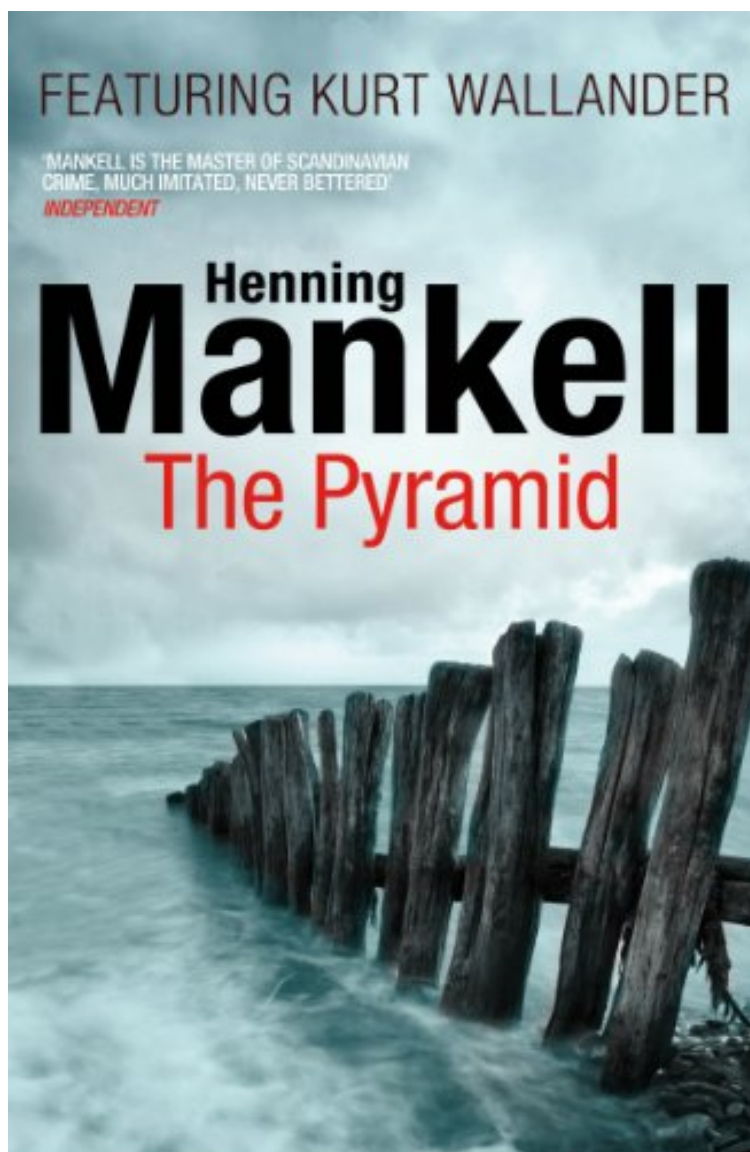


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The Pyramid: Kurt Wallander



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWhen Kurt Wallander first appeared in Faceless Killers, he was a senior police officer, just turned forty, with his life in a mess. His wife had left him, his father barely acknowledged him; he ate badly and drank alone at night.The Pyramid chronicles the events that led him to such a place. We see him in the early years, doing hours on the beat whilst trying to solve a murder off-duty; witness the beginnings of his fragile relationship with Mona, the woman he has his heart set on marrying; and learn the reason behind his difficulties with his father. These thrilling tales provide a fascinating insight into Wallander's character, from the stabbing of a neighbour in 1969 to a light aircraft accident in 1989, every story is a vital piece of the Wallander series, showing Mankell at the top of his game. Featuring an introduction from the author,

The Pyramid is an essential read for all fans of Kurt Wallander. When you spend a lot of time enthusiastically recommending a favourite writer to people unfamiliar with him, it's easy to acquire that cosy feeling that you're one of the initiated, spreading the word to those who aren't. For many, that used to be the case with Henning Mankell; crime aficionados who had discovered the Swedish master could hardly wait to extol the virtues of his wonderfully written novels -- and Mankell's taciturn cop, Kurt Wallander. But the days when Mankell and his creation were known to just a privileged few are long over. There has already been an acclaimed television series made for the Scandinavian territories, and a major new English-speaking series beckons (starring Kenneth Branagh); even more fame is guaranteed for the writer and his detective. So the time is probably right for The Pyramid, even though those of us who enjoyed putting out the word about Mankell will have to relinquish their proselytising role. Wallander first appeared in Faceless in 1991, when he was a senior police officer just out of his 30s and with his private life in chaos. The stories here describe

his early years: the events, the people and the crimes that forged the man we first met in Faceless. We encounter Wallander as a beat cop attempting to crack a murder in his spare time; we follow him in his tentative first steps with Mona, the woman he has decided to marry (his wife, of course, had left him by the time of the events in that first book), and we are shown why his relationship with his father is quite so fractious. The elements that make the full length Wallander novels so successful are all here in microcosm: a cool, dispassionate treatment of crime, the understated evocation of the Scandinavian locales; and (best of all) the puzzling, fascinating character of the tenacious cop at the centre of the narrative. Mankell fans may prefer the full-length novels (and not every piece here is vintage Mankell), but they will feel the need to catch up with the insights provided by these striking stories. --Barry Forshaw

EXTRAIT FOREWORD

It was only after I had written the eighth and final installment in the series about Kurt Wallander that I thought of the subtitle I had always sought but never found. When everything, or at least most of it, was over I understood that the subtitle naturally had to be "Novels about the Swedish Anxiety." But of course I arrived too late at this insight. And this despite the fact that the books have always been variations on a single theme: "What is happening to the Swedish welfare state in the 1990s? How will democracy survive if the foundation of the welfare state is no longer intact? Is the price of Swedish democracy today too high and no longer worth paying?" And it is precisely these questions that have also been the subject of the majority of the letters I have received. Many readers have had wise thoughts to share. Indeed I feel confirmed in my impression that Wallander has in a way served as a kind of mouthpiece for growing insecurity, anger, and healthy insights about the relationship between the welfare state and democracy. There have been thick letters and slender postcards from places around the world that I have never heard of, telephone calls that have reached me at odd hours, agitated voices that have spoken to me via e-mail. Beyond these matters of the welfare state and democracy, I have also been asked other questions. Some of them have been in regards to inconsistencies that many readers have gleefully discovered. In almost all cases in which readers have brought "errors" to light, they have been correct. (And let me immediately add that new inconsistencies will be discovered even in this volume. Let me simply say that what appears in this volume is what should stand. Let no shadow fall upon any editor. I could not have had a better one than Eva Stenberg.) But most of the letters have posed the following question: what happened to Wallander before the series began? Everything, to set an exact date, before January 8, 1990. The early winter morning when Wallander is awakened in his bed by a telephone call, the beginning of Faceless Killers. I have a great sympathy for the fact that people wonder how it all began. When Wallander appeared on the scene he was forty-two, going on forty-three. But by then he had been a policeman for many years, he had been married and divorced, had a child, and, once upon a time, had left Malm for Ystad. Readers have wondered. And naturally I have also sometimes wondered. During these past nine years I have sometimes cleaned out drawers, dug through dusty piles of paper, or searched among the ones and zeroes of diskettes. Several years ago, right after I was done with the fifth book, Sidetracked, I realized that I had started to write stories in my head that took place long before the start of the series. Again, this magical date, January 8, 1990. Now I have gathered these stories. Some have already been published in newspapers. Those I have gone over lightly. Some chronological errors and dead words have been excised. Two of the stories have never been published before. But I am not publishing these stories now to clean out my desk. I am publishing this volume because it forms an exclamation mark to the period I wrote last year.

In the manner of the crab, it can sometimes be good to go backward. To a beginning. The time before January 8, 1990. No picture will ever be complete. But I do think these pieces should be part of it. The rest is,

and remains, silence. Henning Mankell January 1999