



Liv forlag 2021
427 pages
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AWARDS

The Norwegian Silver Dagger Award
(Sølvkniven) 2025

OTHER TITLES

The Crime Series:
Traitors (2024)
The Kleptocracy (2022)
Blood is Thicker Than Water (2021)
Slaughter (2019)

Novel:
Nothing to Hide (2025)



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Blood is Thicker Than Water

Foster parents Ernst and Helga Vadland are found murdered at their farm in Jæren. When police officer Tom Grayston and his partner Dagny Stokka arrive at the crime scene, it turns out that a foster child is missing. Who is the foster child, and can it be connected to the murders? In the search for the truth, the foster child is not the only one carrying secrets.

Blood Is Thicker Than Water is a realistic police crime novel. In the investigation of the murders, central issues concerning child welfare and animal welfare are addressed.

The novel was published in 2021 by Liv Forlag and is the second in the crime series.

Why crime fiction about child welfare?

Espen Skjerven judges all types of cases, including child welfare cases. A characteristic of these cases is that they are exempt from public access. In *Blood Is Thicker Than Water*, he presents several of the challenges from different perspectives:

- The child welfare service
- Foster children
- Biological parents
- Investigators Tom Grayston and Dagny Stokka

“We need a child welfare service that people can trust. Much negative writing appears in Norway and abroad. To understand the system, knowledge is required. Few read professional books and articles, but many read crime novels. I hope the book is an exciting crime story, and that at the same time it gives readers new reflections.”

– Espen Skjerven

“Espen Skjerven has truly written himself into the crime genre with this book...warmly recommended (rating 5+/6).

- Kjell Magne Gjøsaeter, bokblogger.com

“Yet another bull’s-eye for me from Espen Skjerven. Investigative crime exactly the way I like it.”

- Marianne Sæther Tokle, blogger

“...a well-written, thorough, informative, and good investigative crime novel about a difficult and sensitive topic concerning child welfare (rating 5/6).

- Anita Ness, bookblogger

...a steady and more than good enough sequel (rating 5/6).

- Ina Syrstad, bookblogger

An author we will definitely hear more from, because this is crime fiction at a high level.

- Ernst Stenberg, Instagram

The rawest police crime novel I've read this year (rating 5+/6).

- Hilde Sæther, bookblogger

The story in this book captivates from the start, and the suspense keeps building. I couldn't figure out the solution until it was finally served to me.

- Anne Lise Johannesen, hverdagsnett.no

...a crime novel with an important message (rating 5/6).

- Henning Sviland, bookblogger

A crime novel that smells like a bestseller (rating 5/6).

- Simen Ingemundsen, Randaberg24

Espen Skjerven

Espen Skjerven works as a district court judge at Sør-Rogaland District Court. He has a background as a prosecutor in the national investigative units Økokrim and Kripos, as well as a business lawyer/litigator.



Skjerven has written four books in the crime series about police officer Tom Grayston: *Slaughter* (Slakt 2019), *Blood is Thicker than Water* (Blod er tykkere enn vann, 2021), *The Kleptocracy* (Kleptokratiet, 2022), and *Traitors* (Svikere, 2024).

Traitors won the Norwegian Silver Dagger Award (Sølvkniven), for best release of 2024.

Book reviewer Tor Hammerø in the newspaper Nettavisen reviewed the *Kleptocracy* and wrote: "Espen Skjerven has taken a giant step up into the Norwegian crime literature elite."

Nothing to Hide (Ingenting å skjule, 2025) is Skjerven's first work of fiction.



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