



Echoes from the Dead

Johan Theorin, Marlaine Delargy (Translator)

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On a gray September day, on an island off the coast of Sweden, six -year -old Jens Davidsson ventured out of his backyard, walked out into a fog, and vanished....Now twenty years have passed, and in this magnificent debut novel of suspense—a runaway bestseller in Sweden—the boy’s mother returns to the place where her son disappeared, drawn by a chilling package sent in the mail... In it, lovingly wrapped, is one of Jens’ sandals—sandals Julia Davidsson put on her son’s feet that very last morning.

Now, with only a handful of clues, Julia and her father are questioning islanders who were present the day Jens vanished—and making a shocking connection to Öland’s most notorious murder case: the killing spree of a wealthy young man who fled the island and died years before Jens was even born. Suddenly the island that once seemed so achingly familiar turns strange and dangerous... Until Julia finds herself facing truths she never imagined—about what really happened on that September day twenty years ago, about who may have crossed paths with little Jens in the fog, and how a child could truly vanish without a trace...until now.

Echoes from the Dead Details

Date : Published November 25th 2008 by Delta (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9780385342216

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Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Fiction, Thriller, European Literature, Scandinavian Literature, Cultural, Sweden

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From Reader Review Echoes from the Dead for online ebook

Brad says

This is a story about victims. Not about *being* a victim, or the modes of victimization and self-victimization, but a story about victims moving through lives that have victimized them.

Or maybe it is about loss.

There is a mother who lost her son twenty years before and descended into alcoholism, deep depression and a loss of society.

There is a grand/father who lost his grandson and most of those he's cared about in his life -- simply through the movement of time -- who's never had the love of the daughters he loves, who needs closure and a chance to heal himself and those he's leaving behind.

There is a man who lost his father to an act of violence -- terrible on one hand, misunderstood on the other -- who lives a lonely existence on the alvar, being without really being.

There is a girl who loses the only one she ever loved, and she never even had a chance to tell him; there is a mother who lost all her sons; there is a man who lost his self-respect and his health; there is a family who lost their cohesion; there are two boys and an old man and a drunk man and an exiled man and a police man and two soldiers who lost their lives. There is deep loss in Echoes from the Dead on the Swedish isle of Öland; it is an island of victims.

And there is another person to consider. He killed some of those who lost their lives, or was the subject of others' losses. His actions rippled out to catalyze new actions, which created more victims. But he was as much a victim as everyone else. A man-child who never matured, a boy who wanted to be respected and be good and was at times, a boy-man who couldn't control his violence but was able to rationalize it, a lost heart who just wanted to be home with his mother. He was a victim too. And Johan Theorin lets him be exactly what he is, letting us care for him if we want, without passing any authorial judgement, simply letting him exist amongst all those his life effected and affected.

Beautifully done. Again I find myself wishing I could read Swedish. I bet this is even better in its original form. Someday I will.

miteyepen says

The strongest element of Echoes From the Dead was its sense of place. One reason why I read Scandinavian novels is because of their atmosphere. And crucial parts of that atmosphere are the climate and the topography of the respective countries. This book painted a picture of Oland, a Swedish island in the Baltic Sea, that is particularly vivid and as much a character in the story as the human ones.

The main characters are well-drawn, but at first the one I was most interested in was Nils Kant, who seemed to be the personification of evil, or at the very least, a sociopath. When he didn't turn out to be the person responsible for the disappearance of a little boy, I was almost disappointed. The fact that the "evil" Kant

turned out to be a victim as well was a bit of a let-down because I was expecting much more from this character. The actual culprit seemed to come out of nowhere, which made me feel like the author cheated a little bit. But when the ending unfolded and all was explained, I decided that the mystery had definitely been a good one.

Although the ending wasn't a particularly happy one, in the sense that the little boy had indeed been killed, it did bring peace to the two main characters who I'd come to care about very much.

I will have to say that this book was quite different in that one of the main characters and the one who was responsible for solving the mystery was an old man who lived in a nursing home. I found him totally engaging and effective. I don't know if he shows up in subsequent books, but he ought to.

Franco Santos says

Me gustó mucho este libro. Johan Theorin nos hechiza con una prosa exquisita. Amo cómo describe los paisajes nórdicos, los climas y los sentimientos de los personajes. **Lo que tiene de particular este autor de novelas negras es que ahonda en mitos escandinavos.** Éso le da un toque mágico y hermoso, que me cautivó con vehemencia.

El relato es lento, como toda novela escandinava, pero te absorbe con firmeza. **Te hace viajar a Suecia, más precisamente a Öland, y con su estilo de escritura nos hace sentir la desolación y la acuciante tensión de la trama.**

Con respecto al final, es totalmente impredecible. Yo me quedé un buen rato tratando de digerir lo que había pasado. Me encantó. **Una de las mejores conclusiones que leí.**

• • • — — — • • • **says**

Κατ?ρα στον μαλ?κα που ?κανε μ?δα την σκανδιναβικ? λογοτεχν?α.
Δεν μας ?φταναν οι Αντ?κ δηλαδ?

Lynn says

My favorite element in this book is the sense of place. Öland is a barrier island off the Baltic coast of Sweden. Theorin sets four novels here....one for each season. In autumn there are very few residents in the tiny fictitious village of Stenvik. The emptiness of the thinly-soiled limestone landscape and the sparse population make for a memorable setting..... perfect for uncovering past crimes and mysteries. I'm looking forward to learning more about Öland with a new story and new characters in the next season.

Jim Coughenour says

The new word in this book is *alvar*, the limestone pavement habitat on the Swedish island of Öland – a topography that plays the same role in this story as the Yorkshire moor does in *Wuthering Heights*. And if this is an odd way to begin a review, well, it's an odd book.

Echoes from the Dead is another Scandinavian crime story riding in on the crest of Henning Mankell's deliciously cheerless Wallander novels – but it's less a policier than a sometimes whimsical, mostly sad family drama. I could adequately describe the entire plot in about three sentences (don't worry, I won't) and you'd be right to wonder how it could take 385 pages to tell. It says a great deal of Theorin's ability to create a landscape and a mood that his slow novel never quite stops, but keeps pulling us along right up to its mildly surprising *dénouement*. It was good enough to keep me up reading way too late.

Leer En el Sur says

Excelente novela! muy nórdica en su estilo de narración que va de a poco envolviéndote en sus increíbles paisajes y un caso por resolver cuyo desenlace fue totalmente inesperado, muy recomendable! seguiré con la serie!!

Linda says

This was the book that I won last year through a Goodreads contest. I just now got around the reading it and wished I hadn't put it off. This is an exceptional thriller with twists and turns around every corner and an ending that you don't see coming.

In 1970, on a day when fog covers all, a little boy disappears never to be seen again. Years later his grandfather, now living in an assisted living establishment, receives one of his sandals in the mail. Just that and nothing else. So begins the journey of the grandfather and grieving mother as they at first reluctantly join forces to find the truth to little Jens' disappearance, and end up rediscovering your love for each other, and coming to terms with a devastating grief that keeps them both from moving on.

I recommend this book to anyone who loves thrillers. Set on the island of Oland in Sweden readers are drawn into the beauty, isolaton, and memories of a family that has faced one of the life's most unforgettable events and a grandfather who never gives up in his search for the truth-no matter what cost.

Nikoleta says

Παρ? το στεν?χωρο θ?μα του, ?ταν τελε?ωσα την αν?γνωση και της τελευτα?ας σειρ?ς ?νιωσα ?μορφα. ?νιωσα γαλ?νη και... λ?τρωση!

Αντ? το αναφ?ρω γιατ? πραγματικ?, ?ταν ξεκ?νησα την αν?γνωση του βιβλ?ου, ?νιωθα ?να ατελε?ωτο β?ρος. Η ηρω?δα της ιστορ?ας ε?ναι μ?α κατεστραμμ?νη ψυχολογικ? γυνα?κα, εν? το θ?μα που πραγματε?εται ο Theorin, στην ?ναρξη του βιβλ?ου ε?ναι η εξαφ?νιση του 5χρονου

παιδιο? της. Το γεγον?ς ?τι ο Theorin ασχολε?ται με την σκιαγρ?φηση των χαρακτ?ρων σε ?λα τα ψυχολογικ? επ?πεδα αυτ?ν, προκαλε? σχεδ?ν κατ?θλιψη στον αναγν?στη. Ο ρεαλισμ?ς δε, απορρ?ει σε ?λα τα επ?πεδα της αφ?γησης. Σε αυτ? το σημε?ο πρ?πει να αναφ?ρω ?τι ο συγγραφ?ας στο βιβλ?ο του δεν στ?νει κ?ποιου ε?δους ατμ?σφαιρα, δεν χρωματ?ζει και δεν παρουσι?ζει κανεν?ς ε?δους φτιαγμ?νο σκηνικ?. Και τι εννο? το σκηνικ? ε?ναι εξολοκλ?ρου ρεαλιστικ?. Πως θα εξελισσ?ται αυτ? η ιστορ?α στην πραγματικ?τητα, πως θα ?νιαθαν οι ?ρωες ?μα β?ωναν αυτ? την κατ?σταση. Επομ?νως η ατμ?σφαιρα ε?ναι ρεαλιστικ?. Δεν ε?ναι υπερβολικ? τραγικ?, υπερβολικ? μυστηρι?δη υπερβολικ?... τ?ποτα, ε?ναι απλ? ανθρ?πινη. Κ? τσι αρχικ? την π?τησα δι?τι ο συγγραφ?ας επιλ?γει να μας παρουσι?σει την Γιο?λια, μια τρελαμ?νη μαμ?. Κ ε?πα εδ? ε?μαστε... κατ?θλιψη. Στην πορε?α η ιστορ?α μας αλλ?ζει (και ευτυχ?ς αλλ?ζει μαζ? κ η δι?θεση του αναγν?στη) γιατ? μας γνωρ?ζει με τον καταπληκτικ? παππο?, τον ?να και μοναδικ?, Γ?ρλοφ. Δραστ?ριος, περ?εργος και θαρραλ?ος. Πρ?πει να ανακαλ?ψει... και ανακαλ?πτει. Εν κατακλ?δι, ?να βιβλ?ο που ξεκιν?ει υποτονικ?, με αργ? πλοκ?, που λ?γο πριν την μ?ση πα?ρνει τα π?νω του, ανεβ?ζει ταχ?τητες και ε?ναι πραγματικ? δ?σκολο να το αφ?σει ο αναγν?στης απ? τα χ?ρια του. Μου ?ρεσε πολ?. Ο Theorin ε?ναι μ?στερ του ρεαλιστικο? μυστηρ?ου και της σκιαγρ?φησης των χαρακτ?ρων.

Kostas Papadatos says

Ο πεντ?χρονος γιος της Τζο?λια Ντ?βιντσον εξαφαν?στηκε ?να πρωιν? του 1972 χωρ?ς ποτ? να βρεθε? ο?τε ?να ?χνος του. ΕΙΚΟΣΙ χρ?νια περ?που αργ?τερα, ο Γ?ρλοφ (πατ?ρας της Τζο?λια) λαμβ?νει με το ταχυδρομε?ο ?να παιδικ? παπο?τσι. Μαντ?ψτε ποιανο? ε?ναι. Απ? το σημε?ο αυτ? και ?πειτα ο Γ?ρο-Γ?ρλοφ και η κ?ρη του, προσπαθο?ν να εν?σουν τα κομμ?τια του π?ζλ ?στε να λ?σουν το μυστ?ριο της εξαφ?νισης. ?μορφη αστυνομικ? περιπ?τεια με μπ?λικη δ?ση μυστηρ?ου. Μοναδικ? μου ?νσταση? Οι ηρ?ες. Πιο κρ?οι και απ?... υγρ? ?ζωτο φ?λε μου.

Carey Combe says

I am obviously out of step with the rest of the reviewers. It wasn't bad, but I just kept skipping huge chunks because I wasn't interested enough. in the end just skipped straight to the end of the book...

Alexandra Matobookalo says

Πρ?κειται για ?να θρ?λερ που μεταφ?ρει τον αναγν?στη μ?α στο παρ?ν και μ?α στο παρελθ?ν. Η ιστορ?α ε?ναι αρκετ? δυνατ?: αφο? την εξαφ?νιση εν?ς εξ?χρονου αγοριο? που ?στερα απ? 20 περ?που χρ?νια δεν ?χει λυθε?. ?χει πολλ? στοιχε?α εν?ς καλο? θρ?λερ και ειδικ? απ? ?να σημε?ο και μετ? γ?νεται πολ? δυνατ?. Θεωρ? β?βαια ?τι σε κ?ποια σημε?α ε?ναι λ?γο επιτηδευμ?νο ? απλ? σαν λ?ση και σε κ?ποια ?λλα γ?νεται λ?γο κουραστικ?. Ε?ναι για 3,5/5 αλλ? β?ζω 4/5 γιατ? παρ? ?λες τις αδυναμ?ες του υπ?ρξαν ανατροπ?ς που μου ?ρεσαν!

David says

Absolutely loved it. Beautifully written. Great mysterious scandinavian atmosphere. No hot shot detectives, no fancy investigations, no boring clichées.

Trish says

This novel has the best sense of place I've read in a long time. Theorin paints with a few words scattered through his dialog: sparse yellow-brown grass in a small meadow, low, gnarled juniper and moss-covered stones, wind, cold, limestone beaches, pointy firs. He writes of Öland Island, off the southeastern coast of Sweden. I waited until I finished the book to look up photographs, but you may want to have a look now. It is a scrubby island landscape with the ruins of a most intriguing castle.

The island is an inspired choice for a mystery setting because it has small year-round communities isolated in winter. Residents tend to be hardy and self-sufficient, relying on the ocean and the island to eke out a living. Theorin's characters have closed personalities, with lots hidden, even from family. When a psychopath, Nils, is born into the midst of a small community, the group bears its troubles silently until Nils has to be corralled.

Theorin has made a series out of his mysteries set on Öland. It is the island that is reprised, not the characters. On his website, Theorin tells us that he wants to write a quartet of novels, one for each season of the year. *Echoes of the Dead* is the autumn novel. His second novel, *The Darkest Room* is set in the winter, and was published in 2008 to wild acclaim. Theorin's third novel in the quartet, *Blodläge*, in English called *The Quarry*, has been translated and was published last year in the UK. It should be available shortly in the U.S. An insightful reviewer has commented that Theorin is the least conventional of Swedish crime writers, and that this can be a disappointment to some, but that the "dailiness" of his novels gives readers an understanding of ordinary people's lives. This may be the my favorite thing about these titles.

Chrissa Vasileiou says

Η κριτική μου για το βιβλίο στο blog "Read to Death":
Αντλαλοι νεκρούν
