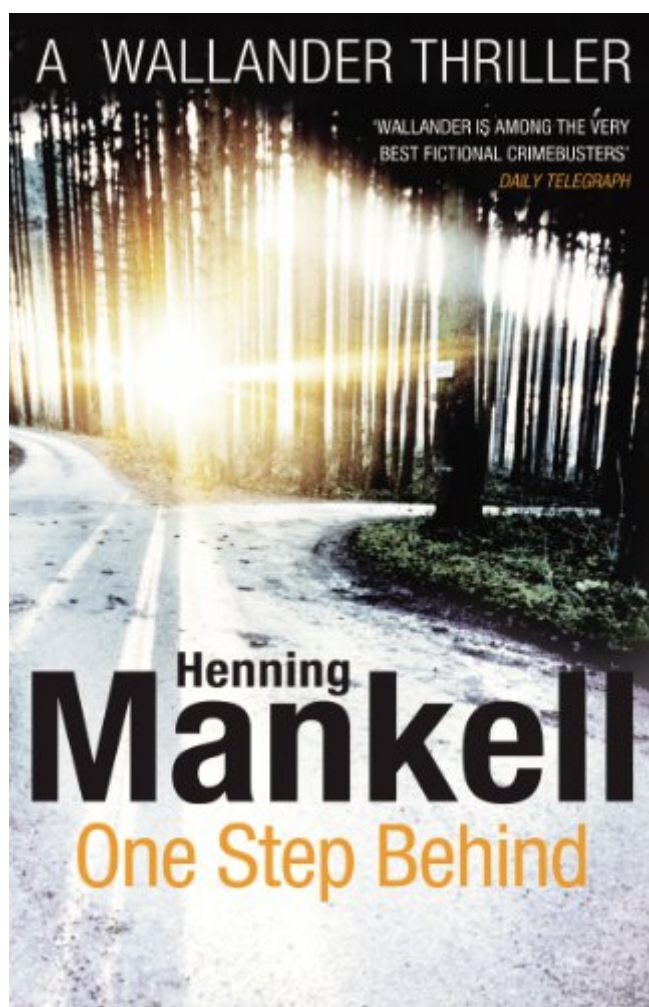


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One Step Behind: Kurt Wallander



Synopsis

It is Midsummer's Eve. Three young friends meet in a wood to act out an elaborate masque. But, unknown to them, they are being watched. Each is killed by a single bullet. Soon afterwards, one of Inspector Wallander's colleagues is found murdered. Is it the same killer, and what could the connection be? In this investigation Wallander is always, tantalisingly, one step behind.

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Customer Reviews

This book was published in 1997 in Sweden as *Steget Efter*. It was the seventh book published in the series in Sweden, although according to the internal chronology of the series it is actually the eighth. It is Mankell's fifth book to appear in an English translation. Confused yet? Me too. I have no idea why they are not translating and publishing the books in order, but I guess that I am glad that they are publishing them at all. Mankell is a wonderful writer, something that comes through even in translation. It is a real treat to be able to read these books. I am going to go out on a limb for a moment and argue that the best detective novels are actually an examination of a changing society (or its effect on an individual). This was true of the Golden Age and I believe that it is true of the

better detective writers working today. I was curious how Mankell would handle that most American of criminals, the serial killer. Too often, contemporary serial killer novels are not an exploration of anything except titillation, sadism, and gore. I need not have bothered to worry. The serial killer, in Wallander's world, is the intrusion of a very different kind of crime in the still-innocent Swedish landscape. The detectives are confronted with the spectre of senselessness and the uselessness of some of their traditional notions of crime and detection. One Step Behind is not my favorite Mankell, to be honest. However, it might well be a good introduction to unfamiliar American readers as the theme is more familiar than in some of the other books which have a focus on more post-colonial issues. You are probably guessing that this book is probably not for you if you are more of a fan of Karin Slaughter or Val McDermid shock and horror.

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