



The Demon of Dakar

Kjell Eriksson , Ebba Segerberg (Translation)

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In *The Demon of Dakar*, Ann Lindell and her motley crew of colleagues are faced with a most baffling murder case in which all clues lead straight back to a popular local restaurant named Dakar. The owner, Slobodan Andersson, has some shady connections in his past, and his partner's reputation is equally murky. The kitchen crew is not above suspicion, either. The meat chef is an oddball, to say the least, while unbeknownst to the rest, the newest hire's personal life is a tangled web of lies. Even Eva Willman, the seemingly blameless older woman returning to the workforce as a waitress, has skeletons in her closet. And then the tension ratchets up a number of notches as it becomes apparent that one murder has not satisfied the killer in the least. If Ann is to prevent a bloodbath at Restaurant Dakar, she must match wits with a killer whose motives are seemingly completely obscure. But the reader knows the killer well. His crimes are justified from his point of view. Not only that, he's a very likable fellow who is only looking for justice.

The Demon of Dakar Details

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Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: Investigator Ann Lindell

SETTING: Uppsala, Sweden

SERIES: 3 of 3

RATING: 2.75

Slobodan Andersson is a rather unlikely restaurateur. He's opened a few places in Uppsala, Sweden, none of which have done very well, until his latest venture, the Dakur. This restaurant serves as the epicenter of the book, with all of the main characters having some kind of connection to its operation, either through working in its kitchen or as a part of some nefarious business that Andersson is involved in, assumed to be drug smuggling.

Andersson has sent one of his closest associates, Armas, to Spain to advance a business endeavor. However, Armas is killed before he can get there. The case immediately falls to investigator Ann Lindell and her team, who struggle to find any motives for Armas' brutal death. At first, they believe that Andersson is involved; but given the nature of their friendship, they begin to look at other possibilities.

The book is told from the point of view of three different people: Lindell; Manuel Alavez who has traveled from Mexico to avenge the death of his brother Angel and to get his other brother, Patricio, out of prison; and Eva Willman, a new waitress at the Dakur who has been struggling to find her role in the world while supporting her two sons. All of the stories interconnect. Manuel finds a temporary job at the Dakur as a dishwasher, and he and Eva are attracted to one another despite their vastly different life experiences.

Lindell was determined to pin something on Andersson, and the results of the investigation came to rest on what seemed to me to be very circumstantial evidence. The whole set of circumstances around Manuel and his journey to Sweden and his actions thereafter were completely contrived. The only character I found to be interesting was one of the detectives, Ottosson, who had more humanity to him than most of the others.

I didn't particularly enjoy **THE DEMON OF DAKAR**. I didn't find Andersson or any of the other characters to be particularly demonic. The worst failing for me was the fact that there was no closure for anyone in the book. When I turned the last page, I felt like all of the main characters were continuing without me, and I couldn't tell in what direction and didn't really care where they ended up. I am a big fan of Scandinavian crime fiction, but this particular book didn't work for me.

Amweatherill says

Of the three books I have read by this author, This is the one I have enjoyed the most. If you want a tidy ending, this book is not for you!

Pamela says

Difficult Plot

This is my first read of a book by Kjell Eriksson. The somewhat haunting story of two brothers who are Zapotec—from Mexico, Manuel and Patricio, and their sometimes grim adventures in Norway, are really the focus of the tale. Ann Lindell is a detective who ends up searching for them in Norway, under the presumption that they are drug dealers. In the beginning, each main character's story is written separately and the reader has no idea how all these stories connect. Eventually the threads of each story become entangled, only to untangle at the end. The real drug dealer, and his partner, are main characters, also. As is a waitress who works at Dakar.

This author has the ability to inhabit the minds of all these characters as their story unfolds. By creating parallel stories, we are lead into the violent world of drug dealing, centered in the restaurant named Dakar.

Carol says

Swedish mystery with the most satisfactory (as opposed to satisfying) ending of any mystery I have read in recent memory---and there have been a lot of them with uniformly disappointing endings. For that reason alone I would recommend this book; the characters are also well-drawn and the plot a bit ordinary.

Bethany says

Something (minor) was lost in the translation to English I think, but this was good, and is apparently one of three books with the same lead detective. Multiple story lines coming together in one crime.

Laura says

Eriksson is a tough read for me - I always end up liking the books a lot more towards the end than I do at the beginning. I almost put this one down! But I'm glad I didn't - it's a compelling look at a web of relationships and how the reverberations of a criminal act can be felt at different levels of society. The characters are interesting and well-drawn, though of all the 'Nordic Noire' series I read, I find the detectives in this series to be the most flat. The criminals they investigate, and those impacted by the crimes, are way more interesting and easy to relate to for me.

There were still some holes in this story (view spoiler)

Steven Langdon says

With a police detective story from Sweden, it is inevitable to make comparisons with Henning Mankell's

novels -- and *The Demon of Dakar* shares some of their strengths, but doesn't quite measure up overall.

This novel, like Mankell's, is less a conventional who-done-it and more a multifaceted slice of life in Sweden with a murder or murders knitting the narrative together. Thus the character of Detective Ann Lindell is probed in all its dimensions in the book, just as policeman Kurt Wallander's agonized life is analyzed throughout Mankell's novels. And the Swedish canvass on which the story plays out includes vivid characters from different social and economic dimensions within the country -- you cannot help but absorb the complex texture of a changing and complicated country. Like Mankell, Kjell Eriksson also sets his book in the wider world context that is influencing the open society that is Sweden.

These facets of the novel are all strengths, since they are handled well, and draw the reader deeply into the particularities of Uppsala, its restaurants, and its policing.

Mankell, however, always succeeds in building suspense and mystery into his books, despite his diverse focus. *The Demon of Dakar* is less skillful on that level. Its plot is rambling, even around the murders that are meant to knit the novel together. The role of the police is analyzed much less effectively than in Mankell. And key characters seem to submerge just as you are expecting to see their roles more fully revealed. The result is a very interesting sketch of one part of Sweden, but just a fair-to-middling mystery story.

Katherine says

"He joined in her laughter and thought that it was the first time he laughed in Sweden" (224-225).

"He only felt bewildered by the fact that there were so many realities. All over the world, people were standing at the edges of fields, by deserts and lakes, in front of home and graves. Or else they were resting in bed or on a sleep mat, alone, or with their beloved by their side. Many were on their way somewhere, restless of full of anticipation.

"Everywhere there were people with dreams and beating hearts" (260).

Fiona says

A man is found murdered in the Fyre river near Uppsala, Sweden. Who is he? Who killed him? These are the questions that Ann Lindell and the other police detectives must resolve.

Armas and Slobodan go to a small town in Mexico and find mules to smuggle their cocaine back to Sweden. The two mules are brothers Angel and Patricio. Angel dies running away from the police in Germany and Patricio is captured in Sweden and sitting in a jail near Uppsala. Their other brother Manuel didn't want to participate in this folly but he now has to help Patricio. He thinks Swedish jails are like Mexican jails: if he pays the jailers, then Patricio would have a good life while in prison. He'll get the money that Armas and Slobodan promised his brothers. After her meets Armas, things went awry. He accidentally slits Armas' throat and tosses him in the river. He still needs to avenge his brothers' situation with Slobodan, though.

While he's working in Slobodan's restaurand, Dakar, he meets Eva and falls in love with her. She may have fallen in love with him but she discovers that he lied about his home country and that his brother was in jail for drug smuggling. Because there is increased drug crime in her own neighborhood and her teenage son

knows of a kid involved with dealers, she won't talk with Manuel any longer.

As in any police investigation, a lot of facts are learned but may not pertain directly to the case. It is the same in this story. There's Manuel's story, Armas and Slobaban drug dealing, Armas' porno films, and Eva's neighborhood crime problems. Not all are relevant to the main plot but they all tie in one way or another. Because of this, there are many characters in the story. For me, there were too many characters. I came across reading about Lorenzo and his name did appear earlier. Who is he?

Good story. I liked how it ended for Manuel and Patricio but not how it ended for the police investigation.

Gisela Hafezparast says

This is my second book of the series and I really like it and have ordered others already. Eriksson's writing is very close to Mankell's in my opinion, but not as dark. However, he picks up on societal problems both in Sweden and elsewhere, in this book Mexico and the way the people of this country are hindered to improve their life at every turn by other countries foreign policy or their people's racism. It depicts the blight of small Mexican farmers, interwoven into a Swedish crime story. I really enjoy the development, both privately and professionally, of Ann Lindell the main character, but just like with Mankell, it is not just about her, you get to know the team.

I know others are not that keen, but if you are looking for something similar to Mankell, than in my opinion, this series is a good one.

Lauren says

Another good police story, not really a mystery since the reader knows whodunnit. I like that the story is peopled with well thought out characters and the plot moves along bringing all the subplots together. The end leads you to believe another book is on the way.

Felicity says

This is an interesting mystery, far more interesting than the predictable tales of Guido Brunetti in Donna Leon's Venetian mysteries, for instance. Nonetheless, I imagine Kjell Eriksson's mysteries have been somewhat eclipsed by the posthumous success of Stieg Larsson's sprawling novels. What both share is a focus on a strong female protagonist, though Eriksson's Ann Lindell differs markedly from the dark and somber Lisabeth Salander of Larsson. Sadly, Eriksson is also served very poorly by his translator and/or editor. There are definite issues with the translation, but nothing a good editor could not have fixed easily enough. Either the manuscript was in a much worse state when it was received by the American publisher--and this is the best job they could do in cleaning it up, or they were just too lazy to bother. The number of mistakes, which are so obviously a result of sloppy editing in my opinion, are very distracting--and detract from an otherwise interesting story.

Sage Streck says

This has been my least-favorite Kjell Eriksson book thus far. The plot was unengaging, and I felt as though Eriksson tried to concentrate on too many main characters at the same time. I did not find the villain credible at all, and I lost interest quickly. I honestly had trouble getting through the whole story--it was very disappointing.

Nancy Oakes says

The Demon of Dakar is a police procedural set in Uppsala, Sweden where the author makes his home. Ann Lindell is a detective inspector in the violent crimes division of the Uppsala Police, and she's also a single mom of one little boy.

Although the action of this novel takes place in Sweden, it begins with the story of Manuel Alavez, who is on his way from Mexico to Sweden to visit his brother Patricio. Patricio and his brother Angel got caught up in a drug-smuggling operation; Angel was killed and Patricio was imprisoned. Manuel needs to know exactly what happened, why Angel died. Two men, a "fat one," and a "tall one," had come to Oaxaca to recruit poor campesinos into smuggling drugs, tempting them with large amounts of money. They had promised Patricio ten thousand dollars, even if he was caught, and as Patricio notes, that sum was the equivalent of over "seven thousand hours of work." Manuel wants that money; if his brother won't take it, it will go to his mother back in Mexico. Manuel discovers that the big man is the owner of a restaurant in Uppsala called Dakar, and goes by the name of Slobodan Andersson; the tall one is Armas, his partner.

Lindell and her team become involved when the body of a man is found. His throat has been cut, and the only evidence of his identity was in the remnant of a tattoo which had been sliced off of the body. The tattoo nags at Lindell, who knows that its removal is an important clue. But before she can identify the tattoo, the body is given a name -- Armas, which leads Lindell to Dakar and to Slobodan Andersson. Armas' death sparks a long chain of events, and as the police keep investigating, they begin to realize that there are connections between all of them that will lead them to the killer, hopefully long before anyone else turns up dead. The reader knows who's behind it all, and we watch, waiting for the police to find that one link in the chain to give the killer a name.

Overall, it's a good book, not great, and I think that the story could have been told much more efficiently and cleanly than it was. If I had to give a one-word impression of how I feel about this book -- it would be "muddled." That is not to say I didn't like it, because I did, and I definitely recommend it. And to answer the question of whether or not I'd read another book by Eriksson, I've already started *The Hand that Trembles*. Many people have given *Demon of Dakar* a two-thumbs-up and four- and five-star reviews, so it's once again probably me. I'm discovering that I'm a very tough audience.

I have a great deal more to say, but realizing that most people do not care for really long reviews, if you're interested, you can check out my thoughts [here](#).

Christa says

The Demon of Dakar starts out a bit confusing, as have most of the Swedish crime novels I've read by Kjell Eriksson, but once you get into it, and get passed the way he switches back and forth between first and last names which adds to the confusion of keeping track of so many characters and plot lines, it is completely engrossing. I couldn't put it down and I love the way he weaves together the different lives. I also love how the police, including Ann Lindell, never really seem to have a grasp on what is actually happening. The speculation on their part is as much fun as the actual events that he lets the reader in on, even when no one in the story can fully grasp what is happening. It's a bit depressing but it's a Swedish crime novel so that is to be expected. Definitely recommended, as I would recommend any of his novels that I have read so far.
