



## When the Devil Holds the Candle (Inspector Sejer Mysteries)

By Karin Fossum

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**When the Devil Holds the Candle (Inspector Sejer Mysteries)** By Karin Fossum

When two teenagers steal a purse from a stroller, it results in an infant's death. Unaware of the enormity of their crime, Zipp and Andreas are intent on committing another. They follow an elderly woman home, and Andreas enters her house with his switchblade. In the dark, Zipp waits for his friend to come out.

Inspector Konrad Sejer and his colleague Jacob Skarre see no connection between the infant's death and the reported disappearance of a local delinquent. And so while the confusion outside mounts, the heart-stopping truth unfolds inside the old woman's home.

Unflappable as ever, Sejer digs below the surface of small- town tranquility in an effort to understand how and why violence destroys everyday lives.

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By *Karin Fossum*

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Skillful characterization and revealing detail lift Fossum's third mystery to be published in the U.S. featuring thoughtful, intelligent Insp. Konrad Sejer (after 2005's *He Who Fears the Wolf*). Handsome Andreas Winther, a self-absorbed, dangerously restless 18-year-old, manages to draw both sympathy and disgust from the reader. He roams the streets of an unnamed provincial Norwegian town in the evenings, accompanied by his socially inept friend, Sivert "Zipp" Skorpe, and fueled by the enormity of a secret he keeps. One evening, after mugging a young mother, Andreas decides to break into an old woman's house to rob her. His intended victim, Irma Funder, has a complicated health situation and a more complicated psyche. In defending herself, Irma pushes Andreas down the cellar stairs, where he lands unnaturally twisted, unable to move but alive. What develops between the immobile boy and the reclusive woman is a bizarre, excruciating, curiously tender relationship that serves as a pathetic and poignant balance to the hunt for Andreas conducted by Sejer and his police colleague, Jacob Skarre. (*July*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Fossum's Konrad Sejer procedurals, set in Oslo, are among the many Scandinavian mysteries that have followed Henning Mankell's Kurt Wallander series to the U.S. Her first novel to appear here, *Don't Look Back* (2004), was very much in the world-weary Wallander mold, with Sejer investigating a 15-year-old girl's murder and finding multiple layers of ambiguity. Although Sejer is present again this time, the story is much less like a contemporary European procedural and more like a Ruth Rendell psychological thriller. As Sejer and his colleague Jacob Skarre investigate a mugging and the disappearance of a delinquent, the reader sees what the coppers don't, following the tragic events in the life of the delinquent and the very disturbed elderly woman he encounters. At times this story is almost unendurably painful, as our sense of the inevitable clashes with our uncertainty about the outcome. All of the characters are victims of a kind, and all are trapped in one way or another. We feel equally trapped, by our proximity to so many lives gone wrong, and by our inability to close the book. *Bill Ott*

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Review

### PRAISE FOR WHEN THE DEVIL HOLDS THE CANDLE

"Either somebody just slid an ice cube down your back or you're reading the opening pages of When the Devil Holds the Candle, a psychological tour de force."?O, THE OPRAH MAGAZINE

"The story is so chillingly told that we can only marvel at the author's skill at illustrating how a random sequence of events can cause so many lives to intersect in so many horrifying ways."?THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

"[I]t is an impossible book to put down, a psychological thriller that will haunt you long after the final page has been turned."

(Bruce Tierney *Bookpage* 2006-09-01)

"A stunning exploration of social isolation... Masterfully plotted."  
(*Curled Up with a Good Book.com* 2006-09-01)

"Fossum . . . writes like Ruth Rendell with the gloves off."  
(*Kirkus Reviews* 2006-05-15)

"This is not your usual police procedural -- Fossum's third Sejer novel ... is psychological suspense at its best."  
(Jo Ann Vicarel *Library Journal* 2006-06-01)

"[T]he story is so chillingly told that we can only marvel at the author's skill at illustrating how a random sequence of events can cause so many lives to intersect in so many horrifying ways."  
(Marilyn Stasio *New York Times* 2006-09-01)

"Either somebody just slid an ice cube down your back or you're reading the opening pages of *When the Devil Holds the Candle*...a psychological tour de force."  
(*O Magazine* 2006-09-01)

"Skillful characterization and revealing detail lift Fossum's third mystery to be published in the U.S featuring thoughtful and intelligent Insp. Konrad Sejer."  
(*Publishers Weekly* 2006-05-22)

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