



Den döende detektiven

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Retired Chief of the National Crime Police and Swedish Security Service Lars Martin Johansson has just suffered a stroke. He is paying the price for a life of excess - stress, good food and fine wine. With his dangerously high blood pressure, his heart could fail at the slightest excitement.

In the hospital, a chance encounter with a neurologist provides an important piece of information about a 25-year-old murder investigation and alerts Lars Martin Johansson's irrepressible police instincts. The period for prosecution expired just weeks earlier and that isn't the only limitation. Lars Martin Johansson is determined to solve the atrocious crime – from his deathbed.

The inimitable style, distinct voice and dark humour of Leif GW Persson, along with the fascinating exploration of a long-cold murder case, serves to make *The Dying Detective* a true masterpiece of the genre.

Den döende detektiven Details

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From Reader Review Den döende detektiven for online ebook

Jeremy Megraw says

Originally posted on Crime Fiction Lover

As retired detective Lars Martin Johansson, a living legend in the Swedish National Police Force, approaches his favourite hot dog kiosk in Stockholm, he hasn't a care in the world except to savour his favorite lunch ritual. Will it be Yugoslavian bratwurst, Zigeuner schnitzel, or elk sausage? The revered detective is surrounded by admirers as he ponders his choices, all delicious but none too healthy. Unfortunately, the fat and happy ex-cop suffers a massive stroke before his first bite. When Lars wakes up, he is in the neurology ward with a doctor leaning over him.

Besides a right arm rendered useless by the stroke, Lars also learns he has a bad heart and must reform his eating habits before he kills himself. Even his adorable wife Pia can't cheer him up after that news. Barely on the mend, he is definitely not in the mood for the next development. His doctor, Ulrika Stenholm, begs Lars to help solve a cold case from 1986 – the rape and murder of nine-year old Yasmine Uryegan. The doctor believes she has new information and that only Lars Martin Johansson, the detective who sees around corners, can solve it. Ulrika conveys the story of her father, the priest who died knowing the identity of the child killer via a confessional statement, but whose identity he never revealed. The case hinges on two evidential clues: a feather and a hair clip.

True to his nature, the dogged detective can't resist the case and starts gathering information while still in hospital. The attendant coroner, still on the force, remembers it well. He outlines the psychological profile of the killer, sardonically referring to him as the sensitive brand of paedophile who is characterised by friendliness, fastidiousness, deep narcissism, and being very dangerous. In fact, the failed investigation has stuck in the craw of Lars' former colleagues, not just because it was mishandled in every way by a notoriously mediocre, lazy and selfish chief. Had it been his case, Lars would have solved it in short order. And solve it he does.

Before you think you see a spoiler coming, understand that the unique take of this book is that it is not a whodunit, as Lars hones in on the prime suspect early on. The main thrust of the plot is just what he plans to do with the information when there is no hope of the murderer being charged. The statute of limitations applies to the crime.

Working mostly as an armchair detective, Lars ventures out into the field on crutches when needed, pushing away thoughts of his own mortality as he stalks his prey. He deputises an oddball crew of people to help him, recruited gradually as the story unfolds. There's Mina, his tattooed Goth caregiver; Vladimir, muscle-bound yet gentle helper with the tragic past; and his brother-in-law Alf, a tax officer who leaves no record unturned. Additional back-up is supplied by ex-partner Bo Jarnebring and Lars' big brother Evert. There is no shortage of former co-workers who lend their support too, some cheering him on and others offering to kill the perpetrator themselves.

In Leif GW Persson's carefully paced thriller, the tension instilled into the narrative comes not from identifying the murderer so much as what form of justice can be brought to bear on the guilty who are outside the reach of the penal system. The last quarter of the book deals with Lars' strategy to confront the child killer and extract a confession. But since this monster can't be tried for the crime, who should serve as judge, jury and executioner?

Although relatively few of his books are in translation, Persson, along with Swedish contemporaries Sjowall and Wahloo and Henning Mankell, has been at the heart of the Nordic noir literary movement which deals in the dark doings lurking just beneath the idyllic veneer of social democratic society. The Dying Detective is actually the eighth part of a series that began in 1978 featuring the detectives Jarnebring & Johansson, the last three all relating to the shocking unsolved murder of Prime Minister Olof Palme. Even this book touches on the subject as the murder of the girl took place before Swedish law lifted the statute of limitations following Palme's assassination.

With its fascinating combination of dark humour, sentimentality and procedural detail, the book's somber ending and the stoical outlook of its characters makes The Dying Detective a must-read for fans of Nordic noir. Winner of the 2016 Glass Key Award, the book is a landmark event in Scandinavian crime fiction. Fans of Jussi Adler-Olsen's Dept Q series' brand of endearingly imperfect but dedicated heroes will find much to enjoy in this title.

Tonstant Weader says

The Dying Detective is a mystery by Leif G. W. Persson whose work may be familiar to people who watched the Backstrom TV series on FOX. It opens with Lars Martin Johansson, retired head of the National Criminal Police, stopping at a food cart for sausage and sauerkraut. It was lucky for him that he did so, because he had a stroke as soon as he settled back into his car. Even more fortuitous, several officers had been at the cart and were there to rush him to the hospital where quick action saved his life.

While recovering in the hospital, his doctor brings him a mystery. Her father confided that one of his parishioners told him who raped and murdered Yasmine Ermegan, a nine-year old girl some twenty-five years ago. Her father did not tell her who was guilty, just shared the pain of knowing who was guilty and not being able to tell anyone. Johansson seizes the opportunity to investigate, even though the statute of limitations has run its course. If the murdered had happened one month later, there would not have been a statute of limitations thanks to a change in the law to keep the Otto Palme assassin on the hook if ever identified, but Yasmine was murdered just before the Palme murder.

While most of the time he is resting, recovering, running to doctors and physiotherapy, he has friends in the force collecting files, his genealogy-obsessed brother-in-law researching family relationships, even his care-giver gets busy working with Detective Google. Johansson is frustrated because he knows his mind is not as sharp as it should be. He can't "see around corners" now. Reading reports gives him a headache, he falls asleep at the drop of a hat, but still he keeps working. He has an idea of the case and he knows he will find the killer.

Throughout the book, Johansson deals with his health, trying to recover use of his right hand, adjusting to using a walking stick and a crutch, having difficulty breathing, random pains in his chest and frequent headaches. He resists doing as he ought to manage his hypertension and help his heart, delighting in sneaking a lunch stuffed cabbage with cream sauce, fingerlings, lingonberries, and vodka. Eating unhealthy foods is an assertion of his manhood.

Johansson and his volunteers are frustrated that the murder is now prescribed, no longer punishable by law. In particular, there is frustration that the case was mishandled from the first day and most of that is blamed on Evert Backstrom, a very different Backstrom than the Everett Backstrom of the series. Nonetheless, they persevere, getting ever closer to the solution.

Of course, finding the killer is not enough, thanks to the statute of limitations. Most of the volunteers would happily murder the killer themselves, though Johansson holds out hope for a judicial punishment, perhaps for committing a similar crime after the cutoff date for prosecution or even for some other crime that nets the kind of punishment he deserves.

3-stars

The Dying Detective is scrupulously fair and the procedural process of investigation rings true. The "intuitive" assumptions are based on experience and evidence. There is an example of how trace evidence was misinterpreted in the first investigation twenty-five years earlier that was critical in putting Johannson on the right track, but we know it as soon as he does. We are following his thought processes, from his reasoning about the case to his musings about his health.

The story is full of humanity and compassion. There is a certain goodness to the people who are part of the story and investigation. There is no consideration of letting this go, because this sort of crime cannot be ignored and forgotten without harming society as a whole. There is a strong commitment to law, a desire on Johannson part to reject vigilantism.

There were a couple difficulties with the story. Sometimes the pace got pretty slow, spending so much time on the recovery from his stroke. I also thought it was unnecessarily graphic, particularly in having several people share their own stories of child sexual assault. Sexual assault of children is too common, but Johannson pushed people to tell their stories that did not advance the investigation, but did dwell even more on abuse. Nonetheless, it's a good procedural that takes a more thoughtful approach to noir mystery.

When I looked up the publishing house link, it says it will be released in May 2017, however it is also available right now on Amazon.

★★★

<http://tonstantweaderreviews.wordpress...>

Bonnie Brody says

'The Dying Detective' is a wonderful novel that transcends genres. It is a literary in-depth character study, love story, mystery, and morality tale. It offers up a dazzling array of unexpected gifts to the reader.

Lars Martin Johannsson, former head of the National Criminal Police in Stockholm, Sweden has just ordered a sausage from the best hotdog kiosk in Sweden. He goes to his car to enjoy his food when he suffers a stroke. The next thing he knows, he is a patient in the Karolinska Hospital where he realizes that he can barely move his right arm, his face is sagging and the right side of his body is very weak.

Though Lars has retired, he has remained a legend among the police force in his country. He is known as "the man who can see around corners" because of his perspicacity and ability to solve crimes. As he works to gain his health back, he is tenderly cared for by his wife and a team of doctors. All of them tell Lars the same thing, that he must change his ways. He is overweight and sedentary and must eat healthier and exercise in order to survive. Not only has he suffered a stroke, but he has a heart condition.

While in the hospital, his neurologist tells him about a cold case that has come to her attention. Her father

was a vicar who believed in the sanctity of confession. Going through his things after his death, she realizes that he knew who a killer was. Twenty-five years ago, a nine year old girl named Yasmine Ermegan was raped and murdered, her killer never found. The only bit of evidence that Lars's doctor presents him with is a story and a hair band.

Lars decides to find the murderer, knowing that he's solved crimes before with less evidence than a hair band and a story. He is a legendary detective with an encyclopedic memory. Despite a continued tightness in his chest, a debilitating headache, and dependence on others for his care, Lars accrues information and insight.

The novel has two wonderful arcs - the narrative of external events and Lars' internal one. Lars is tired and sleeps a lot but when he's awake there is no one more tenacious and insightful. His mood varies by how many 'little white pills' he takes to provide himself with respite from his emotional and physical pain.

What astounded me is that I believed, from the outset, that Lars would prevail. It was easy to believe in him. Even his caretakers, weird and quirky as they are, become Lars' friends and co-conspirators as he tries to find out the identity of the murderous pedophile. A case is closed and the statute of limitations has passed, but Lars presses on. He is a man who is revered, respected, and loved, that rarity of humans - a truly upstanding person.

Paromjit says

A ScandiCrime written by Leif Persson, it has his trademark subtle and dark humour and incorporates Swedish cultural and political history which I really like. The strong and likeable character of the retired police chief Lars Martin Johansson is at the heart of the story with his refusal to give up on a cold case from 1986 from his hospital bed. The fact the case is conducted from his hospital bed lends the story a strong cerebral quality. This is not your run around, fast paced affair. The detective is nearing the end of his life, and this is his last case which lends the story an inescapable emotional poignancy.

Johansson is paying the price of his life of excess and stress and has suffered a stroke. He happens to acquire critical information on the murder of 9 year old, Yasmine, in 1986, from his medic. His friends from the police bring in the old police files and the determined cop investigates. The only thing is that under Swedish law, the murderer will escape prosecution as the Statute of Limitations applies. The killer is identified and there is thoughtful consideration of what is to be done and the notions of revenge. This is a thoroughly absorbing and entertaining read from an assured writer. Many thanks to Random House Transworld for an ARC via netgalley.

Natalie says

The writer's apparently extremely highly thought of in Sweden; he's a professor at the Swedish Nat'l Police Board, has been an adviser to the Swedish Ministry of Justice, and has written some 10 to 15 other books, three of which (one of them is this one) won the Best Swedish Crime Novel Award. Wikipedia says Persson won the "2011 Glass Key award for Den döende detektiven (The Dying Detective); this award is a given

annually to a crime novel by an author from the Nordic countries and the 2011 Palle Rosenkrantz-prize, which is awarded by the Det danske Kriminalakademi for the best criminal literature translated into Danish."

This sounded pretty amazing, especially since I've read a bunch of Scandinavian mysteries over the years and mostly enjoyed them, both their stories and their writing, albeit translated into English.

I was disappointed in "The Dying Detective." To me it seemed ham-handed and unconvincing. The characters, especially the hero, were boring and self-satisfied. The language, both in description and especially in the dialogue, was lacking in depth and range of language and phrase. Some of this is probably due to the translation. For example, the expression 'so-and-so said something, **for some reason**' appeared so many times that it seems clear it's an oft-used Swedish expression used in certain circumstances where it yields a certain connotation to what it modifies. I have no idea what that connotation actually is in Swedish, because the translator made do with simply repeating the phrase, rather than using English descriptively or narratively to show similarities in the various circumstances in which the expression was used.

Another such expression was "Now I see you," thought by various supporting characters regarding the main character, whose characteristically sharp perception seems sometimes changed because of his illness. There, I got what it meant all right, but it was said so frequently that it became tedious. That might work for Swedish readers in the way the book reads in Swedish; it didn't for me in English. The translator could have done something about this, and while I understand why he might not have wanted to, I think it would have improved the English version of the book. This is also true for the countless times the protagonist is described as suddenly happy for no reason, or how often he asks himself, "Now why did I say that?" and "What the hell is [some other character] going on about?"

Translation is really hard. There is no one-to-one correspondence between words in X language and "the" ones in Y language. To get the feel of the language the author used for a character from a specific time and place, of one sex or another, older or younger, who is particularly religious or politica or of one economic class or another, the translator has to have a fantastic sense of what kind of English might give the right feeling, or what aspects of English they might combine to construct it.

As it is, neither the story, with its significant lack of suspense, nor the language used to tell it, really enamoured me of "The Dying Detective" by Leif GW Persson, in this translation by Neil Smith. I enjoyed much more the work of Persson's fellow-countrymen Stieg Larsson, Maj Sjöwall, and Per Wahlöö.

Susan says

This book was listed as a 'stand alone' novel by author, Leif G.W. Persson. Although Persson is a well known Swedish novelist and criminologist, I had not read any of his books before, but soon discovered that he has written eight crime novels featuring detectives Jarnebring and/or Johansson (of which this is the eighth) – with books 4-6 being known as the "Fall of the Welfare State Trilogy" and Book 7 the first in the "Evert Backstrom" ('Linda') novels. As far as I can tell, his first three books have not been translated into English yet and, as always, we seem to receive books from Scandinavia in bits and pieces, out of order.

Now, I hate reading series books out of order and so, once I realised that I actually had the last book in the series I felt unwilling to pick it up – but I had received the book to review, preferably before publication date, so I got down to reading it and it totally had me gripped from the first pages! So, having been biased against this book, it is a testament to how very good this is that I loved it so much.

Lars Martin Johansson is the former head of the National Criminal Police. In Stockholm on family business, he stops for one of his beloved, unhealthy snacks, and has a stroke in his car. When he wakes, he is in hospital and his life has changed forever. While he is in the hospital, one of the doctor's – Ulrika Stenholm – asks whether he remembers the unsolved rape and murder of a nine year old girl, twenty five years ago...

Before long, Johansson is investigating the case; aided by his old partner, Bo Jarnebring, a young girl called Matilda whose Johansson's wife Pia has hired to care for him and a Russian orphan called Max, who Johansson's brother sends to help out. This novel really reminded me of, "The First Deadly Sin," by Lawrence Sanders (one of my favourite crime books) where a police Captain (not retired, but on a leave of absence) gets together an amateur task force to help solve a crime. Both novels have excellent characters, which are every bit as important as the plot. I

In this book, we follow Johansson's attempt to solve a crime which has been prescribed; meaning that the criminal, even if caught, cannot be tried for the crime and this adds an extra layer to the storyline, along with Johansson's health issues. This is a fantastic read and I will certainly need to explore more works by this author. I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

Niklas Pivic says

Jostle me and kill me. That's how I feel from having experienced this.

Filled to the brim with simplicities, a language so dated that every single character is unbelievable and an ending that everybody is able to tell from the start. "Hard-boiled" male characters everywhere.

The author is a Swedish professor in criminology. Too bad that doesn't show.

I must say I fell asleep during several trials of reading this. That's something.

Kasia says

How is that possible that everyone in this book remember so good names, conversations, details from 25 years ago? quoting what people said quarter a century ago! oh please. And they all seem to be super clever, having 'a feeling' and with that 'feeling' suddenly they find the murderer after 25 years silence. Policemen know everything about witnesses and also about parents of the victim without checking it. They know that they divorced, that mother came back to Iran, started to wear burke again. how do they know that, how they know about how good businessman is victim's father after moving from Sweden to USA, how they know what he does there. and after all... the plot moves slowly, step by step, which is quite good but then in the last moment there is super speed as if the author had just an hour left to finish the book. Anyway I really liked Lars and feel sorry for his death.

switterbug (Betsey) says

Lars Martin Johansson, retired crackerjack police detective and former head of the National Criminal Police in Stockholm, was “the man who could see around corners.” Unfortunately, he has let his body go slack since becoming a pensioner, and he is lucky to see his feet! He nourishes his mind with the daily paper and nuggets of literature, but he feeds his body with high volumes of the wrong cholesterol and carbs. One day, after buying his typical sausage meal from his favorite kiosk, he collapses, ending up hospitalized with a blood clot in his brain and an overstressed heart. His wife, Pia, twenty years younger and devoted to him, is tormented by his condition, and is vigilant toward his care and wellbeing.

It is from his hospital bed that Lars is lured into a 25 year-old unsolved rape-murder case of a nine-year-old child, Yasmine Ermegan, presented to him by his neurologist, daughter of a vicar who, on his deathbed, admitted to her that an elderly parishioner confessed that she knew the perp, but the name remains unknown to all alive, as the vicar took it to his grave. Thus begins Lars’ first (informal) murder investigation since his retirement, a case, under the new law, that is prescribed, meaning that the statute of limitations has passed, and the murderer cannot be punished for that crime, even if discovered. But that doesn’t stop Lars. He is still well-connected, but this is off the books and must be done slyly and with help from old friends and new.

GW Persson hooked me with the two alternate stories—one, crime-solving, with delightful deductive and inductive reasoning by Lars, supported by his caregivers with their own keen contributions, and his best friend (another retired detective, who was on the case when it was fresh), and the slender information amassed in the case files.

The investigation is girdled by Lars’ precarious health condition, such as weakness, fatigue, right arm/hand numbness, an oversized heart, labile mood, and the challenge to change his lifestyle in order to survive. Previously independent in all matters, Lars is forced to rely on others to complete activities of daily living and some of the logistics of solving the crime. The pensioner’s witty observations and complaints are spoken with silent ripostes mingled with direct ones, and his attempts to undermine a healthy diet and lifestyle add humor and pathos.

Although Lars ignored early warning signs to his impending neurological stroke—such as memory loss—his reasoning skills are very much intact, and he’s a brilliant, laconic, self-possessed detective. Physical recovery is the harder cross to bear, with one step forward, and two backward, the way a criminal investigation tends to go. However, the pensioner accepts the vicissitudes of the investigation with impunity, meanwhile roaring over his mortal restrictions.

Despite the 400+ pages in tightly packed print, the pages soon fly as you’re sucked into the story. Johansson, who appeared in Persson’s earlier works, is fleshed out and three-dimensional here, an endearing and taciturn man fighting crime and mortality in the only way he knows—with gusto and gumption, a consummate professional but stubborn as well, facing the coldest case and the most brutal redemption of his life. First-rate and page-turning.

4.5 rounded up

Ingrid Verschelling says

De Tweede Leif G.W. Persson is hoogleraar criminologie en schrijver, en had met tussenpozen functies bij de

top van de Zweedse politie. In de naweeën van een prostitutieschandaal rond de Zweedse minister van justitie werd hij ontslagen, en dit dreef hem bijna tot zelfmoord. Hij keerde echter terug, en was o.a. betrokken bij het onderzoek naar de moord op premier Olof Palme in 1986. Hij schreef twee thrillers met in de hoofdrol Evert Bäckström, en zes met in de hoofdrol Lars Martin Johansson. Persson heeft in Zweden meer succes dan Henning Mankell en Liza Marklund. Hij kreeg al drie keer de Zweedse prijs voor beste thriller, en ook in Finland en Denemarken viel hij in de prijzen. Het laatste woord is zijn zesde thriller rond Lars Martin Johansson, die volgens zijn collega's 'om het hoekje kan kijken'.

Voormalig hoofd van de riksrecherche Lars Johansson is een paar jaar met pensioen en is gedeeltelijk verlamd. Maar dat houdt hem niet tegen om een oude zaak te onderzoeken, wanneer hij een verhaal hoort van zijn dokter Ulrika Stenholm. Haar vader was priester, en op zijn sterfbed vertelde hij haar dat hij tijdens een biecht gehoord had wie de moordenaar was van Yasmine, een negenjarig meisje dat vijfentwintig jaar geleden verkracht en vermoord werd. Het onderzoek was destijds niet goed uitgevoerd, omdat de politie toen alle mankracht nodig had na de moord op Olof Palme. De zaak werd dan maar in de ijskast gezet. Er was de ouders geen gerechtigheid gegeven.

Nu is er een nieuwe wet aangenomen, waardoor moordzaken na 25 jaar verjaren. De rechercheurs van het coldcaseteam hadden echter al een DNA-analyse aangevraagd om beweging te krijgen in de Yasmine-zaak voordat die verjaarde. Bij het onderzoek zijn nogal wat toevalligheden, maar Lars Johansson had al vroeg geleerd het toeval te haten. Eén keer is geen keer, maar twee keer is twee keer te veel. Hij voelde een directe en onredelijke haat jegens de dader.

Samen met zijn beste vriend Bo Jarnebring, zijn zwager Alf Hult, de hulp Matilda en Max, die hem is uitgeleend door zijn broer om hem te chaufferen, vormt hij een team. Maar als Lars de dader vindt staat hij voor een dilemma: is gerechtigheid zoals in het Oude Testament is omschreven: heb geen medelijden en eis een leven voor een leven, een oog voor een oog, een tand voor een tand, een hand voor een hand, een voet voor een voet?

Leif Persson is geliefd bij velen. Sommige critici denken, dat hij te macho en te arrogant is. Hij is ongetwijfeld door de wol geverfd en schrijft over een harde wereld, maar toch heeft hij een fijne schrijfstijl zonder grof te worden. De eerste drie delen met Lars Johansson in de hoofdrol bevatten veel maatschappijkritiek. Zijn stijl is direct en realistisch met een beetje humor. Soms schetst hij een nogal negatief beeld van de Zweedse politie, zoals in zijn boeken met de antiheld Evert Bäckström, de hoofdrolspeler van zijn andere serie, hoewel hij ook in dit laatste deel zijdelings wordt genoemd. Deze man heeft precies het tegenovergestelde karakter als Lars Johansson: hij is zeer incompetent, is een racist en seksist, is egocentrisch en lui. Hij drinkt te veel, is te dik en niet sympathiek. In *Het laatste woord* speelt zijn held Lars Johansson de hoofdrol, een sympathieke competente politieman, die totaal niet corrupt is. Veel van zijn zaken raken zijdelings de moord op de Zweedse minister-president Olof Palme in 1986. Persson laat de incompetente zien van sommige politiemannen en politici en lanceert theorieën over wat er toen gebeurd kan zijn.

Perssons scherpe taalgebruik en dialogen maken hem zeer origineel. Zijn romans hebben alles wat je verwacht van goede misdadliteratuur: een onweerstaanbare plot, een subtile vertelwijze en interessante karakters.

De serie met Lars Martin Johansson in de hoofdrol is nu waarschijnlijk tot een einde gekomen. We kunnen ons alleen maar afvragen waar Persson nu mee zal komen. Dit boek, *Het laatste woord*, zet je in ieder geval aan het denken.

Eva Dillner says

One of the best books I've read. I read the Swedish original so will do my review likewise.

Jag har sedan ungdomen läst väldigt många deckare. Men den här är nog en av de bästa jag läst. Redan från första meningens när magen längtar till Günthers korvkiosk så dras man rätt in i handlingen. Jag sträckläste boken, ville bara fortsätta. Att följa känslorna, tankarna och så all denna mat som den stroke drabbade Johansson längtar efter är en ren njutning. Jag verkligen ser framför mig alla personerna som kommer och går, snacket, samspelet, älskar hur pusslet löses upp undan för undan.

Att det sen handlar om att sätta dit en pedofil av äckligaste sort gör det ju ännu bättre, att den pensionerade chefen löser fallet. Hela intrigen, storyn, de inblandade personerna flyter samman så otroligt väl. I många deckare blir det lätt krystat, de har inte riktigt fått till kopplingarna så de blir naturliga. Här är det klockrent.

Sen var det många igenkänningspunkter som kryddade storyn. Min pappa har haft flera strokes så det var intressant att uppleva från den drabbades synvinkel, och på ett humoristiskt sätt. Det här med korvkiosk är ju också så typiskt svenskt, och vi som bott utomlands har kanske en speciell kärlek till barndomens korv med bröd och mos, som var hemmalagat. Vi stannade alltid vid Walters i Åtvidaberg på väg ut till landet. Hur mycket mamma än föreslog att vi skulle gå på restaurang blev det alltid korvkiosken...

Jag blev glatt överraskad att chefen läste Der Richter und sein Henker. Den läste vi på universitet i Seattle för att träna upp förståelsen av tyska språket, och det är också en utmärkt bok.

Personerna i boken är väldigt mänskliga, mycket väl porträtterade genom beskrivning och dialog. Så alltigenom en underbar läsupplevelse.

Carrie says

4.5 stars. I had no idea that this book was part of a series when I checked it out of the library. With that said, I must admit that I really wish I had the opportunity to read the other books prior to this one primarily for detailed character background information. There were definitely times when I was reading this that I felt as if I was missing something.

Overall though this was a really good book. The plot of the book centers around a retired police officer who has a stroke and winds up admitted to the hospital for a lengthy stay. During that time, he makes a personal connection with his doctor and she brings up a murder that occurred 25 years prior. A little girl was savagely attacked, raped, and murdered and her killer was never found. The doctor tells the officer that her father was a man of the cloth and that during a confession the name of the killer was revealed to him. Her father is deceased but she wants to know if he would be interested in reviewing the case. He agrees but the case comes with a hitch. A new law has been passed and the statute of limitations for this case has since passed, so even if a perpetrator is found he cannot be charged with the crime.

This story is really well written. I was quite interested in the deductive reasoning the retired officer used to determine who the killer was. Beyond that, the supporting character development is fabulous. Persson flushes out each of the supporting roles in a detailed fashion (interestingly through the retired officer's eyes, which may or may not be reliable). The officer himself believes he is dying and often times he is quite crass (I would like to know what is personality is like in other books!).

This was a great book with a satisfying and somewhat surprising conclusion. I'm not sure how many other

books in the series have been translated to English but I would definitely be interested in reading them!

William Shaw says

That Perrson manages to keep you hooked using a detective who's a retired, sick, overweight Chief of Police who is often confined to bed or to the sofa, is an achievement in itself. But the real joy in this book is the sparse, Nordic laconic humor, which I suspect occasionally slips through the floorboards in translation. There's a great economy to it. Perrson's characters often reflect on a moment with a single pithy sentence, or a phrase repeated from an earlier scene. Lars Martin Johansson is dying. He does so in a very male world, one in which the women characters are mostly secondary, often carers (who include a feisty tattooed young woman who's just a little too groovy for comfort), but despite that, there's great pathos in the way Perrson draws Johansson's maleness; a once great detective, now a self-indulgent old man, working with passion on his final case.

Sandy says

Lars Martin Johansson, retired chief of the Swedish National Criminal Police, was having such a nice day. One minute he was standing in line for a hot dog at his favourite kiosk, the next everything went black. When he comes to in hospital, he's told all those years of inactivity & fine dining have caught up with him. His struggling heart caused a stroke. Over the next few days visitors trickle in & out as Lars comes to grips with his immortality. But it's his doctor who provides a welcome distraction.

Dr. Ulrika Stenholm's father was a priest who recently died. On his death bed, he told her a parishioner had once confessed to knowing who was behind the rape/murder of 9 year old Yasmine Ermegan in 1985. They knew the girl & Ulrika is upset that her father couldn't disclose the information at the time. She knows who Lars is & wonders if he might take another look at the case.

Lars wasn't part of the original investigation so enlists the help of former colleague Bo Jarnebring to bring him up to speed. Bo begins to drop by every day, relating details between Lars' rehab sessions & frequent naps. Meanwhile, wife Pia is determined to curb her husband's bad habits & begin to plan for the day he comes home.

For the first half of the book, Lars is in hospital trying to recover while learning about Yasmine's short life & horrible death. You might think it would make for a slow, dull read but oddly enough I found myself caught up in her story & eagerly waited for Bo to deliver the next instalment. It's kind of like getting a few chapters of a bedtime story each night when you were a child.

Once Lars is released he's able to take on a more active role in the investigation & quickly co-opts his 2 home care providers. Matilda is a smart, young woman who easily deflects her boss' comments about her tattoos. Max is a strong, Russian labourer whose own past gives him motives to help solve the case. They make a quirky team & their interactions lend a gentle, wry humour to the story.

If you've read the author's "Fall of the Welfare State" trilogy you'll recognize some of the characters as well as his trademark literary style of prose. At times it reminded me of an Hercule Poirot mystery with a definite emphasis on using one's little grey cells as opposed to muscle. Like the Belgian detective, Lars is a

fastidious man who enjoys his creature comforts. But the stroke has left him frustrated (and scared) by his physical & mental limitations.

Watching him pick apart the old case is fascinating & I became quite attached to the cranky old copper. There's also bittersweet sadness as you watch Lars struggle to accept a reduced life governed by rehab & medication. You're never in doubt he'll find the killer but the circumstances raise an interesting moral dilemma. What do you do when you find the person responsible for such a horrendous act after the statute of limitations has run out? There is no shortage of people with suggestions for what he deserves & Lars' personal ethics are sorely tested.

The ending is full of surprises & ramifications for most of the characters. I'm willing to bet a lot of readers will be caught off guard as well. This is not a fast paced, guns drawn, things-go-boom thriller. It's a literary mystery with a smart, intricate plot that allows you to just sit back & listen while someone tells you a great story.

Nancy says

Shortlisted Petrona Award 2017
...still I am not impressed
I have read better crime fiction.
My advice? try Pierre Lemaitre!
