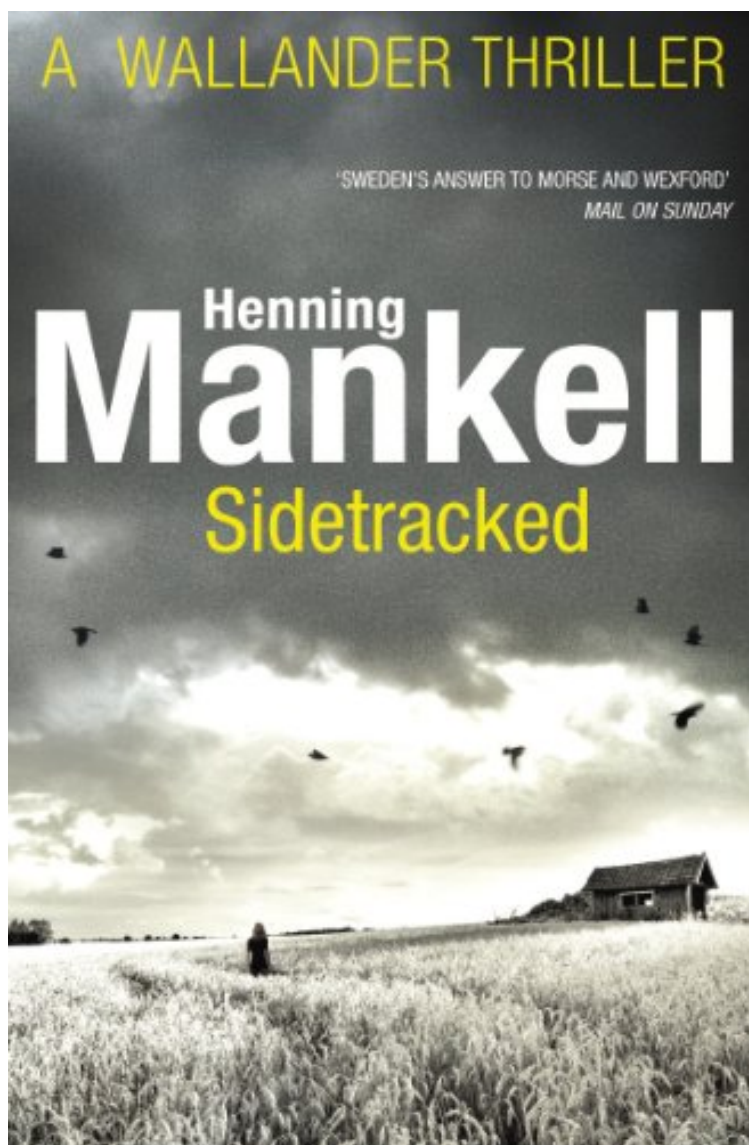


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## Sidetracked: Kurt Wallander



*Par Henning Mankell*  
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### Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurMidsummer approaches, and Inspector Kurt Wallander prepares for a holiday with the new woman in his life, hopeful that his wayward daughter and his ageing father will cope without him. But his restful summer plans are thrown into disarray when a teenage girl commits suicide before his eyes, and a former minister of justice is butchered in the first of a series of apparently motiveless murders. Wallander's desperate hunt for the girl's identity and his furious pursuit of a killer who scalps his victims will throw him and those he loves most into mortal danger.WINNER OF THE CRIME WRITERS' ASSOCIATION GOLD DAGGER.co.uk"The Swedish summer-time is too beautiful and too brief for something like this to happen."

A young girl commits self-immolation, a former government minister is killed with an axe and scalped; these are the two brutal facts that confront Inspector Kurt Wallander as he prepares for his holiday. As the

Swedish midsummer approaches there is no escaping from the darkness of society. Sidetracked, the fifth of Henning Mankell's acclaimed Kurt Wallander mysteries, and the second to be translated into English, is an engrossing police procedural. The hard-boiled Kurt Wallander has softened slightly since he was first introduced in Faceless Killers, the first title in the series. He drinks less, has more functional relationships and has developed a faith in his investigative team. Despite this, it is his other qualities as a character, his philosophical angst and his intuitive pursuit of hunches, which drive this novel as Wallander struggles to discover the leads that will trap the killer. Mankell manages to squeeze in serious comments on the state of Swedish society. The over-stretched police force, child prostitution and the corruption of high politics, all come under the scrutiny of Wallander's wearied gaze as he struggles to come to terms with the new violence of his society. This is a dark novel peppered with genuinely nasty violence, but it is Wallander's struggle to uncover the truth and face his own demons that provide the real thrills. --Iain Robison From Publishers

WeeklyTold from the perspectives of both cop and criminal, Mankell's third Kurt Wallander mystery revolves around the veteran Swedish inspector's search for a savage serial killer who scalps his victims after delivering a fatal hatchet blow. The novel opens as Wallander is called to a farmer's field, where he helplessly witnesses a teenage girl's self-immolation. The suicide unsettles the inspector, who can't understand why someone so young would kill herself. As the police try to identify the young woman, the serial killer's first victim, a former justice minister, is discovered on a beach in a wealthy neighborhood. Three more people are found murdered and scalped, and other signs of violence suggest that the perpetrator is becoming increasingly agitated. Following standard procedure, Wallander and his crew try to link the four victims, all male, a difficult task because their lives never seem to have intersected. Using American profiling methods as well as his own intuition, Wallander struggles to make headway in the case. What he doesn't consider, and what readers know, is that the murderer isn't a man but a boy, who hopes to revive his catatonic sister by the ritual presentation of the scalps. Mankell's meticulously detailed descriptions of the inspector's investigation and his often lyrical portrayal of Wallander's struggle to rearrange his thought processes in order to catch the criminal are masterful. The author's treatment of modern themes such as juvenile killers and broken families adds richness to what is essentially a straightforward police procedural. But above all, the novel stands out for its nuanced evocation of even the peripheral characters. Winner of Sweden's 1997 Best Crime Novel of the Year, this is another terrific offering from the talented Mankell.

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