



The Inner Circle: A Mystery (Anders Knutas Book 3)

By Mari Jungstedt



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The Inner Circle opens with an international group of young archeology students sweating on a dig on the island of Gotland, uncovering a Viking fortification dating back over a millennium. They are a fun-loving lot, partying together every night, but the good vibe turns to horror when one of them, twenty-one-year-old Martina Flochten, disappears. Her body is found a short while later, naked, bled out, and hanging from a tree. Her injuries indicate that she is the victim of a ritual killing.

Inspector Anders Knutas investigates Martina's acquaintances. Who was the mysterious lover she was supposed to have been meeting in secret and whom none of her fellow archaeologists have actually seen? What do the marks on Martina's body signify? Is there possibly a connection between Martina's death and the recent and unsolved brutal beheading of a Gotland pony? The pony was also bled out, and its head was missing---until it appears mounted on a stick outside the next victim's house.

Inspector Knutas and his team work feverishly to catch the killer, but before long there are more victims, all of whom have been killed and mutilated the same way.

Mari Jungstedt integrates a healthy dose of Scandinavian mythology in this installment of her critically acclaimed series, and also addresses current issues on Gotland, while keeping up a fast-paced and intricate plot as Knutas closes in on the killer and the secret that connects the victims. This is Swedish crime fiction at its best: dark, atmospheric, and character-driven.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In summer the Baltic island of Gotland, Beowulf's old stomping ground, offers stunning scenery for tourists and white nights for love and lust, all of which shape the backdrop of Det. Supt. Anders Knutas's investigation into one horrifying crime after another in Swedish author Jungstedt's absorbing third police procedural (after 2007's *Unspoken*). The decapitation of a harmless pony is followed by the threefold Viking ritual murder of a female archeology student, who's been carrying on a torrid affair with a secret lover, then two more grisly executions, all punctuated by chilling glimpses into a psychopathic mind. The fluid translation evokes the stark economy of the ancient sagas, where all that mattered was how one fought and died. A little of that old warrior spirit still inhabits Jungstedt's tired, frustrated Swedish policemen and journalists, facing monsters within and without and, like Beowulf, never giving in. (*Dec.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Jungstedt's third Anders Knutas mystery finds the Swedish inspector glum and depressed, still upset over the events of the past winter (*Unspoken*, 2007). With the confined island setting of Gotland and Knutas' previously more upbeat manner, this series has leaned toward cozy, but this entry often adopts a morose and fatalistic tone, almost in the manner of Sjöwall and Wahlöö's landmark Martin Beck series. As Knutas is not the only featured character, however, the mood is not entirely bleak. Journalist Johan Berg continues to play a strong supporting role, and happy, gluttonous Kilhgard, from the National Criminal Police, makes a welcome appearance. Short chapters from multiple viewpoints—killer, victims, investigators, and bystanders—move the story along at a rapid clip, from the discovery of a decapitated horse to the ritual-infused dramatic climax. Suggest this solid addition to a fine series to readers who enjoy Helene Tursten's capable and stable Detective Inspector Huss or those who liked the island setting of Johan Theorin's recently released *Echoes from the Dead* (2008). --Jessica Moyer

Review

Praise for Mari Jungstedt

The Inner Circle

"Jungstedt . . . is unusually skilled at constructing her intrigues. . . . Much like her female crime-writer colleagues abroad---for example, the Scottish author Val McDermid---she succeeds in combining a fascination with macabre acts of violent crime with a focus on relationship drama, and this is done without the boring politicization that has ruined so many other good ideas within Swedish crime literature. This novel supports the reputation of Mari Jungstedt as one of the most convincing authors of her generation."---*Svenska Dagbladet*

"Murder, blood, perverse sects, confounded cops, and a passionate, complicated love affair---the author gives it all she's got, and the result is both an entertaining and suspenseful fast-paced crime novel."---*Aftonbladet*

Unspoken

"An engaging and twisty narrative that will fool even the most attentive reader." ---*Publishers Weekly*

“Chilling. Jungstedt serves up crisp prose, steady suspense, and a roster of flesh-and-blood characters by turns conflicted and content.”---*Booklist*

Unseen

“Jungstedt fashions a solid, compellingly readable police procedural with a nicely rounded protagonist.”---*Library Journal*

"Jungstedt writes with skill and aplomb from multiple characters' points of view."---*The Richmond Times-Dispatch*

“A fine Scandinavian mystery debut . . . carefully constructed, atmospheric . . . with a compelling cast of characters . . . Perfect for fans of Henning Mankell.”---Mysterylovers.com

“*Unseen* has everything we have come to expect from a great Swedish crime novel---graceful prose, deft characterization, and a setting that is somehow both familiar and strange, like a kind of dream-world. But what makes this first novel unique is its author’s ability to write with a bird’s-eye view about horrible events while at the same time maintaining a poet’s sense of intimacy about what her characters think and feel. Possessing such gifts as these---scope and heart, a desire to get to the truth---makes Mari Jungstedt the new writer to watch.”---Daniel Judson, Shamus Award winner and author of *The Darkest Place*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nicholas Walsh:

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