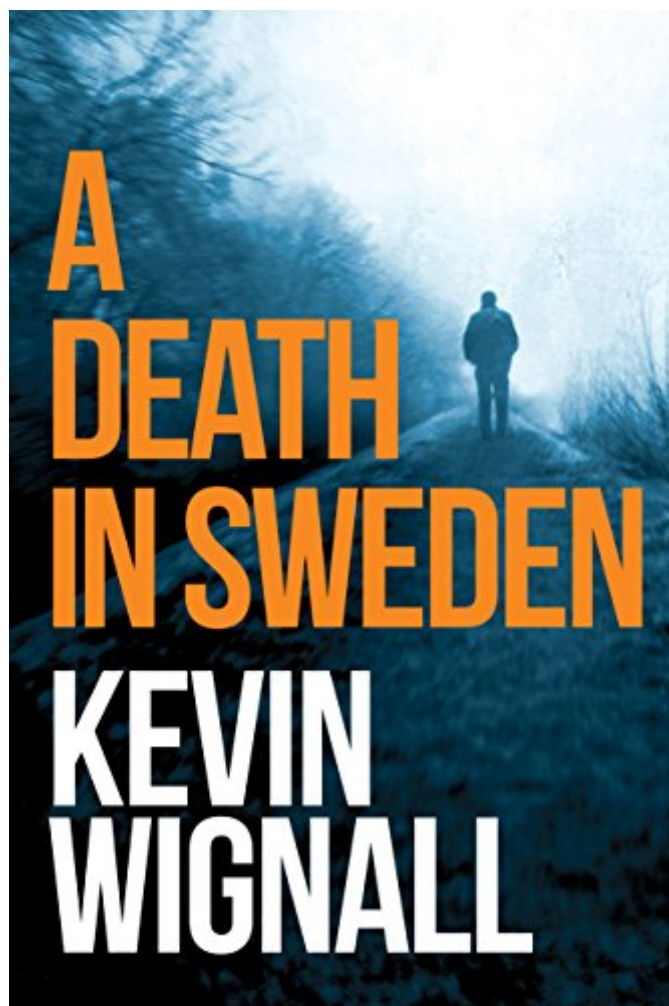


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A Death In Sweden



Synopsis

Dan Hendricks is a man in need of a lifeline. A former CIA operative, he is now an agent for hire by foreign powers on the hunt for dangerous fugitives. It's a lethal world at the best of times, and Dan knows his number is almost up. His next job could be his last—and his next job is his biggest yet. The target sounds trackable enough: Jacques Fillon, who gave up his life trying to save a fellow passenger following a bus crash in northern Sweden. But the man was something of an enigma in this rural community, and his death exposes his greatest secret: Jacques Fillon never existed at all. Dan is tasked with uncovering Fillon's true identity—but can he do so before his own past catches up with him?

Book Information

File Size: 1603 KB

Print Length: 278 pages

Publisher: Thomas & Mercer (January 1, 2016)

Publication Date: January 1, 2016

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00Y21VGYW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #2,353 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #23

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime #25 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime #31 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers > Assassinations

Customer Reviews

"A Death in Sweden" is a quick and easy read. At 278 pages long, there isn't room for complex plots and subplots. There are two principal stories. That of Jacques Fillon, the man who gave up his life to save a fellow passenger and whose death is the subject of the book's title. And, that of Dan

Hendricks who, in order to save his own life, is tasked with learning who Jacques Fillon was and what he knew. Since Jacques dies in the beginning, the action naturally centers around Dan and we learn about Jacques along the way. As in a typical story in this genre, you know the protagonist is going to prevail. You just don't know beforehand how he is going to do that. However, the principal antagonist is obvious fairly early on and I found Dan's necessary steps to be fairly predictable. Jacques, on the other hand, was more of a mystery. I had a feeling that there was more to him than was being uncovered. But, it took a while before I figured out for sure just what that was. All was revealed in the end, and it was satisfying to have my suspicions confirmed. The story was written in an easy flowing style. I did find the editing to be a little sketchy. There were obvious errors and omissions that should have been caught prior to publication. But, it was only a minor distraction. Violence is a necessary part of this genre, but the author took care to not make it excessively graphic. I also appreciated that he also avoided both foul language and graphic explicit sex.

Spy thrillers aren't usually my preferred reading but I read the description for "A Death in Sweden" a month ago and loved it. After reading samples of the author's other books, I knew that this would be my pick if it was a Kindle First choice. So, yea! -good choice. The plot description given is a little over simplified- it is clear early on that Dan Hendricks, a sometime hired gun for the CIA- has become a target himself. The interest in the identity of Jacques Fillon is actually a result of that. This plot gets the pace going early on and I have to say that for the first half of the book I thought that this was one of the best Kindle First books that I had read. It was very engrossing and easy reading. My enthusiasm waned a little after that. Partly because the relationship between Dan and the female character as well as some of the speeches, reminded me a lot of John P.

Marquand's dated spy thriller "Stopover Tokyo" which I didn't like at all. But, fortunately, although there were some stretches, this doesn't have the massive logic failure of Marquand's book. In addition, making a hero out of an assassin requires delicate handling and is usually better when the author doesn't even try, like "The Butcher Boy". In this case it seemed the author was trying too hard to convince us that Dan was a good guy. But all in all, this was a quick fun read. There is a LOT of violence but not graphic. Mild sex scenes and little, if any, foul language. There were a surprising number of proofreading errors that were a little distracting but not large enough to completely derail the story. I'm hardly a judge of spy thrillers but I think most mystery/thriller fans will enjoy

this. I know that I am going to pick up some of Wignall's earlier works.

Although I enjoyed the pace of the read and took it for what it was worth, nothing in the content was ever really developed enough to stir many emotions or make me think the author had many in writing it either. The inner dialogue of our protagonist was about as unimaginable as it comes, the settings were about as non descriptive as a tourist pamphlet and at no point did any other character surprise or act in any other way than to push the plot forward. I was dying for a twist or something to make me think our hero was actually in peril but not once did I think that the next page would give me a WTF moment and sadly it never did. Even the big reveal in the final pages was telegraphed from the first few paragraphs and since there was nothing to hint at this in between it felt as if the author put in an ah ha moment just for the sake of having one. Basically the whole story reads like a high school outline of how to write a fast paced spy thriller without the spying or the thrills. What you think is going to happen pretty much does and there isn't enough character and setting development to distract from the fact that this book feels like it was written by some software algorithm not someone who actually cares about the words they are putting on the pages. I will say it kept me turning those pages, but only in search of a payoff that never came. A Death in Sweden was more of A Nap on the Couch for me.

I'll be looking for more of Kevin Wignall's work from here on. I was very fortunate to get it as an Prime monthly special, and based on their usual fare I have assumed it was an effort to plug a rising author. So I was stunned at the quality of the writing and the tightness of the plot in this story. Then I came back to the author page and realized that Kevin has a pretty long track record, and well deserved at that. So this is the kind of work that you should expect from a well-established author, and you won't be disappointed. Swedish mysteries are all the rage since the Dragon Tattoo series but actually this story has a much wider European travelogue sweep than that; it just happens that the death in Sweden kicks the cycle off (although there are also some Swedish scenes to please you if you were expecting more of the Dragon Tattoo genre). Think of this as LeCarre with a bit more violent action or Jason Bourne toned down to be a bit more realistic.

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