



Kalde hjerter

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En frostkald januardag i Bergen oppsøkes Varg Veum av en prostituert kvinne. Hennes venninne Margrethe er forsvunnet. Ingen har sett henne på flere dager. Før hun forsvant, var det noe som plaget henne. Hun hadde avvist en kunde og kom skrekkslagen tilbake til strøket.

Veum tar saken og konfronteres raskt med en brutal og ubehagelig virkelighet. Det tar ikke lange tiden før han kommer over det første liket. Og det blir ikke det siste. Saken fører Veum til et miljø der korrumper idealisme har fått fatale følger. Under hver stein han løfter på ligger mørke hemmeligheter skjult. Det tegner seg til sist et mønster av skadeskutte mennesker, markstukne livsløp og hjerter som er blitt kalde lenge før tiden. Et mønster som er dødelig - for noen.

Kalde hjerter Details

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Author : Gunnar Staalesen

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From Reader Review Kalde hjerter for online ebook

Sidsel Tompkins says

Liked the detective, but didn't like the translation. Should have read it in Norwegian.

ALEXA says

Brrrr! Frozen smiles and a chilly reception greet Norwegian private detective Varg Veum when he's hired to find missing prostitute Margrethe. I mean, who cares? Right? She's just a streetwalker, a stupid slut who doubtless "asked for it" by virtue (or rather, lack thereof) of her profession. At least that's the general attitude Veum encounters. But they don't mirror his own feelings -- especially when he realizes his client, also in the flesh business, used to date his son years earlier. Talk about an unpleasantly small world!

In Gunnar Staalesen's "Cold Hearts," it's not just the Norwegian winter that causes so many in this novel to have ice in their veins and not give a damn about a hooker. Until the first body shows up. (Note I said "first.") But the dead person is [italics] not [/italics] the missing Margrethe. Things warm up a bit as the bodies pile up -- and, still, none are the lost woman Veum was hired to find. And most of the deceased aren't from the red-light district either. Who the heck are all these dead people?

Veum often finds himself corpse-side, almost by accident. He didn't kill these people. But he's jaded enough from his profession to know coincidences usually aren't just a fluke. In fact, he's pretty dang sure this is fast becoming a fluke-less situation.

But what's the connection? Ah yes, one of the best questions in any good mystery novel. (And don't think for one second I'm going to give it away!)

The answer is so tangential, you won't see it coming anymore than detective Veum does. But I'll let you in on a clue or two: the best of intentions can become twisted so out of shape the original ideal is lost. And if lives are lost, too? Eh, crap happens to good and bad people alike. Right?

Some of the well-drawn men, women, and even children in this book turn cold to steel their hearts against emotional wounds. Others were probably born heartless bastards. Trying to figure out who's who is something Veum better figure out soon, as hearts also become cold when they stop beating -- like that of a nosy investigator.

Lindsay says

'On the exterior, everything looked nice and proper, but who had any idea what corruption was hidden - not only behind these walls but any such walls anywhere in the world?'

Cold Hearts is an excellent crime read featuring Norwegian private investigator Varg Veum looking into the case of a missing woman in Bergen, and uncovering crimes as well as a dark history of sadness and a web of

lies as his search develops.

I liked the opening chapter which gave a little background to Veum's life. Then we are taken back six months to a case involving a missing woman. Her friend Hege comes to him to ask him to help find her. Margrethe was a prostitute and, after turning away from a car one night, she was evidently very frightened. The woman who went in the car in her place returned injured. Margrethe's whereabouts are now unknown, and then shortly afterwards it is discovered that her brother Karl, who was in prison, is also missing.

The book has a great lead character in Veum, a former social worker who puts this background to good use here when it comes to understanding and handling dysfunctional families, and individuals who haven't had a great start in life and/or those whose lives have taken a bad path. He uses his experience to dig deep and unravel the murky secrets of the past and discover how they have influenced the present. I enjoyed his interactions with the police and others as he pursued the truth.

This is a well-plotted page-turner of a crime story with a firm sense of place. I really enjoyed the first-person narration by Veum; I liked getting to know his ways of thinking and his methods; when it comes to the investigation, he 'was impatient to get started. I knew from bitter experience that time was a thief. When you arrived where you wanted to go it was often too late.'

There's a dark tone to the tale, there is brutality, and there is a real feeling of sadness about the lives that some people endure and the bleaker aspects of society. Veum ponders '...what was it that caused lives to veer off in different directions? Was it possible to predict, or was it simply woven into your destiny from a very young age? Such fragile boundaries,...'

I am sometimes a little hesitant to read a novel that's part of a series when I haven't read the previous books. I found that despite not having read any other books in this series, I didn't have any problems enjoying this one or understanding anything.

I thought the translation by Don Bartlett was really well done and read well. I love the blue/turquoise tones of the cover, and the image fits the story. I really enjoyed reading this one, for me it was a really good introduction into what seems to be a strong detective series; I will definitely be looking out for more of this series now.

Bruce Hatton says

It is quite unusual for a Scandinavian crime novel to have a private detective as the central character. However, the *Varg Veum* series of novels are a rare and honourable exception. Varg himself is a very likeable character with an unwavering devotion to justice and a great line in humourous patter. As with other books in the series, this one is set in the author's home town of Bergen and doesn't flinch from portraying the dark underbelly of life. Varg is hired to find a missing prostitute and his investigations uncover some sinister secrets involving drug smuggling and child abuse. It's hard to believe that this is the 16th book in a (so far) 20 book series. It's set in 1997, was originally published in 2008, but not made available in English translation until 2016. As far as I can see, only 7 books in the series have been translated so far. I hope they all will be in the not too distant future.

Linda Branham Greenwell says

The main character is Varg Veum, a private eye and past child social worker. As the novel opens, Veum's financial status is so dismal that he has to take just about every case that comes his way.

A prostitute hires Veum to find her colleague, Margrethe Monsen - Maggi, who has disappeared. Veum is the sort of man who treats everyone the same until actions dictate otherwise, and he begins his search for the missing woman.

He uncovers the dark side of Margrethe's family. Her father was a drunk and died in a fall down the stairs and her mother lives in solitude in an apathetic condition. Maggi's brother is in jail. The only one who seems to be living a normal life is the older sister

As Varg searches for Maggi, another young prostitute is killed - a girl that he just interviewed about Maggi. And this is where Varg becomes involved in complicated police business

Glen Kizer says

I really like this series of books. Mysteries set in Norway, I picked up the first of his books because the review I had read reminded me of the Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. They are interesting and I enjoy listening to them. I have read three of them and they are all similar in tone and plot and characters but as a mystery series they are great. It makes me want to go to Bergen and walk the streets he talks about in the books. This book involves a prostitute hiring the lead character to find another prostitute who has gone missing and who happens to be her best friend. It is very much a Sam Spade Maltese Falcon kind of atmosphere through the whole series with the lead detective Varg Veum getting beat up and stumbling along but never taking his eye off of his task. He had worked in child welfare so a lot of the series and this book involves him rescuing or trying to rescue young people. He has written a lot of books and I would probably never read two in a row but I really like them. This book is not upbeat or happy or funny but it took me to the streets of Bergen Norway in a way that made me feel like I was there tagging along with the detective.

Jerry Peace says

Love this book, though I read it rather than listened. Tight noir with a wonderful detective that steers clear of almost all of his history and personal life. Scandinavian crime novels are perhaps the best being written. This private detective, Varg Veum, is in the Philip Marlowe tradition of gathering information, culling the truth primarily through asking questions and asking questions and asking questions. I will be reading more of these novels. Oh, and they're, and Varg, are funny. Just a couple of examples: "We each ordered a salad with tea and behaved by and large like Spinsters Anonymous on a day out: Go wild and don't spare the Thousand Island dressing." And after a source claims he has neither the time nor the inclination to worry about his co-workers' personal lives, Veum replies, "Well...Give my best regards to the Good Samaritan, if you should bump into him in the lift or wherever." OK, the humor won't bust your gut like Lewis Black, but I would have been proud to have coined each and every one of them. But before you get too sanguine, I'll leave with this stark truism from Staalesen- "It was the weakest who had to suffer most. The strongest always had right on their side."

Caroline Åsgård says

This was actually the first book I read about the famous fictive private detective from my hometown. I saw the movies that came out when I was a teen, and I loved them. After reading this, I definitely have to read them all!

The first thing I noticed is that the book is super easy to read - I finished it in less than a day. It's also in Varg's POV, which isn't that common. I loved the entire thing. The mystery and how everyone is connected (but not in a way that you would expect), the humor and sarcasm, and all the descriptions of my hometown.

So if you want to get into scandinavian crime, I definitely recommend this! And like most, you don't really have to read them in order.

VMom says

I felt like I should have enjoyed this more than I did but it just didn't grab me. The frequent shilling for social services also had my eyes rolling.

Stuart McMillan says

So, I came to this book with no preconceptions, not having read any of the preceding novels and not knowing anything about Varg Veum.

To be frank, I found no real spark here to differentiate Varg from any number of used-up, down-at-heel and broken PIs that I might read about anywhere in the constellation of similar individuals.

The scenario is kinda-sorta believable (an addict prostitute promising money to look for a missing friend) but does require a proper suspension of disbelief, especially as we explore some of the later antics.

It was fun while it lasted, but I don't think I will be spending too much more fun with Varg when I have better broken down detectives from the likes of Rankin, Oswald to continue exploring.

Mary says

I read this in English. fun to read literature set in places I have visited. this was set in Bergen, Norway.

Emily says

3 1/2 stars - read this on a backpacking trip so I stuck with it. I quite liked the main character, its nice to have

a character who has such an "ethical" standpoint. That being said, the story never really took off. The bits with the pimps seemed a bit unbelievable (why didn't they just kill him?) and the perpetrator seemed obvious from early on. It was overall quite a depressing atmosphere and story. However, I'd give the author another read to see what he does with a different story. It was interesting getting the background and image of Bergen, though it was clear this book was written long ago (frequent references to the internet's early days), which is distracting instead of timeless.

Greg says

As he recovers from a near-fatal injury, Varg Veum is approached by a prostitute with a family connection. She wants Varg to look for a friend of hers who has gone missing.

Things get complicated when Varg learns that the missing girl's brother escaped from prison and went missing the same night. He visits their mother to talk to her, and a dead body is discovered in the house while he is there. On top of that, a couple of thugs are anxious to do Varg some serious harm.

I thought this was one of the better Varg Veum books that I have read. The plot was hard to predict and far from obvious in its many twists. It was refreshing to see our hero being more of the crusty old wolf, without him falling into bed with every halfway-presentable woman who rocks up. As always, Staalesen captures Veum's home town of Bergen perfectly, bringing the atmosphere of this city into focus as Varg travels through it.

Mitch McCrimmon says

This is my 4th book in the Varg Veum private detective series. I enjoyed 2 of them, Writing on the Wall and We Shall Inherit the Wind but this one and Yours Until Death were too slow paced for me and too much boring detail about social services and dysfunctional, poor families. As with other books in the series, Cold Hearts suffers from too much trivial detail. For example, the private detective, Varg Veum, has to take a person to Emergency. As he sits there waiting, we get a description of all the rough/sick characters coming into Emergency - totally uninteresting detail but, more importantly, stuff like this helps to kill what little pace and suspense there is in the book, which is pretty non-existent until the last 25% - which I did enjoy. But the first 3/4 was hard to stick with - too many boring interviews with uninteresting people. The other thing I find with this author is that his writing style is very casual & informal, which complements the protagonist who is also easy going and likeable. The problem with this style though is that it undermines tension, suspense and the fear that often accompanies good murder mysteries. There is a bit of violence and danger in the book but the easy going style makes it hard to take any danger seriously. As a result, we have more of a cozy mystery than a very scary one.

Jeanette says

This was a 2.5 star at best, and a 2 star for me. Only because the private detective was decent himself, and seemed an experienced former social worker who had some humorous thoughts did I continue to the end and not quit the book. The era is 1997 and records are just going to tech and he is NOT completely Internet savvy at all- early days for that- so control/alt/delete is his friend. This reminded me of a script for Law & Order

Special Victims, only within Bergen, Norway. But these characters, other than the prime Veum are either flat or completely unlikeable, just mean or sad. I would not read another in this Staalesen series.
