

Leena Lehtolainen



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Leena Lehtolainen

Leena Lehtolainen is the bestselling female crime author in Finland. Her new titles head straight to #1 on the Finnish bestseller lists. In addition to her career as an author, she has also worked as a literary researcher, columnist, and critic. Lehtolainen published her first novel at the age of 12; this work of juvenile fiction *Ja äkkiä onkin toukokuu* ("And Suddenly It's May") appeared in 1976. Five years later her novel *Kitara on rakkauteni* ("My Guitar is My One True Love"), about a teen-age band, was published.

Finland's Bestselling
Female Crime Author
With Over 1 Million Copies
Sold Worldwide



Eleventh Maria Kallio Novel Where Have All the Young Girls Gone

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.

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 1993 work *Ensimmäinen murhani* ("My First Murder") kicked off Lehtolainen's series of crime novels, which through its distinctly down-to-earth heroine, Maria Kallio, has brought an enthusiastically received female perspective to the male-dominated detective genre. The forthcoming Maria Kallio novel, *Minne tytöt kadonneet* ("Where Have All the Young Girls Gone"), is already the eleventh in this bestselling crime series.

Recently Lehtolainen started a new thrilling trilogy with another convincing female lead, Hilja Ilveskero. The first novel of this trilogy, *Henkivartija* ("The Bodyguard"), came out in 2009. Lehtolainen has also published outside the crime genre, most recently the work *Luonas en ollutkaan* ("I Wasn't With You After All", 2007). Translations of Leena Lehtolainen's works have already been published in 15 languages.

Read more about Leena at www.leena-lehtolainen.de & www.leenalehtolainen.net

Maria Kallio Series

A beguiling mix of tough police work and family life - from a female perspective. The Maria Kallio series has been a fantastic sales success in Finland and Germany, and has also been successfully adapted for Finnish television in a 13-part series.

The Successful Maria Kallio Detective Series -
Hard-Boiled Realism From
A Female Perspective



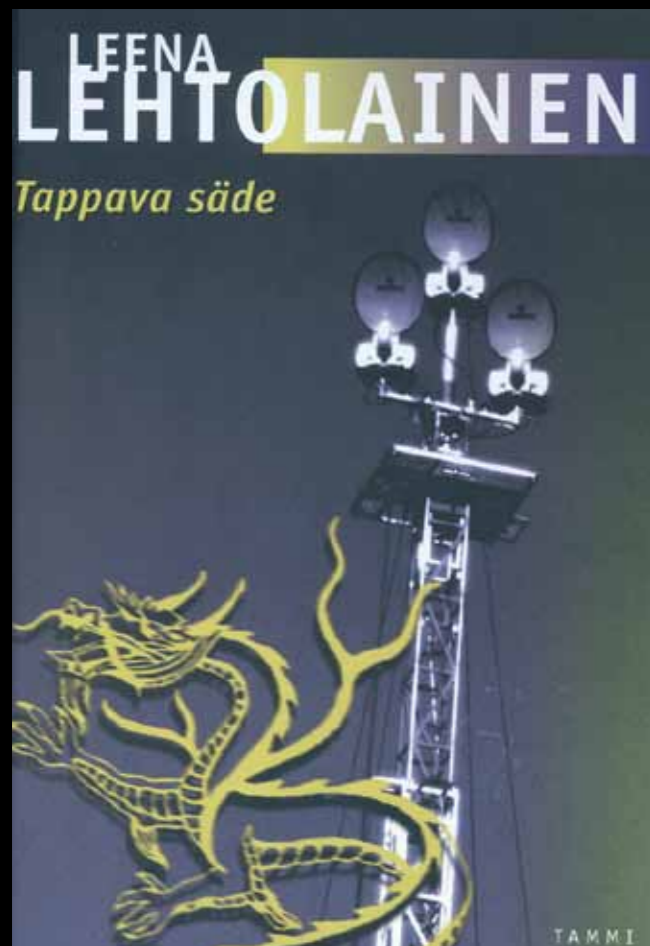
MARIA KALLIO SERIES

- Ensimmäinen murhani** ("My First Murder", 1993)
Rights sold: Germany, France, Spain and Italy
- Harmin paikka** ("Her Place", 1994)
Rights sold: Germany, France and Italy
- Kuparisydän** ("Copper Heart", 1995)
Rights sold: Germany, France, Ukraine, Norway and Russia
- Luminainen** ("Lady in the Snow", 1996)
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- Tuulen puolella** ("Upwind", 1998)
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- Ennen lähtöä** ("Before I Go", 2000)
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- Veren vimma** ("The Rage", 2003)
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- Rivo Satakieli** ("Indecent Nightingale", 2005)
Rights sold: Germany and Sweden
- Väärän jäljillä** ("On the Wrong Track", 2008)
Rights sold: Germany
- Minne tytöt kadonneet**
("Where Have All the Young Girls Gone", August 2010)

OTHER TITLES

- Henkivartija** ("The Bodyguard", 2009)
Rights sold to Germany.
- Jonakin onnellisena päivänä** ("One Perfect Day", 2004)
Rights available.
- Kun luulit unohtaneesi** ("Almost Forgotten", 2002)
Rights sold to Germany and Estonia.
- Tappava säde** ("The Killing One", 1999)
Rights sold to Germany and The Netherlands.
- Luonas en ollutkaan**
("I Wasn't With You After All", 2007)
Rights sold to Germany.
- Sukkanauhattyttö ja muita kertomuksia**
("The Suspender Girl and Other Stories", 2001)
- Viimeinen kesäyö**
("The Last Summer Night and Other Stories", 2006)
Novellas from **Sukkanauhattyttö** and **Viimeinen kesäyö** published: Estonia, Spain, China, Lithuania, Slovenia and Germany





The Killing One

Säde Vasara is a 35-year-old social therapist—lonely, colourless, and ‘nice’. In her demanding work at the Home Base women’s shelter, she has become accustomed to seeing the full range of horrors that are domestic violence. She comforts, supports, and tries to help, day in and day out. However, after a deadly assault on a client, something snaps in Säde’s head, and she begins a lonesome crusade to correct the injustices she has witnessed. When Säde quits being an innocent bystander, more lives than hers are irrevocably altered.

The Killing One describes the difficult lives of three frequent visitors at Home Base. They are all in very different places in their lives, but they do have something in common: assaults, lies, shame. Säde gets tired of being nice and encourages the women to stand up for their rights. When the women fail to do so, Säde decides to take action herself, but why? What has happened to her? Who is the mysterious man in her life? What will Säde’s future hold?

The Killing One is both an engaging psychological thriller and an unconventional love story. Leena Lehtolainen’s previous protagonist, Maria Kallio, only appears in a supporting role—in this book the perspective is shifted from the investigator to the criminal, who is presented in a highly sympathetic light. Tension builds until the very last pages as hints about Säde’s motives and the fallout for the deaths she has arranged are dropped. Will the police catch up with her, will Säde’s actions change her world permanently, or will life just continue as before, brutal, pointless, and full of unhappy endings?

The Killing One Translation Sample

by Owen F. Witesman

1

One of the pig’s wings had come off. The animal stared past me sadly from the restaurant shelf. 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.

I was angry and sad, 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 abuser could be reformed 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 notify the police later either when she fled to the shelter with blackened eyes and broken ribs.

Now Irja was dead.

I got another cider from the bar, even though I could feel the first one making my legs weak. Inspector Maria Kallio had telephoned this afternoon to ask how much I knew 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 rather 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.

Kallio 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 Kallio had done fine without amplification.

I was afraid that Kallio would blame me for Irja Ahola’s death too. She and I most certainly had different ideas about how domestic violence should be handled. Kallio wanted to see abusers in prison, while at Home Base we focused on reconciliation and forgiveness.

I had thought that way too, until last night.

When I arrived at Kallio’s office, I was shocked. The inspector looked exhausted. Gray had begun to appear in her red hair since I had last seen her, and she had dark shadows under her eyes. A year earlier Kallio had become head of the Espoo Police Special Crimes Unit. Not everyone had been pleased that the mother of a small child was being named to such a responsible position.

“Hello, Säde Vasara.” Kallio stood up behind her desk to shake my hand. The mention of my name made her

smile wryly. I knew my name sounded like a toy weapon for playing space pirates: ray hammer. “Sergeant Anu Wang will be taking notes,” Kallio continued, motioning to a young, Asian-looking woman sitting behind a computer.

Kallio described how Pentti Ahola had hit his wife with a fireplace poker dozens of times about the head and upper body. On the desk there were clear plastic envelopes filled with photographs taken of the body, which I didn’t want to look at. My memories of Irja Ahola were dark enough as they were, filled with bruises and tears.

“The prosecutor will clearly be charging Pentti Ahola with murder,” Kallio stated. The veins on the back of her hand were raised; I could see the artery pulsing in her wrist. “But a murder charge requires evidence. In addition to the unusually brutal means of death, another basis for the charge could also be that Ahola abused his wife systematically for more than five years’ time. I suppose we can get you to testify about the persistence of the abuse?”

“Of course, even though it’s too late now,” I answered so angrily that Kallio’s eyebrows rose.

“I agree. It won’t help Irja Ahola even if her killer sits in jail for twelve years. However, it would be good to explain to your other clients that District Attorney Reponen’s approach to domestic violence cases is naturally going to be stricter than that of her predecessors. They aren’t necessarily going to be getting off with fines for abuse anymore. Let’s begin the interview. Anu, please start the recorder.”

...

“When did Irja Ahola come to the Home Base shelter for the first time?”

“May of ‘93.”

I remember well the plump, gray-haired women climbing out of the taxi gasping and holding a nose streaming with blood. The violence had gone on their whole marriage, but for

the first thirty years it had just been “a little slapping around,” as Irja expressed it. The really savage hitting had begun over Christmas of ‘92 after the electrical contracting company where Pentti Ahola worked went bankrupt, and he was left unemployed.

Home Base tried to help the Aholas. We offered mediation and tried to get Pentti into a twelve-step program for male perpetrators of domestic violence. Not once did Irja want to make a criminal report. Her religious convictions prevented

Perhaps it was time to grab the reins from fate and start controlling my own life

it, and the shelter’s principles include respecting the beliefs of the client. That principle had led to Irja’s death.

It was only as I went through the chain of events with Kallio that I realized how many mistakes had been made. I had noticed that Pentti Ahola’s hand was getting heavier. The last time, Irja had to be taken to the hospital for a broken rib, but she had claimed to the nurses that she had fallen down the stairs and forbidden us to tell the truth. She had been afraid that the hospital staff would notify the police.

When the interview was over, I felt like throwing up. Sergeant Wang printed the interview record and asked me to sign. I acknowledged that the statements were my own. Kallio said that the prosecutor would contact me soon. From her gestures I concluded that she expected me to leave. However, I remained sitting, rotating the confirmation ring on my right ring finger.

“Um... Sirpa Väätäinen and the children came to Home Base again today.”

The previous fall I had worked closely with Kallio’s section when they were col-

lecting preliminary evidence against Ari Väätäinen. Sirpa Väätäinen had been a client at Home Base for a couple of years. When Ari Väätäinen sent Sirpa to the hospital the third time, I thought Väätäinen would end up in prison. That was the first time I had admitted to myself that mediation and good advice aren’t enough in every domestic violence case.

The officer handling the preliminary investigation had become agitated during the interrogation and started

case as Irja Ahola. Or maybe we should say that Ari Väätäinen is just as hopeless a case as Pentti Ahola. Tell Sirpa about Irja’s death. Order her to make a report.”

“That doesn’t fit with our principles. Home Base acts based on our clients’ requests,” I answered smoothly, but I found myself doubting my own words.

“So why did you tell me about Sirpa? Usually you social types invoke professional confidentiality,” Kallio snapped. “Don’t you think family is important at Home Base? Think of the Väätäinen children. Where will they go when their mother is in the grave and their father is in prison?”

I couldn’t answer. Wang escorted me out into the hallway and said apologetically that the inspector had had a difficult day. My day had been the same, and the future wasn’t promising anything better.

...

Wanting to help people for my profession, after passing the college entrance examinations I studied social work at the university. After five years of school and a master’s degree, I was stuck behind the window at the welfare office, distributing money to those who didn’t have even my pathetic monthly salary.

When the Home Base shelter was founded, I applied for a job. I thought this would be a place where I could make more of a difference than at the welfare window, where I was just an ATM. Work at the shelter was a way of life. That was fine with me; what else would I have done? Because I didn’t have a family, I could be at work on the weekends. I scheduled my summer vacation for the fall, once the vacation pressures of the nuclear families had let up. Once or twice a week I sang in a choir. They noticed how eager to please I was there too, so they put me in charge of the sheet music. Who would be better suited to be a slave to the copy machine and to go

→

around meekly inquiring after unreturned music?

But now that was over. I looked in turn at the pig and my cider glass and decided to renounce my niceness. Only harm had come of it.

After work and the police interview, I hadn't gone home as usual. My client's husbands and boyfriends often found comfort in alcohol, and a few times I had experienced what a cheery mood a glass of wine or a bottle of sweet cider could bring about. So I did something I had never done, not once, in my entire thirty-five years of life. I went alone into a restaurant and ordered a mug of cider. The decision felt like one of the most important of my life. Perhaps it was time to grab the reins from fate and start controlling my own life.

The restaurant was rather empty; in addition to me and the one-winged pig there were only a few chess players and an elderly man who had ensconced himself behind the evening tabloid. The radio was lazily playing Finnish pop songs, and I didn't have to care about anything other than the drink in front of me.

It was always nice to come home because Sulo would be waiting behind the door. I lifted her into my lap and got a herring scented lick on my cheek. The cat stared at me demandingly with her one good eye.

"I have to rest for a minute, then we'll go outside," I said to the cat, who didn't want to give up her place on my lap. I took off my coat and walked into the bedroom, flopping down on the bed. Sulo curled up next to me in a gray fluffy ball. The nausea returned for a second, along with the image of Irja Ahola's mutilated face. I should have been able to save Irja.

I woke up to the shrill ringing of the phone. I was so slow nowadays that I only just bare-

ly made it to the living room before the answering machine came on.

"Hi, this is Anneli," I heard my workmate's worried voice say. I tried your cell, but it isn't picking up."

"Oh, sorry." I had turned off my cell on my way into the police station and forgot to turn it back on. That wasn't like me. "What's wrong?"

"Ari Väätäinen came to the entrance and leaned on the doorbell so long that Sirpa panicked and asked us to let Ari in. Supposedly he'd come to bring his family home."

"Was Ari drunk?" "Not as far as I could tell, but yes, he did seem aggressive. 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 had to eat a little yogurt first. Usually I poured it into a small flowered bowl, but now I didn't feel like being overly fastidious and drank it straight out of the carton. 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 mole. Her

lone eye gleamed greedily; 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 told her that tenderheartedness didn't pay.

Säde and Sulo, what a harmless pair we sound. The cat's back tensed; I released the leash. Let her go after her mole—she'll drag her prey back to me soon enough like a good

little girl.

I would become a predator like Sulo. I couldn't help Irja Ahola anymore, but I could still save Sirpa Väätäinen. I would have to act before Ari beat Sirpa to death. I wouldn't leave things to fate anymore. I would make those decisions myself.

A longer translation sample is available upon request.

TRANSLATION SAMPLE SUPPORTED IN PART BY FILI - FINNISH LITERATURE EXCHANGE.

I would become a predator



"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."

"Themes drawn from the real world."

Kainuun Sanomat

"Despite the difficult subject, pure reading enjoyment."

"Hard to put down."

"Säde Vasara 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."

Länsi-Savo

The Killing One Reader Report

by Owen F. Witesman

In the opening scenes of *The Killing One*, the main character, Säde Vasara (the last name means "hammer"), learns that a client at the domestic violence shelter where she works 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 Kallio, 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 and her own inner monologue surrounding her indirect role in the client's death hint that she will begin killing abusive husbands.

This is the most unique aspect of the novel: from the outset, the murders are not the mystery. Since the story is told from the perspective of the perpetrator, the reader always knows when a death has occurred and exactly how. The motivational framework within which the murders occur is straightforward: the abusive men are not being dealt with otherwise, so Säde deals with them. The object is to protect the women

who come to the shelter. Thus, the elements of suspense are not built in the usual way, although the reader does not always know exactly how each death will be arranged. Instead, the suspense revolves around three elements: first, Säde may be found out at any time; second, the reader does not know what the repercussions will be of each death; and third, the reader is given to know that there is something undisclosed going on in Säde's life that has to do with her motive for the killings.

Over the course of the novel the reader meets three versions of the Säde character. First, we meet the "nice" Säde, mostly retrospectively. Säde has spent the greater part of her life being a nice person, i.e. someone who gets taken advantage of because she is so compliant. She is only 35, yet her physical appearance is that of an unattractive middle-aged woman. She has no life outside of work other than her one-eyed, non-purebred cat and singing in a church choir. She has never had a romantic relationship. She is a timid helper who always sacrifices for others and never speaks out of turn. Second, we spend most of the novel with the "killing" Säde. With the first client's death, something snaps and Säde ceases to be nice. She

starts standing up for herself at work, begins to make changes in her physical appearance, and becomes a diminutive vigilante. She arranges three seemingly accidental deaths of abusers: an electrocution in the bathroom, a drunken driving accident, and a fall from a mobile phone tower. This new persona is an unknown quantity: every interaction with coworkers, supervisors, acquaintances, friends, and relations must be reinvented, all under the cloud of hidden violence, creating a constant tension both for the protagonist and the reader. Säde is troubled, although not so much by guilt as by regret over chances lost and, ultimately, over the active destruction of the new life she could have had as the new Säde without the killing. Third, the reader sees the birth of a modified incarnation of this Säde who could have been: a post-killing Säde who must find a way to live out the remainder of a life she did not expect to have, bearing the burden of her crimes and the possibility of, if not redemption, at least progress.

In a sense *The Killing One* is a reverse procedural, although one not limited to the details of the killings—the details of maintaining a semblance of normalcy despite such extraordinary acts are foremost. The book delivers

in one go what is usually accomplished over the course of a series of novels in terms of main character development. The killings are the major events around which the action revolves, but they are part of a larger purpose in terms of the overarching stream of events, which add up to the complete metamorphosis of Säde's persona.

This is clearly a feminist novel, in the best sense of the term. The main perspectives are female, and no punches are pulled regarding the harsh realities of many male-female interactions. However, there are sympathetic male characters, so the audience of the novel is not limited. In addition to strong social relevance, the characters are remarkably real-feeling and the events abnormally plausible for the genre. For example, there is no way Säde is going to be found out, so she isn't. What she has done is horrible, no matter how justified it seemed in the moment, and so she is sorely burdened. She has to tell someone, but she is not going to run to the police to confess. Rather than falling apart and being caught, she goes on with her life.

A more complete plot synopsis and reader's report is available upon request.

Translator Owen F. Witesman

Owen F. Witesman is an American-born translator with a master's degree in Finnish and Estonian studies. Owen has a broad range of literary translation credits to his name including everything 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 boilers and glass manufacturing.

"The characters are remarkably real-feeling and the events abnormally plausible for the genre."



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