

'The Living and The Dead in Winsford' is the first of your books set in England translated into English...

Yes it is, it is. I mean so far they've done the Van Veeteran series which is ten books, and while I was writing the book and I met the people in Winsford, and said you will never get a chance to read it unless you start reading them in Swedish, because this one was out in Sweden only two years ago and for some reason they jumped to this one. This one is a standalone, but I've written two books in the UK, the other in London, but I'm not sure if there are plans to translate the London book.

What made you choose Winsford as a setting?

Since I lived in London, and because I like the South West, I find Exmoor is the best of the moors, I mean Dartmoor is Dartmoor, but Exmoor is more thrilling and beautiful. Normally you would go there in the summertime, but this was the first time I went there in the winter.

And did you spend much time there while you were writing the book?

I did, I did. I went for two or three weeks over Easter, and then I decided to write the book and because my wife was spending more and more time back in Sweden it was mainly just me and the dog, so I spent six months there, and anybody can write a novel there because it's the only thing you can do. You have no connection with anything, your mobile doesn't work, your internet is down all the time and the only thing to do is write a novel.

Are we going to be seeing the Inspector Barbaretti books at some point in the UK?

There are five of them, and I think we are signed up for two so far, but I'm sure we will do all five, but the problem is my translator Laurie Thompson recently passed away, and he was a charming man and a very good translator and we are facing the problem of who is going to replace him, because he did all my books. He also worked on the Stieg Larsson and Henning Mankell books.

Do you have a close working relationship with your translators?

Yes and no. Laurie would send me huge emails about the books, but I met him only twice, every book he would have just a few questions, but some translators I have never met. All my books have been published in Danish, but I met my Danish translator for the first time after book number twenty five, and I never had one question.

Who inspires you when you are writing?

No one in particular, I mean you read a lot when you are a writer, so it's difficult to point out the inspiration. I mean, you steal a lot from other writers, whether you

notice it or not, but I need to read a lot to be able to write, and there are so many good writers.

What's the best piece of advice you would give about writing?

The advice you want to give is just keep on, don't lose faith. I mean, I'm old so I know the routine. I used to be a teacher and everyone who wanted to be a writer would ask me "I've written the first chapter sixteen times Hakan, what should I do?" and I would say "Get on with the second chapter! Move on, go forward"

It's tricky, writing a book is a very complicated process and analysing the process is even more complicated, so I'm not sure about the best advice, perhaps simply "don't give up".

When you finish one book, do you dive right into the next book or do you take a break?

I've learnt over the years to take a break, I think it's best, because it is a drag really. I can't write two books, one book is enough to concentrate on, but it's good to have one written because you can re-write it and re-write it a number of times and the ideal thing is that when I've done one book I have another one that I can correct or re-write, so it's never really a dead day.

So do you have a writing routine for the day?

I wish I had. Although if you are in the story, it's like reading the story and if you are in the story you want to finish it. I get the urge that I must continue, so I don't need the routines, but I would like to have the routine, because you are better in the morning, when you're coming of age. When you are a student you can be brilliant at four o'clock in the morning after sixteen glasses of wine, but it doesn't work anymore when you are older. So take your dog for a walk, have breakfast, work for three, four five hours, then you're done - that's the ideal thing, but it doesn't happen every day.

So are we far behind your Swedish publishing schedule here in the UK?

I've written 28 books there have been 11 published in the UK, and the Barbaretti series was finished long ago, so you're far behind here, but they are classics so it doesn't matter!

Is it difficult to come over here and promote a book you wrote several years ago?

Sure, we had a gig in Nottingham the other day, and I had a question asked about a Van Veeteran book I wrote back in the mid-nineties, "Why did you etc...?" and all I can answer with is, "I have no idea". I know there was a reason, and it would have

been a very good reason at the time, but I can't remember it and it's tricky. But this one is good, because I can remember the Winsford book really well, because I don't usually do so much research for a book, but I was there and Exmoor is almost a character in the book, because landscape is so important, in other books the landscape is not so important, but in this case it is.

And finally what are you working on now?

I am in Sweden right now writing my Berlin book. I had this idea because I lived in New York for a couple of years, and in London and I wanted to write one book in each city, one in New York, one in London and one in Berlin. It is a kind of a trilogy of major cities. That's finished, but in Sweden I will have to do a tour over there for that. Then I've written another one coming out next year, but it's just the first version which the publishers like, so I know I will continue working on that in the autumn. Then thirdly, and this is unusual, because my dog, the same kind of dog that is in the Winsford book, he died. He was old, but my wife and I were devastated, so I'm writing his memoirs. I published a story about Norton my dog for a collection of 10 dogs and a cat, about writer's pets, and so this is a continuation of that story, 'The Memoires of Norton', but it's only like forty pages so it's easy, and I'm enjoying it as I have this connection with Norton up there in dogs' Heaven. It's really been fun.