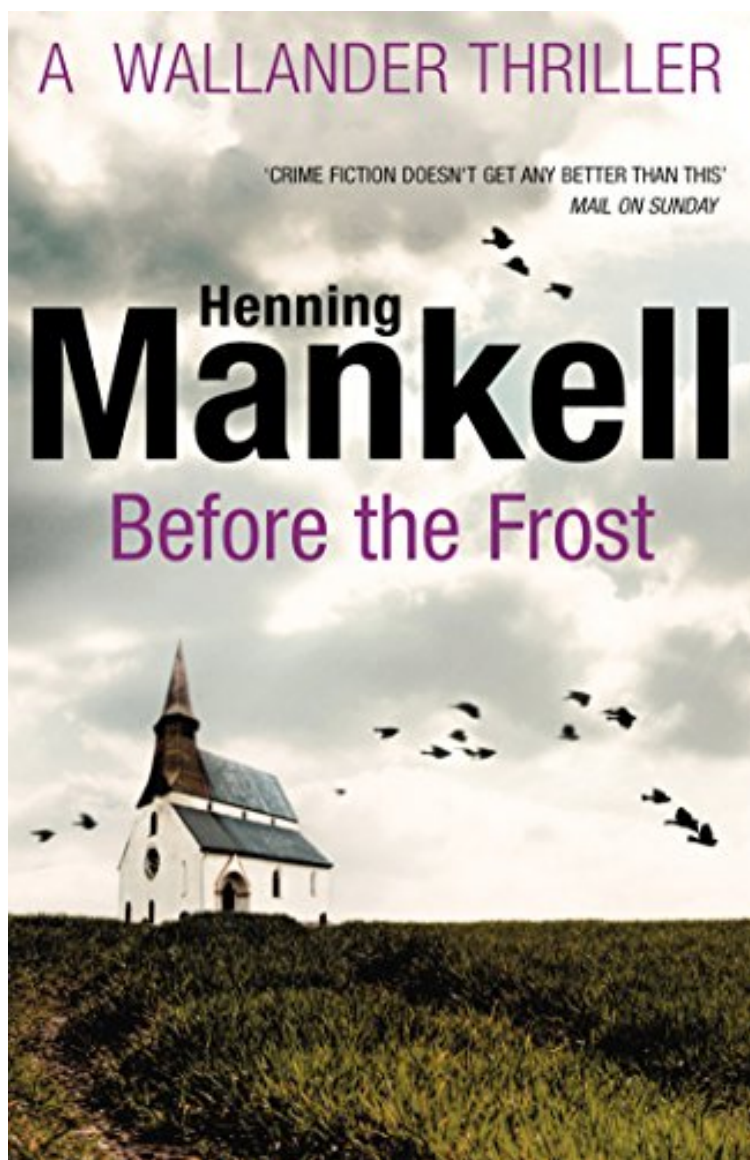


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## Before The Frost



*Par Henning Mankell*  
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**Par Henning Mankell : Before The Frost** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Before The Frost:

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**Description :** Description du produitThe internationally acclaimed crime writer introduces a new, young heroine with a familiar father. Linda Wallander is bored. Just graduated from the police academy, she is waiting to start work at the Ystad police station and move into her own apartment. Meantime, she is living with her father and, like fathers and daughters everywhere, they are driving each other crazy. Nor will they be able to escape each other when she moves out. Her father is Inspector Kurt Wallander, a veteran of the Ystad police force, whom she will have to work alongside. Linda's boredom doesn't last long. Soon she is embroiled in the case of her childhood friend Anna, who has inexplicably disappeared. As the investigation proceeds, she makes a few rookie mistakes. They are understandable, but they are also life-threatening. And as the case her father is working on dovetails with her own, something far more calculated and dangerous than either could have imagined begins to emerge. Already an international bestseller, Before the Frost

inaugurates Henning Mankell's new mystery series about Linda Wallander, and also features Stefan Lindman of *The Return of the Dancing Master*.

Presentation de l'diteurThe leader of a religious cult in Guyana instigates a mass suicide. He succeeds in killing himself and his whole flock of worshippers, save one. In a wood outside Ystad, the police make an horrific discovery: a severed head, and hands locked together in an attitude of prayer. A Bible lies at the victim's side, handwritten corrections and amendments on every page. A string of incidents, including attacks on domestic animals, has been taking place and Inspector Wallander fears that these events could be the prelude to attacks on humans on a much greater scale. Meanwhile Linda Wallander, preparing to join the Ystad police force, arrives at the station. Showing all the hallmarks of her father - the maverick approach, the flaring temper - she becomes involved in the case and in the process is forced to confront a group of extremists bent on punishing the world's sinners..co.ukNo longer is Henning Mankell a name known to just a privileged few. Before the Frost will have a readership far greater than his first European fans, those lucky enough to have encountered some of the finest modern crime writing from a Swedish master. His recent novel, *Firewall*, further developed the cool, utterly gripping style that had become his trademark: modern society and its eccentricities stripped bare, with Sweden ably standing in for the whole of western society. In that book, Mankell's dogged copper Inspector Kurt Wallander investigated crime in cyberspace (as the country experienced electricity blackout), and anarchist cyber terrorists tested Wallander's mettle. But Mankell was showing signs of wanting something new, and *Before the Frost* delivers that--in spades. Linda Wallander--Kurt's daughter--is cut from the same cloth as her resourceful father, and as a new detective character for Mankell, she'll do very nicely, even if a certain amount of adjustment is needed on the reader's part. In the dark forest near Ystad, a grisly find is made: human hands and a severed head, arranged in a grim mockery of prayer. A bible, seemingly heavily annotated by the killer is also found. But this is just one of a series of bizarre incidents that have been taxing inspector Kurt Wallander: including domestic pets being attacked. Not a good time, in fact, for Wallander's daughter Linda to make her debut as another detective on the force. But (needless to say) she soon gives her father a run for his money in identifying the criminals involved--a sinister group with biblical punishments on their unflinching agenda. While Linda has some way to go to make herself as beloved a protagonist as her father, the auguries here are very promising, with plotting compensating for the gearshifts involved.--Barry Forshaw

Chapter 1 The wind picked up shortly after 9.00 on the evening of August 21, 2001. In a valley to the south of the Rommele Hills, small waves were rippling across the surface of Marebo Lake. The man waiting in the shadows beside the water stretched out his hand to discover the direction of the wind. Virtually due south, he found to his satisfaction. He had chosen the right spot to put out food to attract the creatures he would soon be sacrificing. He sat on the rock where he had spread out a sweater against the chill. It was a new moon and no light penetrated the thick layer of clouds. Dark enough for catching eels. That's what my Swedish playmate used to say when I was growing up. The eels start their migration in August. That's when they bump into the fishermen's traps and wander the length of the trap. And then the trap slams shut. His ears, always alert, picked up the sound of a car passing some distance away. Apart from that there was nothing. He took out his torch and directed the beam over the shoreline and water. He could tell that they were approaching. He spotted at least two white patches against the dark water. Soon there would be more. He switched off the light and tested his mind--exactly trained--by thinking of the time. Three minutes past nine, he thought. Then he raised his wrist and checked the display. Three minutes past nine--he was right, of course. In another 30 minutes it would all be over. He had learned that humans were not alone in their need for regularity. Wild creatures could even be taught to respect time. It had taken him three months of patience and deliberation to prepare for tonight's sacrifice. He had made himself their friend. He switched on the torch again. There were more white patches, and they were coming nearer to the shore. Briefly he lit up the tempting meal of broken bread crusts that he had set out on the ground, as well as the two petrol containers. He switched off the light and waited. When the time came, he did exactly as he had planned. The swans had reached the shore and were pecking at the pieces of bread he had put out for them, oblivious of his presence or by now simply used to him. He set the torch aside and put on his night-vision goggles. There were six swans, three couples. Two were lying down while the rest were cleaning their feathers or still searching for bread. Now. He got up, took a can in each hand and splashed the swans with petrol. Before they had a chance to fly away, he spread what remained in each of the cans and set light to a clump of dried grass among the swans. The burning petrol caught one swan and then all of them. In their agony, their wings on fire, they tried to fly away over the lake,

but one by one plunged into the water like fireballs. He tried to fix the sight and sound of them in his memory; both the burning, screeching birds in the air and the image of hissing, smoking wings as they crashed into the lake. Their dying screams sound like broken trumpets, he thought. That's how I will remember them. The whole thing was over in less than a minute. He was very pleased. It had gone according to plan, an auspicious beginning for what was to come. He tossed the petrol cans into the water, tucked his jumper into the backpack and shone the torch around the place to be sure he had left nothing behind. When he was convinced he had remembered everything, he took a mobile phone from his coat pocket. He had bought the phone in Copenhagen a few days before. When someone answered, he asked to be connected to the police. The conversation was brief. Then he threw the phone into the lake, put on his backpack and walked away into the night. The wind was blowing from the east now and was growing stronger. chapter 2 It was the end of August and Linda Caroline Wallander wondered if there were any traits that she and her father had in common which yet remained to be discovered, even though she was almost 30 years old and ought to know who she was by this time. She had asked her father, had even tried to press him on it, but he seemed genuinely puzzled by her questions and brushed them aside, saying that she more resembled her grandfather. These "who-am-I-like?" conversations, as she called them, sometimes ended in fierce arguments. They kindled quickly, but they also died away almost at once. She forgot about most of them and supposed that he did too. There had been one argument this summer which she had not been able to forget. It had been nothing really. They had been discussing their differing memories of a holiday they took to the island of Bornholm when she was little. For Linda there was more than this episode at stake; it was as if through reclaiming this memory she was on the verge of gaining access to a much larger part of her early life. She had been six, maybe seven years old, and both Mona and her father had been there. The idiotic argument had begun over whether or not it had been windy that day. Her father claimed she had been seasick and had thrown up all over his jacket, but Linda remembered the sea as blue and perfectly calm. They had only ever taken this one trip to Bornholm so it couldn't have been a case of their having mixed up several trips. Her mother had never liked boat journeys and her father was surprised she had agreed to this one holiday to Bornholm. That evening, after the argument had ended, Linda had had trouble falling asleep. She was due to start working at the Ystad police station in two months. She had graduated from the police training college in Stockholm and would have much rather started working right away, but here she was with nothing to do all summer and her father couldn't keep her company since he had used up most of his holiday allowance in May. That was when he thought he had bought a house and would need extra time for moving. He had the house under contract. It was in Svarte, just south of the main road, right next to the sea. But the vendor changed her mind at the last minute. Perhaps because she couldn't stand the thought of entrusting her carefully tended roses and rhododendron bushes to a man who talked only about where he was going to put the kennel--when he finally bought a dog. She broke the contract and her father's agent suggested he ask for compensation, but he chose not to. The whole episode was already over in his mind. He hunted for another house that cold and windy summer, but either they were too expensive or just not the house he had been dreaming of all those years in the flat on Mariagatan. He stayed on in the flat and asked himself if he was ever really going to move. When Linda graduated from the police training college, he drove up to Stockholm and helped her move her things to Ystad. She had arranged to rent a flat starting in September. Until then she could have her old room back. They got on each other's nerves almost immediately. Linda was impatient to start working and accused her father of not pulling strings hard enough at the station to get her a temporary position. He said he had taken the matter up with Chief Lisa Holgersson. She would have welcomed the extra manpower, but there was nothing in the budget for additional staff. Linda would not be able to start until September 10, however much they might have wanted her to start sooner. Linda spent the interval getting to know again two old school friends. One day she ran into Zeba, or "Zebra" as they used to call her. She had dyed her black hair red and also cut it short so Linda had not recognised her at first. Zeba's family came from Iran, and she and Linda had been in the same class until secondary school. When they bumped into each other on the street this July, Zeba had been pushing a toddler in a pushchair. They had gone to a caf and had a coffee. Zeba told her that she had trained as a barmaid, but her pregnancy had put a stop to her work plans. The father was Marcus. Linda remembered him, Marcus who loved exotic fruit and who had started his own plant nursery in Ystad at the age of 19. The relationship had soon ended, but the child remained a fact. Zeba and Linda chatted for a long time, until the toddler started screaming so loudly and insistently that they had to leave. But they had kept in touch since that chance meeting, and Linda noticed that she felt less impatient with the hiatus in her life whenever she managed to build these bridges between

her present and the past that she had known in Ystad. As she was going home to Mariagatan after her meeting with Zeba, it started to rain. She took cover in a shopping centre and--while she was waiting for the weather to clear up--she looked up Anna Westin's number in the directory. She felt a jolt inside when she found it. She and Anna had had no contact for ten years. The close friendship of their childhood had ended abruptly when they both fell in love with the same boy. Afterwards, when the feelings of infatuation were long gone, they had tried to resuscitate the friendship, but it had never been the same. Linda hadn't even thought much about Anna the last couple of years. But seeing Zeba again reminded her of her old friend and she was happy to discover that Anna still lived in Ystad. Linda called her that evening and a few days later they met. Over the summer they would see each other several times a week, sometimes all three of them, but more often just Anna and Linda. Anna lived on her own as best as she could on her student budget. She was studying medicine. Linda thought she was almost more shy now than when they were growing up. Anna's father had left home when she was five or six years old and they never once heard from him again. Anna's mother lived out in the country in Lderup, not far from where Linda's grandfather had lived and painted his favourite, unchanging motifs. Anna was apparently pleased that L...