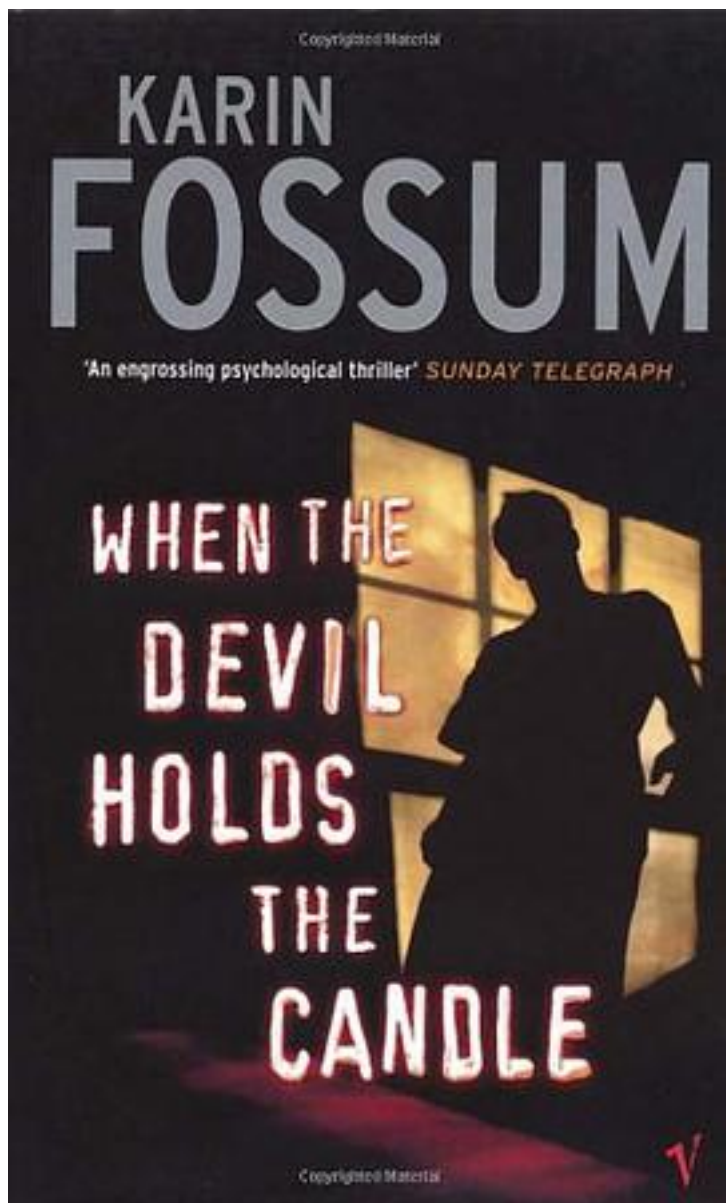


When the Devil Holds the Candle



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A psychological thriller, where the line between victim and killer is fine, and easily crossed.

Teenage troublemakers, Zipp and Andreas, unwittingly commit murder when they accidentally kill a baby in the course of a petty crime. Unaware, the pair move onto their next crime. Having followed an elderly lady home, Andreas enters her house armed, as always, with his trusty knife. Zipp waits nervously outside, but his friend never reappears. He will never see him alive again.

Fossum toys with the roles of victim and killer and pens the inner monologue of her characters to chilling effect. It is the mental processes behind the sinister act that form the real pieces to this puzzle, and they fall gradually into place as Irma and Andreas converse and reveal more information about themselves. We are forced to question the familiar stereotype — that it is always bad people who do bad things.

While the reader may be party to the truth of this crime, the police remain flummoxed. There is no reason for Inspector Sejer to see a connection between the infant's death and the disappearance of a town troublemaker. With Zipp too frightened to come forward, the police must wait for the evidence to present itself before they can begin to comprehend the unsettling nature of the case on their hands.

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