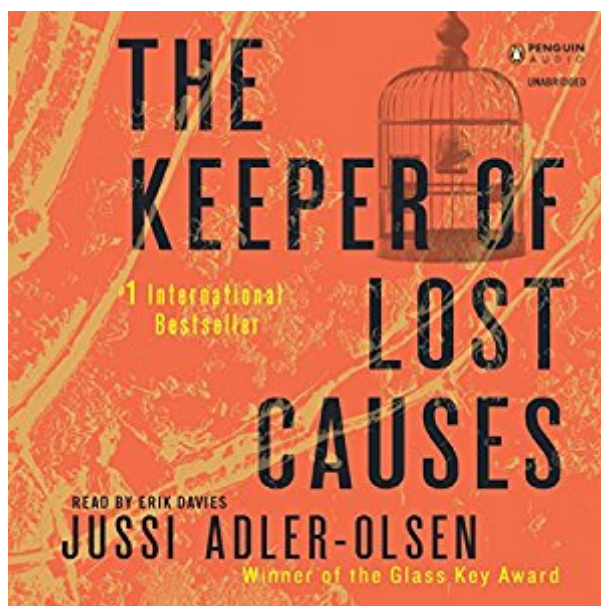


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The Keeper Of Lost Causes: Department Q, Book 1



Synopsis

Jussi Adler-Olsen is Denmark's premier crime writer. His books routinely top the best-seller lists in northern Europe, and he's won just about every Nordic crime-writing award, including the prestigious Glass Key Award - also won by Henning Mankell, Stieg Larsson, and Jo Nesbo. Now, we're thrilled to introduce him to America. *The Keeper of Lost Causes*, the first installment of Adler-Olsen's Department Q series, features the deeply flawed chief detective Carl Mørck, who used to be a good homicide detective-one of Copenhagen's best. Then a bullet almost took his life. Two of his colleagues weren't so lucky, and Carl, who didn't draw his weapon, blames himself. So a promotion is the last thing Carl expects. But it all becomes clear when he sees his new office in the basement. Carl's been selected to run Department Q, a new special investigations division that turns out to be a department of one. With a stack of Copenhagen's coldest cases to keep him company, Carl's been put out to pasture. So he's as surprised as anyone when a case actually captures his interest. A missing politician vanished without a trace five years earlier. The world assumes she's dead. His colleagues snicker about the time he's wasting. But Carl may have the last laugh, and redeem himself in the process. Because she isn't dead....yet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Scandinavian invasion continues with Jussi Adler-Olsen's *"The Keeper of Lost Causes,"* translated from the Danish by Tina Nunnally. The protagonist, Carl Mørck, is a deputy detective superintendent who has just been "promoted" to Department Q, of which he is the

head and sole employee. His remit is to handle "cases deserving special scrutiny." Mørck is a chronic troublemaker ("lazy, surly, morose") who talks back to his bosses and does pretty much what he wants to do. He has never completely recovered from a tragic shooting that left his two partners dead and paralyzed respectively, and he still feels guilty that he could do nothing to save his colleagues. His wife left him, but she still badgers him; he has no social life to speak of; when he assumes his new position, he is relegated to a windowless basement office where, his superiors hope, he will remain out of sight and out of mind. Everything changes when Carl demands an assistant. He gets a lot more than he bargained for--a Muslim named Assad who is a jack-of-all trades: Assad dons rubber gloves to clean thoroughly, makes bad coffee, drives like a madman, and acts like a Syrian Sherlock Holmes. Carl is content to put his feet up, smoke cigarettes, and do little or nothing, but Assad digs into the case files. He shows an amazing aptitude for locating valuable nuggets of information, gaining cooperation from secretaries and bureaucrats, and goading Carl into acting like a detective. This unlikely duo soon become obsessed with an extremely challenging cold case--the disappearance five years earlier of Merete Lynggaard, a beautiful, talented, and dedicated up-and-coming politician. Did Merete fall overboard while she was a passenger on a ferry? Did she commit suicide? Or did someone abduct her? If the latter, who would want to hurt this kind and compassionate woman? With the help of his able factotum, Carl emerges from his lethargy and makes up his mind that he will find out what really happened to Merete. "The Keeper of Lost Causes" is an addictive read. Who can resist flawed heroes who underachieve until they find some reason to put forth their best effort? Carl is an excellent investigator when he is not busy wallowing in self-pity or having panic attacks. Adler-Olsen uses flashbacks effectively to recount Merete's torturous ordeal. She shows amazing spunk and resourcefulness as she squares off against villains readers will love to hate; they are sadistic, vengeful, and remorseless fiends who enjoy inflicting agony on their helpless victim. It is entertaining to observe Assad and Carl squabble and fuss like kindergarten children (Carl does most of the fussing) until the pair eventually learn to work together productively. This is a darkly humorous, poignant, twisty, and engrossing novel that thriller fans will eagerly embrace.

This is the first book by this well regarded Danish author I've read. It certainly won't be the last. From the moment we meet the complex antihero who is removed from the homicide squad in Copenhagen where he is despised by his fellow detectives despite (and perhaps a bit because of) his brilliant analytical crime solving skills and "promoted" by his wise boss the head of homicide to head up the new Department Q -- which will basically consist of Carl and be located in the

basement of police headquarters one cannot take ones "reader's eye" off him. He commands one's attention whether he is make no sweat inappropriate passes at the married crises counselor or talking with his unconventional housemates or mentoring his Department Q new hire Assad who was to scrub floors and ends up partnering in crime fighting in rather significant ways. The book has an interesting - novel not encountered by this genre addict before ethos of dealing with the victim - plot and characters that you really give a damn about. Re villains may be a bit all bad but what the heck not all bad guys have to be well rounded. As you can tell I loved the book and highly recommend it.

The setting: Denmark. The protagonists: Carl, disheartened, depressed, burnt out; Assad, mysterious, a bit fearful, an immigrant quick to adapt while still a stranger in what sometimes feels to be an advanced but oddly insular setting. The challenges they face include not only a variety of bad guys but also the incompetence of their peers and their difficulties in coping with one another. The story revolves around overcoming great evils while coping with mind-numbing bureaucracy and the difficulties resulting from having to cope with a temporally distant and mostly incompetently investigated crime of major national significance. The underlying story is one of the beginnings of personal redemption as it comes about through a growing respect between two strangers set on a dangerous project for which they have little hope of success. The writing is clear, developing a well-developed image of the setting and of the characters. It was a true joy to read.

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