Leena Lehtolainen
The new installment of the Maria Kallio series is a chronicle of xenophobia and hate. Maria Kallio is investigating the disappearance of three Muslim girls – and the killing of another.

Maria Kallio, working on an EU project training Afghani police, travels to the opening ceremonies for the country’s new police academy, with disastrous consequences. Upon return­ing home to Finland, Maria begins work in the Espoo Special Crimes Unit and is assigned to investigate the disappearances of three immigrant girls. The girls frequented the same girls’ club as Maria’s daughter Iida.

Crimes Unit and is assigned to investigate the disappearances of three Muslim girls. The girls frequented the same girls’ club as Maria’s daughter Iida. Then the body of a fourth Muslim girl is found in the snow, strangled with her own headscarf. Are the cases related? Is a serial killer on the move? Or did the girls’ families have something to do with the disappearances?

Leena Lehtolainen’s Where Have All the Young Girls Gone is an engrossing exploration of the collision between tradition and the new multicultural Europe. It is a journey into a world where daily life is defined by ancient belief and deeply ingrained, habitual perception. Who is in the right when there are two truths?
The Killing One
Translation Sample
by Owen F. Witesman
The Killing One
1

One of the j伊's wings had come off. The animal's cries crossed the restaurant shell I tried to catch its eye to say that I felt the same.

Irja Ahola was dead. Her husband had beaten her skull to mush with the first weapon that happened into his hand, a coal poker.

She had been doing charity work, but not surprised Irja should have divorced him after the first serious assault, five years ago. She could have moved away from the city and changed her name. Irja had not wanted to leave. She had to think of the children and grandchildren. We, the staff of the Home Base women's shelter, had supported her decision. We thought the abuse could be tolerated and that keeping a big family together was important. Irja had not pressed charges over the abuse five years ago, and she hadn't allowed us to record the police later either when she fled to the shelter with blackened eyes and broken ribs.

Now Irja was dead.

I got another cliché from the bar, even though I could feel the first one making my legs weak. Inspector Maria Kalliо had telephoned this afternoon to ask how much I had known about the violence that had been going on in the Ahola home. Once Irja Ahola had admitted to her eldest daughter that the bruises on her jaw were not the result of a bicycle accident after all, but that the girl's father had inflicted them in a fit of rage. It was only in a police interview following the murder that it dawned on the daughter that her mother's constant injuries weren't a result of a tendency to bump into things.

Kalliо had asked me to come down to the police station at 2:30. I already knew the inspector because we had met for professional reasons and once presented at the same seminar. That domestic violence prevention seminar had been the most horrible experience of my life. Despite the microphone, my voice had hardly even carried to the middle of the small auditorium at the Espoo Cultural Centre, but Kalliо had done fine without amplification.

I was afraid that Kalliо would blame me for Irja Ahola's death. I had had the impression that Kalliо had clear ideas about how domestic violence should be handled. Kalliо wanted to see abusers in prison, while at Home Base we believed that the police could do more to correct the injustices she has witnessed. When Säde quite being an innocent bystander, more lives than hers are irrevocably altered.

"The proseur will clearly be charging Pentti Ahola with murder," Kalliо stated.

She had been sitting for days either when she fled to the shelter with blackened eyes and broken ribs.

On the desk there were clear five years. When Ari Väätäinen went bankrupt, and he was left unemployed.

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"The proseur will clearly be charging Pentti Ahola with murder," Kalliо stated.

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I would become a predator.

I lifted the reins so he'd come to bring his family home.

"Was Ari drunk?"

Not as far as I could tell, but yes, he did seem agitated. He said we didn't need to get involved in his family's business.

"Sirpa didn't go along with it, did she? Well, good. If Ari comes back again, call the police."

"The police? We can't do that. Not unless Sirpa asks."

"You just go ahead and call, and don't let Sirpa go with Ari."

"But if she wants to herself?" My stern tone seemed to be throwing Anneli off.

"You will not let her go. Say that the children have to be allowed to sleep in peace. I'll talk with Sirpa in the morning. I'll come in at 7:30. Goodnight."

Sulo meowed impatiently for her evening walk, but I didn't give her a yolk-syrup-based gift. Usually I poured it into a small flowered bowl, but now I didn't feel like being overdosed feelingly and drawn it straight out of the cup. No one would be sharing it with me. Then I put Sulo's harness on. In order to keep peace with the neighbors, I didn't dare let the cat out free, and she had gotten used to the harness well enough.

It was barely even 7:30, but it was already dark. Sulo made for the edge of a field, probably hoping to catch a mouse. Her long eye gleamed greenly, the relaxed fur ball had suddenly become a voracious beast of prey. She would stay alive just fine even without me; she knew how to defend herself. Her cat instincts had been told tenderheartedness didn't pay. Sulo and what a harmless pair we sounded. The cat's back tensed; I released the leash. Let her go after her mole—she'd drag her prey back to me soon enough like a good little girl.

I would become a predator like Sulo. I couldn't help it. Ija Åhola was just as I was, Sulo Vääntäinen. I would have to act before Ari beat Sira to death. I wouldn't last things to fate anymore. I would make those decisions myself.

I would become a predator.

I would become a predator.

The Killing One

The Killing One Reader Report

by Owen F. Witeman

In the opening scenes of The Killing One, the main character, Säde Väätäinen, demonstrates how she learns that a client at the domestic violence shelter where she has worked has been murdered by her abusive husband. The women's shelter in question has a policy of not encouraging women to file police reports, since they consider keeping families together more important than bringing abusers to justice. Säde is called in for a police interview during which we meet Maria Kalio, the lead investigator in this and the later cases in the novel (and the protagonist in most of the author's other novels). Säde's interactions with the police take a turn when a police officer surrounding her indirect role in the client's death, that she will begin killing abusive husbands.

The social crime novel is alive and well in Finland, not least thanks to Leena Lehtolainen. Lehtolainen's newest, The Killing One, is among her best and places her at the forefront of the genre when considered more broadly as well.

"Kindred spirits with Karin Fossum and Anne Holt."

"Thames drawn from the real world."

Kaisa Saamant

"Despite the difficult subject, pure reading enjoyment." 

"Hard to put down."

"Säde Väätäinen gives up her role of bystander, and death becomes a frequent visitor in the close circles of the battered women. Coincidences? Accidents?... Leena Lehtolainen reserves another complete surprise for the end, with barely a hint earlier in the book."

Linnu-Seve

The Killing One

The Killing One

by Owen F. Witeman

Owen F. Witeman is an American-born translator with a master's degree in Finnish and Estonian studies. He has translated a range of work from comics and children's books to poetry and adult fiction, as well as non-fiction and technical translations from books on cooking and weaving to manuals for power generation and boiler manufacturing.

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Over Half A Million Copies Sold In Germany.