



The Secret Life of Wallander: An Unofficial Guide to the Swedish Detective Taking the Literary World by Storm

Stafford Hildred

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As Nordic Noir takes off, there is one standout character who has been fascinating critics and readers alike for almost 20 years—this book traces the evolution of Kurt Wallander and the enormous impact he has had

In the two decades since he first appeared in Henning Mankel's novel *Faceless Killers*, the sad Swedish detective Kurt Wallander has become a worldwide success story. Mankel's compelling books about the idealistic police inspector have sold more than 30 million copies in 43 different languages and inspired more than 25 film adaptations. This book explores how in Europe, readers took instantly to the troubled, lonely cop with his horrendous health problems and catastrophic home life. It also demonstrates the new fanbase given the character since Kenneth Branagh has taken on the central role in the acclaimed and award-winning series, and British and American fans have really taken Wallander to their hearts. It discusses the effect on the small Swedish town of Ystad, now one of the country's top tourist attractions as many British and American visitors are lining up to visit murder scenes and immerse themselves in the bleak landscape made famous on screen. Yet *Wallander* is much more than just another TV crime series—Henning Mankel invented the caring policeman as a vehicle to write about the disturbing increase in violence and racism that was undermining the comfortable social democracy of Sweden. Those problems are as international as Wallander's appeal.

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