

„The lost Head“ (Vic P. Victory)

I've been longing for the debut novel of this author, and finally, the day has come. This crime novel has exceeded my wildest expectations.

A missing woman from the 70s and a corpse without its head and the one or other limb missing.

The investigation is not getting anywhere. The husband of the missing person: a frosty character, who only has eyes for his 'niece'. The neighbors of the missing person: a bit senile, but otherwise two lovely women. The corpse: hard to identify as most important parts are missing. This case really keeps Detective Hubert Sonnleb on his toes. But with the help of his team and an endless supply of marzipan chocolate, he faces the colossal challenge head-on, trying to solve the puzzle piece by piece.

Because Vic P. Victory had leaked excerpts from his upcoming novels to his social media followers, I had an idea of what I was getting myself into, linguistically speaking. However, now that I've finished the book in its entirety, I have simply fallen in love with his style of writing. The way he commits his thought to the paper, and delivers his message verges on an absolute masterpiece.

This crime novel captivates the reader with its charm, style, and humor mixed with the right amount of sarcasm, but maintains a certain graveness that a crime novel, such as this one, calls for. So many passages brought tears of laughter to my eyes, especially the ones where detective Sonnleb shows off with his sarcastic and dry comments.

The story was really interesting and so captivating that I couldn't put it down; I just fell for the story and couldn't tear my eyes from the pages. I just had to know how it all ends. Not knowing was unbearable, and I couldn't sleep without the knowledge. The story really scored with me, because it is based on a real case. And that always hits the mark with me. I'm always baffled on how much work of the author went into the whole process. The research,

the personal interviews that needed to be conducted... The author's blood, sweat, and tears are in this work, and that's what makes an exceptional novel exceptional.

The characters created for this crime novel were perfectly portrayed. I could actually see them standing in front of me: the detectives, the victim's husband – Boris Banevic, his 'niece' Janika, the two older ladies who live in the same neighborhood as the missing person and who sweeten the detective's case with rum truffles; I really cracked up over them both being hard of hearing and their confusing banter. They all breath so much life into the book. And it's exactly that, the harmonic interactions between the characters, that makes this book worthwhile.

Hubert Sonnleb was a likeable character right from the start. I guess I appreciated him so much, because, of his personal interest, he put a special focus on the case.

However, I did worry for some time that he would break under the pressure, because the detectives didn't have any hard evidence to lock up the murderer for good. And, although he understood the severity of the case, he also lightened the mood with his rugged personality. Seriously, a really strong character that is absolutely needed.

I thought the descriptions of landscapes and places are incredible rich in detail, and it allows you to really imagine yourself there. And also the detailed description of the corpse... I was really impressed with. From the description I understood that the corpse is not just seen as a lifeless shell, but that this horrible picture of a mutilated body is actually turned into something beautiful. The picture of the dead body is described almost tenderly, and I've never come across a description of a corpse that is this poetic.

What really stuck to me where the profound parts of the novel. Some lines of the novel really touched on my emotional side, because the put some characters in a very different light, but you can also always relate to those lines personally. It encourages you to self-reflect, but also entertains on so many levels.

Besides all the necessary seriousness a case like that demands, and the detective who likes to keep it light with his playful comments, the novel also turns to its poetic side, and even

surprises with one or the other downright philosophical passage... and that's why this book just works.

In my opinion, this unparalleled crime novel deserves nothing less than 5 stars and a prominent place on my book-highlights of 2020 list. It was a whole lot of fun to read the book. I can't put it any other way. Definitely a must read!!!