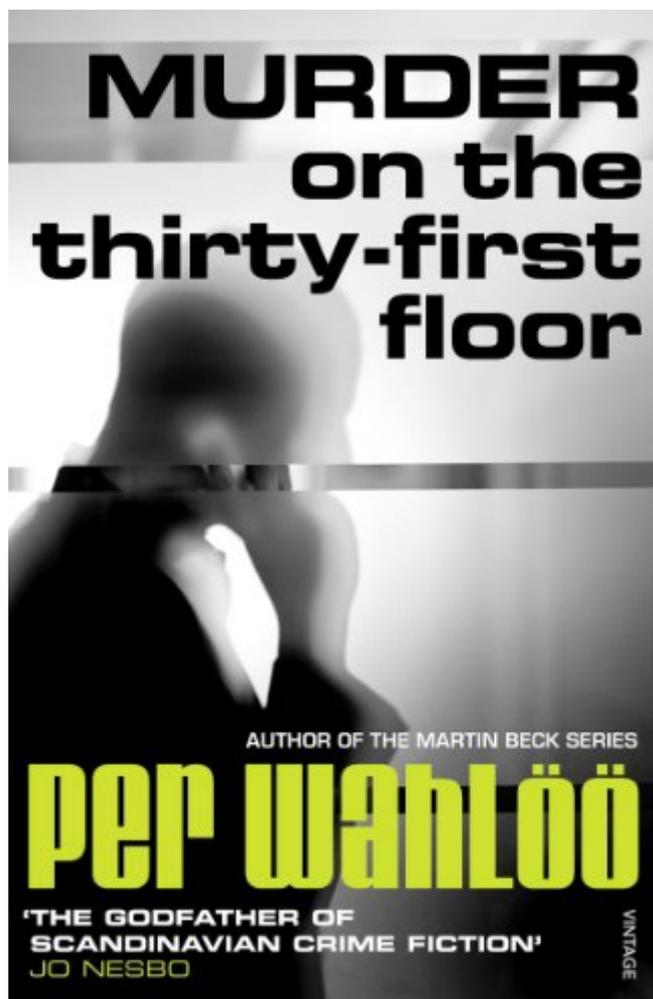


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Murder On The Thirty-First Floor



Synopsis

In an unnamed country, in an unnamed year sometime in the future, Chief Inspector Jensen of the Sixteenth Division is called in after the publishers controlling the entire country's newspapers and magazines receive a threat to blow up their building, in retaliation for a murder they are accused of committing. The building is evacuated, but the bomb fails to explode and Jensen is given seven days in which to track down the letter writer. Jensen has never had a case he could not solve before, but as his investigation into the identity of the letter writer begins it soon becomes clear that the directors of the publishers have their own secrets, not least the identity of the 'Special Department' on the thirty first floor; the only department not permitted to be evacuated after the bomb threat. Author of the Martin Beck series.

Book Information

File Size: 429 KB

Print Length: 226 pages

Publisher: Vintage Digital (December 15, 2011)

Publication Date: December 15, 2011

Language: English

ASIN: B006E38DII

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,176,082 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #253

inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European >

Scandinavian #8048 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism >

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Crime Fiction

Customer Reviews

Per Wahloo is not the first writer to record the stifling effect of government bureaucracy. But in the background of this police procedural he has fashioned a devastating critique of the modern state. This may not be the first anti-utopian novel, but it is among the best. The time is the near future. The major problems that have plagued the democracies -- housing, unemployment, social inequality and

so in -- have been solved, partly it seems by having been declared solved. Like Big Brother in "1984" (and some recent inhabitants of the White House), the rulers of this corporate paradise are deeply offended by the merest expression of dissent. Chief Inspector Jensen must stop whoever is threatening to bomb the company that controls the nation's magazines and newspapers. According to someone Jensen consults at the Ministry of Communications, their publications "have proved their ability to satisfy in a moderate way all legitimate tastes." Although the press once tended to inspire anxiety and unhappiness, now it can be relied on to give readers reassurance and peace of mind. The media have, in short, "the ability to be comprehensible and uncomplicated, adapting to the tastes of modern man." Jensen has never failed to solve a case. He is a cop's cop, tireless, incorruptible, puritanical, a stickler for the rules. As he pursues his investigation, he is continually turning in people for petty infractions, especially private drunkenness. His thoroughness begins to unsettle the company's executives. They become more concerned with preserving the secret of the "thirty-first floor" than with discovering who is threatening the company. If he can unlock the door to the thirty-first floor, the chief inspector will find his culprit.

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