



“Her eyes had turned almost violet... They didn't look as if birds might fly out of them now. They looked as if they led to dark tunnels, to smoke-filled cellar rooms, to rooms with garishly painted walls, to opium dens. To villages deep in the jungle.”

Yours Until Death (1979) by Gunnar Staalesen is about a private detective named Varg who's hired by a young boy to recover his stolen bike. Varg soon finds himself intervening in the machinations of a menacing gang of delinquent youths that is terrorizing their small town*. Little does the detective know that this simple request will seal his fate,

leading him down a labyrinth of murder and deception.

Staalesen's first installment in the series has all the ingredients of a solid Nordic noir: undercurrents of loneliness, staunch stoicism and the pervasive chill of the icy elements. The main character, Varg, is your stereotypical hard-boiled detective with a chip on his shoulder. Despite Varg's tendency to lust after anything that moves, and the author's unfortunate predilection for describing every woman's chest size, I realized I was quite fond of this morose, alcoholic (anti)hero. Staalesen has a unique, almost hallucinatory quality to his writing that I found mesmerizing and disorienting all at the same time. *From GoodReads.com*

Gunnar Staalesen was born in 1947 in the historical city of Bergen on the west coast of Norway. He took his M.A. at the Bergen University, studying English and French language and literature as well as comparative literature.



Varg Veum came to life in 1977 in the first of many books that would conquer Norwegian readers and make its creator the king of crime story writing for many years. Staalesen's basic idea was to create a crime noire PI, adding his own social criticism located in the Bergen scenario - under the Nordic light - and this was a success from the very first novel. Varg Veum steps forward as a 68 generation idealist, a divorced, slightly alcoholic ex-social worker well versed in life's darker side. Behind his rough exterior and sharp verbal sallies, both typical genre markers, hides a warm-hearted and sensitive person.