes aware that the murder is closer to home than what he first thought. This then starts what becomes a race against time for Frank to find the killer... This part of the book let it down for me. I had read other reviews that said that this book was incredibly gory and just too much. I hadn't found this to be true until the last 20 pages. I have read a lot of crime novels and those pages will forever be etched in my mind. Maybe I have a high tolerance to scenes that were described in the book but it didn't put me off at all. What did put me off was the way I felt the author rushed through the later part of the book. I felt that many loose ends were not dealt with and that the last 50 pages were just wrote to finish the book quickly. The ending was an utter disappointment and I wish so much I could explain why I thought this way but because of the risk of a spoiler I cannot say more, but it was a major let down. I can understand why the ending was the way it was but for me as a crime reader I read crime for a reason, and the ending was an utter anti climax! I would love to hear from other people who have read this book and see what they thought.

This is why my review is quite a strange one and part of me still doesn't know what to give the book star wise, as I utterly love some elements but despised others.

Would I read another book by the author? Yes, yes I think I would.

Do I think that he is the cream of the crop when it comes to Scandinavian authors? No, I do not understand why some reviews have said that he is like Larsson (The Girl with the dragon tattoo) There are no

similarities between the two. If he is to be compared by any other author from Scandinavia I would say that it would be more like a Camilla Lackberg. I haven't got round to reading my Jo Nesbo book to compare that yet.

Little Irish Luck says

Troppo, anche per me che non sono una che si impressiona facilmente. In più non ha un finale soddisfacente!

Carla Florian says

At the beginning I thought it was actually going to be an interesting book, probably with a great plot twist. I was intrigued by the main idea that somebody was giving life to the crimes in the writer's books. But the story did not go in the direction I imagined. I was sooo disappointed in the end especially with that gross final chapter..all those details kind of ruined the whole book for me and honestly, I've skipped a lot of the last few pages.

Stig Kjær says

Rigtig god bog. Meget spændene. Slutningen er lidt for åben for min smag.

Anda says

This book is a piece of garbage. Really! Despite the promise start, the plot ended into an uninspired and grossed scene of sadism, which does not at all inspire horror, but just boredom. As I said, a piece of garbage that counts on violence and sex to gain some fame. It does not worth any penny or time to read it.
