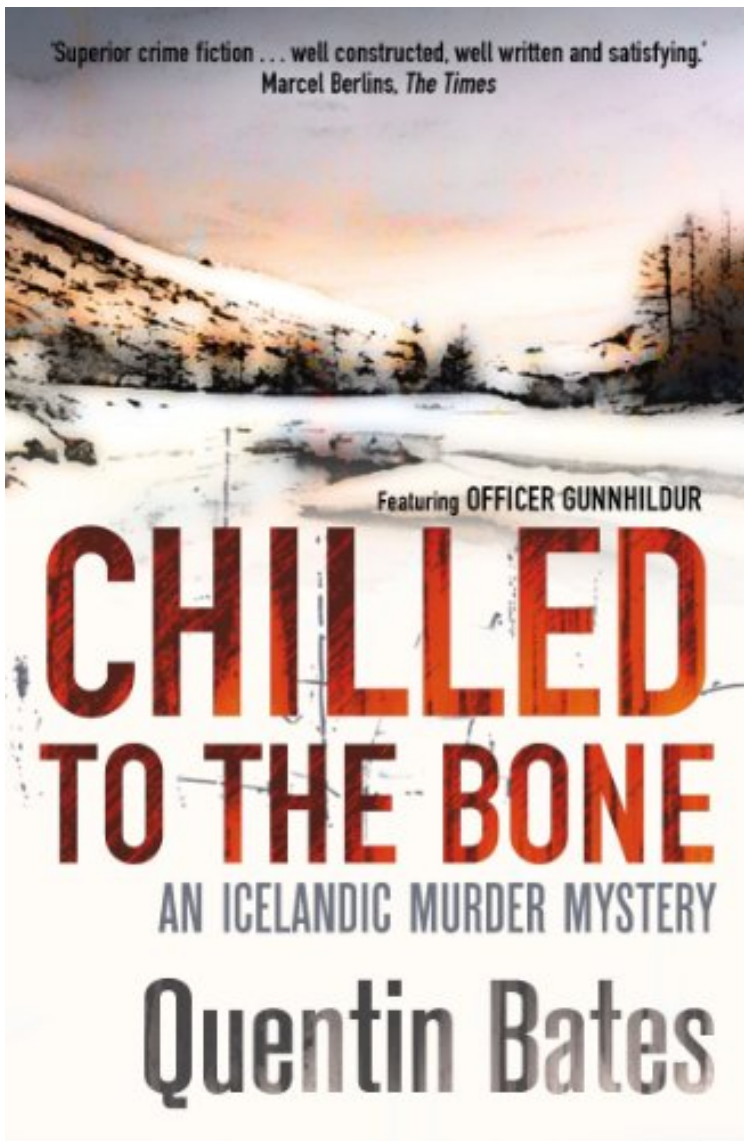


(Read ebook) File size: 25.Mb

# Chilled to the Bone



*Par Quentin Bates*  
\*Download PDF | ePub | DOC |  
audiobook | ebooks

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les  
ventes : #101058 dans eBooksPubli le:  
2013-04-04Sorti le: 2013-04-  
04Format: Ebook Kindle

(Read ebook) Chilled to the Bone

**Par Quentin Bates : Chilled to the Bone**  
before purchasing it in order to gage  
whether or not it would be worth my time,  
and all praised Chilled to the Bone:

 Download

 Read Online

## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWhen a shipowner is found dead, tied to a bed in one of Reykjavik's smartest hotels, sergeant Gunnhildur Gisladdottir of the city police force sees no evidence of foul play but still suspects things are not as cut and dried as they seem. And as she investigates the shipowner's untimely - and embarrassing - demise, she stumbles across a discreet bondage society whose members are being systematically exploited and blackmailed. But how does all this connect to a local gangster recently returned to Iceland after many years abroad, and the unfortunate loss of a government laptop containing sensitive data about various members of the ruling party? What begins as a straightforward case for Gunnhildur soon explodes into a dangerous investigation, uncovering secrets that ruthless men are ready to go to violent extremes to keep. Praise for Quentin Bates: 'Superior crime fiction set in Iceland... this is a well constructed, well written

and satisfying police procedural'. The Times. A meticulously constructed thriller, peopled with exceptionally convincing characters and shot through with black humour. Frozen Out is as chilling as an Icelandic winter.

S.J. Bolton "[A] crackling fiction debut ... palpable authenticity." Publishers Weekly British author Bates captures the chilly spirit of Nordic crime fiction in what is the apparent start of a promising series with a distinctly appealing protagonist. Fans of Arnaldur Indridason's Reykjavik mysteries will want to add Bates to their reading lists. Booklist

Extrait Thursday Gunna stamped the snow from her boots and flinched as the overpowering heat of the hotel's lobby hit her like a slap in the face. The door whispered shut behind her as she looked around, spying a man wearing a grey suit and a worried look by the reception desk. He immediately hurried over to her. 'You're from the police?' He asked in a voice laden with drama but kept so low as to be almost a murmur. 'That's me. Look like a copper, do I?' Gunna replied brightly, shooting out a hand for the man to grasp and shake limply. 'Gunnhildur Gsladttir. And you are?' 'Yngvi Jnsson, I'm the duty manager. Where are the rest of you?' 'Only me to start with. Can you show me what's happened?' Yngvi wrung his hands as he scuttled towards the lift that opened in front of them. 'Of course we've had guests who have had problems before, and even people who have...' he gulped. 'Passed away on the premises. But never anything like this.' 'You know who the man is, I take it?' 'Of course. He's stayed here a good many times in the past and he has always been a real gentleman. It's been such a shock...' 'And his family? He has a family?' 'I haven't contacted anyone except the police. The staff are in the canteen, waiting for you.' Gunna nodded. Yngvi continued to wring his hands and the lift played muzak until a soft voice warned them that the third floor was approaching. 'This way, please,' he said needlessly, stepping out of the lift and hurrying along the corridor with Gunna striding at his heels. He swiped a card through the electronic lock of a door, looked left and right along the corridor and pushed the door open. 'There,' he said, and Gunna stepped inside, pulling on a pair of surgical gloves as she did so. The room was silent and dark. She carefully used the butt of a ballpoint pen to switch on the lights at the switch by the door and surveyed the room in front of her and the naked man stretched across the kingsized bed. 'Who's been in here?' Gunna asked, calling over her shoulder and sensing Yngvi standing in the doorway. 'The cleaner who found him, me, and the doctor.' 'Which doctor was that?' 'Sveinn feiggsson, his name is. He's retired, but he's staying here at the moment and as he was in the bar, I asked him to come up with me. I don't know if that was right or not, but it seemed quicker than calling out an ambulance right away.' Gunna went along the side of the bed and crouched by the man's head, lolling at an unnatural angle, his mouth blocked by a bright red ball held in place by straps around the back of his neck. The face looked vaguely familiar, a man in late middle age, with eyes half-closed and strands of thin hair in disarray, revealing a gleaming scalp. The pale arm that reached up behind him was tied securely at the wrist to the top of the bed frame. Standing up and retracing her steps, she saw that the man's other hand and both ankles were tied in the same way with dark red scarves that almost matched the burgundy of the rich bedspread. 'Don't touch anything, please,' Gunna told Yngvi, who had advanced a few steps into the room. Gunna looked around, taking in as many details of the room as she could, but nothing appeared to be out of place. A suitcase lay open on a frame in the corner of the room, with rows of shirts and underwear neatly laid out and ready to be plucked for use. The bathroom light shimmered into life automatically just as she was looking for the switch to reveal sparkling marble tiles and a vast basin. A small sponge bag sat next to the sink, along with an electric razor. Gunna peered into the sink and spied a long black hair in sharp relief against the pale marble. She nodded to herself and backed out to where Yngvi was waiting for her. 'That'll do, thanks, for the moment. I'll get a forensic team to come and examine the room as soon as possible. Until then, it needs to be sealed.' 'But what about...?' Yngvi asked, gesturing towards the corpse on the bed. 'Don't worry. He's not going to run away. We'd best go back downstairs and I'll start asking questions. You said the girl who found him is still here?' Yngvi nodded miserably. 'In that case, I'm going to have to borrow your office, probably for the rest of the day,' she said. 'I was wondering how long...?' 'How long, what?' 'How long this will all take? He was due to leave today and we'll be needing the room for a guest tonight.' 'In that case, I think someone is going to be disappointed. This is going to take a while so you might have to send your guest to Hotel Borg instead. Come on.' # Hekla's new hair had a blonde sheen that gave her at once an allure and a confidence that sheenjoyed. Everything was new, the expensively simple dress, the nails, the shoes, even her minuscule underwear was understatedly elegant and straight from the packet. She sat in the hotel's lobby and did her best to stay calm, forcing herself to breathe at a measured rate to numb the combination of anticipation and anxiety. This wasn't something she could see as a job and detach herself from. It still took its toll and kept her awake at nights, especially since that scare before Christmas, but less often than before and she reflected that in a small country like Iceland there

simply wasn't enough of a clientele. Sooner or later she would run out of men, be recognized on the street or else have to leave the country and maybe take her line of work with her. Hekla sipped chilled water and delicately replaced the glass on the table in front of her. Or she could retire, she thought and smiled at the prospect. The bank balance was piling up nicely. Debts had been paid off. She would be able to take it easy and maybe get a proper job once the children were at school. She hardly noticed the florid man in a dark business suit approach and stand looking sideways at her. Hekla looked up and reproached herself for a lack of awareness, giving the man a discreet smile and a nod. 'Sonja?' He asked. 'I'm Sonja. You must be Haraldur?' 'That's me. Call me Halli. Shall we?' He asked, the eagerness in his voice unmistakable. 'Of course. But if you don't mind, I'd like to talk here first for a little while. Think of it as an icebreaker,' she smiled. 'Would you like a drink?' Haraldur sat in the chair opposite her, at ease but still tense, although he hid it well. Hekla looked deliberately at the bar and caught the eye of the young man behind it who quickly came across to them, his steps silent on the hotel's lush carpet. 'Can I offer you anything?' He asked. 'What would you like, Haraldur?' 'Bacardi and coke for me.' 'And I'll have some tea, please. Camomile if you have it.' The barman almost bowed as he backed away. 'So, Haraldur. Are you in Reykjavik on business?' 'Yup. Here for two days, then back home.' 'You're in the seafood business?' 'Actually, no. Transport and storage equipment. There isn't much I couldn't tell you about fork lifttrucks,' he said with a sharp bark of humourless laughter. Hekla could see he was becoming increasingly nervous, maybe worried that someone would see him with an unfamiliar young woman. She saw that the hand that lifting the glass the barman brought him trembled slightly. He placed a small teapot and a delicate china cup in front of her. 'Thank you. Charge to room 406, please,' Hekla said to the youth, and smiled warmly at him as he backed away again. 'No offence, but I'd just like to lay down a few ground rules before we go any further,' Hekla said, flashing a smile. 'Yeah. Of course.' 'I see myself as a professional and I expect to be treated as one. There has to be respect on both sides. I take a pride in my work and aim to do a good job, the same as I'm sure you do in your professional life,' she said smoothly. 'Absolutely.' 'Once we are alone, I'm at work. I expect you to address me as "mistress" at all times. If at any time you want to stop, all you have to do is say "terminate" and we stop immediately. You're happy with that?' 'Understood.' 'What could you tell me about fork lift trucks, then?' She asked, her voice silky, and deliberately uncrossed her legs as slowly as she dared. 'Well, they come in all sizes. Depends what you need to...' His voice faltered as Hekla re-crossed her legs the other way, hiding the reason for Haraldur's sudden loss of the power of speech. She poured fragrant tea into her cup and sipped, looking over the rim at him and wanting to laugh as he quickly gulped his drink. 'You were saying?' # Jel Ingi Bragason shrugged on his jacket and picked his way through the toys that his wife's nieces and nephews had left littering the hall to the door of the flat. 'See you at six,' he called out, waiting for a second before closing the front door for a reply that didn't come from his wife and cursed the realization that she must have gone back to sleep. It was cold and damp outside, as well as dark, and Jel Ingi found it difficult to reconcile himself to Icelandic winters, even in Reykjavik where heavy snow was a rarity. The years of study in America and the delightful sojourn at the Sorbonne had spoiled him, he reflected as he took short steps along the icebound but gradually thawing pavement, scared that overconfidence in unsuitable shoes would send him flying. Once in the car, he felt better. It became a bubble around him, safe and warm, its airbags and discreet steel pillars protecting him from a cruel world outside. He could have walked to work in roughly the same time as it took to walk to the car and then drive it to the underground car park beneath the Ministry. Coffee arrived half-way through the morning and it was a relief. A couple of glasses of wine the night before had left him heavier than he should have felt and Jel Ingi wondered if this was the onset of middle age. In spite of two strong cups of coffee, he struggled to stay awake during a meeting later in the morning, and had to force himself to pay attention to the minutiae of European Union proceedings. Checking his phone discreetly during the meeting, there were no messages from Agnes, which was a relief as she had taken to shooting him sideways glances and he was starting to get the feeling that she was checking up on him. Shrugging off his misgivings, he steered his thoughts back to the fine detail of the proposed policy, but not before noticing with pleasure that the most junior person in the room, a newly-appointed secretary, had slipped off her shoes under the table opposite him and that she had delightfully shapely calves. The voice of the meeting's chairman became little more than a distant droning noise as Jel Ingi's thoughts drifted increasingly towards how those solid legs might shape up from the knee upwards. As his thoughts slipped in another direction, he scowled to himself, unconsciously chewing his lip as that damned woman came back to him once again, and he wondered if that afternoon would come back to haunt him. He started as he looked up and saw with discomfort that the girl with the delightful calves was looking right at him with concern in

her eyes. Jel Ingi smiled as broadly as he could and hoped that he hadn't looked too bored or stupid. # The city felt different. There was a cautious, watchful feel to Reykjavk as if the place were waiting for yet another kicking. Badd hadn't spent much of his years away following events in Iceland, but the news of the financial crash and then the volcano going off and stopping air traffic had been the basis of a few ribald comments from prisoners who hadn't got to know him or his reputation, and that had resulted in more than one sore head. When Badd had left Iceland for somewhere a man could have space to flex his muscles, it still had the feeling of a quiet backwater, a place where not much happened and when it did, it wasn't going to be happening in too much of a hurry, regardless of how much fuss people might make. The occasional visit through the years when it seemed that business had discovered some hidden philosopher's stone had left a sour taste behind. All the same, it had been like a rest cure to come back and see the place once in a while.

Although most of his family hadn't wanted a great deal to do with him, there were a few friends who respected a man who could stand his corner and keep his mouth shut. Now it was different. Badd had to admit even to himself that he was tired. He had been ready to explode with fury at any moment during the flight over the Baltic with a moustachioed policeman each side of him, and while they sat and wolfed down pizzas and beer at Kstrup, their eyes never strayed far from him. The two hulking giants didn't take their eyes off him until the stewardess had closed and locked the pressure-tight door of the aircraft that would take him back to Iceland for the first time in almost a decade. He unfolded the newspaper he had put under his arm without thinking in the shop at the corner, and was surprised to see it was in English. He threw it into the bin and lay down on the wine-red sofa, tucking a cushion under his head and tried to sleep. Ten minutes

later he gave up and stood up to gaze out at the grey roofs opposite the little flat's bathroom window, watching flakes of snow spiral down and settle. It was going to be a cold day, he thought, wondering when Mara would be home. # 'His name's Jhannes Karlsson,' Helgi said. 'Shipowner from Hsavk, retired. Lives in Copenhagen part of the year. Rolling in dosh, if I recall correctly. Used to be politics years ago, MP for a term or two in the seventies until he decided business was more important or lucrative than politics. Does that tell you what you want to know?' Gunna and Helgi had retired to a corner of the hotel's bar to confer while the forensic team and the police pathologist examined the room where they had left the late Jhannes Karlsson still strapped to the bed he had died in. 'Independence or Progressive?' 'Independence Party, I think. I wouldn't want to think that he was one of us,' Helgi said in a severe tone. 'One of you, you mean. I'd prefer it if you didn't take me for a Progressive Party supporter, thank you very much.' 'Sorry. Never saw you as anything but a bleeding heart liberal, Gunna.' 'Cause of death?' she asked. 'You're asking me?' 'Sorry, Helgi.

No, just thinking out loud. I'm wondering if this was murder or accidental? What do you reckon?' Helgi snorted. 'Doesn't look intentional to me in the least. I reckon there was some fun and games going on, our boy got his first stiffy for years and keeled over under the strain. The girlfriend, or boyfriend, or paid companion, or whatever, ran for it. That's what makes me think that whoever was with him probably decided that he or she wasn't being paid enough to deal with this kind of stuff.' 'You know, Helgi, with brains like yours you're wasted on the police. I reckon you've pretty much summed it up. But, unfortunately, that doesn't mean I get to go home.' 'And do some knitting?' Helgi asked innocently. 'Don't push it,' Gunna growled, signalling to Yngvi, hovering by the bar, with a cup-to-the-lips gesture. 'How long has he been staying here? This place must cost a fortune,' she decided as a waiter approached with a tray of cups and a flask of coffee.

'He's been here for two weeks. His wife was here for the first week, apparently, and went home while Jhannes was dealing with some business in Reykjavk. He was due to check out at twelve today. When he hadn't showed up at two, the chambermaid knocked as they always do, to see if he'd already gone, and found him spark out on the bed. She screamed, called the housekeeping manager and she called us and the doctor who was at the bar.' 'Fair enough,' Gunna said. 'Where's Eirkur?' 'On his way. Won't be long.' 'Good,' Gunna said, sipping daintily at the coffee a tall, dark-haired young man placed on the table without a word. 'When he gets here, start him off checking the passenger lists to see when our boy was due to travel and then get him to see if he can track down the man's wife. If she's still in Hsavk, he'd best get the police there to speak to her and break the bad news that she's a widow.' 'Right, will do. And me?' 'Talk to the staff, and see what you can find by way of CCTV. We need to speak to whoever tied Jhannes Karlsson to the bed, even though it looks like he'd probably paid whoever it was handsomely to do just that.' 'Yup. And you, chief?' 'Oh, you know. I'll just take a walk around the shops while you and Eirkur do the hard work.' 'Nothing unusual there, then?' 'Get away with you. I'll start with the chambermaid who found our boy and then the duty manager, and hopefully the forensic team will have done their business by then. But I'm going to have another cup of this rather fine coffee first.' 'Are we paying for this?' Helgi asked dubiously. 'Good grief, no. It's an integral

part of the investigation.' # Haraldur sat on the bed in his underwear, breathing heavily. Hekla stood in front of him and unzipped the black dress with one hand behind her. His hands reached forward and his face was flushed. He groaned. 'God, you're gorgeous.' 'God, you're gorgeous...?' 'Sorry. Mistress.' 'That's better,' Hekla warned, lifting his hands from her hips and pushing them firmly back. 'You're a bad man and now you'll have to wait. If you'll just get yourself in the mood, I'll be right back.' She let the dress fall, turned and stepped towards the bathroom, her heels clicking on the warm tiled floor, knowing that Haraldur's eyes were glued to the buttocks he could just see below the hem of her shift. She washed her face in cold water and dried it with a towel that felt as soft as fur. She could hear Haraldur's breathing in the bedroom and the sound of him moving about on the bed. She pulled on the tight PVC one-piece suit that she had ready in the bathroom and took a deep breath, picking up a handful of scarves and a small leather strap on the way. Hekla dimmed the lights as far as they would go and sent a slow smile towards Haraldur where he lay on the bed. She added a low chuckle and stepped towards him, standing over the naked man, hands on her hips. 'So, Haraldur, you've been really bad and I'm going to have to teach you a little lesson, aren't I?' She said, pitching her voice deep and reaching forward to tie one of his wrists to the headboard with practiced ease. He moaned as she leaned over him, her breasts encased in electric blue plastic skimming his face as she tied the other wrist back in the same way. The fingertips of one hand brushed his chest and down to his belly. A reasonably attractive man and in good condition for his age, she thought. Hekla walked along the side of the bed, trailing the leather strap down the length of his body and along one leg to the ankle, where she stooped and planted a kiss on one instep. 'Have you been bad, Haraldur?' 'Yes, mistress,' he responded dutifully. 'Then a little more correction might be needed.' Another scarf was swiftly tied around the ankle and secured to the bed frame. 'Bad, bad man,' she growled in the deepest voice she could manage and the other ankle was quickly tied, leaving Haraldur spread-eagled across the king-sized bed. Hekla sashayed back to the top of the bed and showed him the ball gag. 'Since you've been such a bad, bad man, I'm going to show you what a bad, bad girl I can be,' she said quietly. 'Please, mistress,' Haraldur panted. 'You really want me to hurt you?' 'Yes, mistress.' 'Then watch this, Haraldur.' Hekla pushed the ball into Haraldur's mouth and put her hands quickly behind his neck to clip the strap shut. As she stepped back, he immediately began to breathe heavily through his nose, struggling to draw breath and splaying his cheeks to get some air around the ball. 'Now you're going to be patient and wait right there and think about how bad you've been,' she said, disappearing back into the bathroom. After what to Haraldur seemed an age, she reappeared. The plastic suit had gone, replaced with a hooded sweater, jeans and trainers. The makeup had been scrubbed off and the golden hair was gone, replaced with dark curls that reached her shoulders. Hekla dropped a large holdall on the floor next to the door and as his heart sank, went over to where his clothes had been hastily discarded, going through the pockets systematically. She switched off his phone and put it on the dresser, before opening his wallet and removing the notes, stuffing them into the pocket of her pullover without counting them. Next she extracted all of the cards and brought them over to the bed. Hekla looked down at Haraldur, lying mute and helpless in front of her. She sat down by his head and looked into his bewildered eyes, unclipping a ball-point pen from the neckline of her sweater. 'Are you listening carefully, Haraldur?' The only response was a limited straining of his arms and legs against the scarves holding him down and a desperate growl from behind the rubber ball. 'You know that's not going to help, don't you?' She told him as he went limp. 'Now, listen. I'm going to go shopping for an hour or so while you ponder the error of your ways and remember how much you love your wife. All right?' Haraldur's eyes bulged. 'Your credit card. Tell me your pin number. Clench your right fist for the numbers. Once for one, twice for two, and so on. Four numbers. Go.' Haraldur's fists remained obstinately clenched and Hekla sighed. 'Look. There's an easy way and a hard way. If you give me the number and it works, when I've been shopping I'll call the hotel's reception and tell them that there's a man in room 406 who is in trouble and needs some help urgently. If the number doesn't work, then I won't and nobody will come in here until the chambermaid comes to clean your room tomorrow morning.' She looked at her watch. 'It's half-past four now, so that's in about sixteen hours. You might be a bit cold and thirsty by then. It's up to you.' Haraldur's fist clenched and unclenched in a series of numbers. 'Two-five-two-seven. Good. Now we're getting somewhere. And your debit card? Same number, maybe?' Haraldur nodded furiously as she wrote the number on the back of her hand. She held up a second debit card. 'And this one?' Another series of nods. 'Good. It's been a pleasure doing business with you, Haraldur. Don't worry about your cards. The bank will give you new ones easily enough. I'll destroy them when I've been shopping and won't sell them on for anyone else to use.' She dipped into her pocket and drew out a small digital camera, pointed it at the helpless, naked Haraldur in front of her and pressed the shutter. Haraldur

strained against the scarves holding him down and his face went a deep red as she took several pictures. She looked him up and down, screwed up her face in sympathy and spat in her palm. 'The least I can do for you under the circumstances, I suppose,' she said as she set to work. It didn't take long. A minute later Haraldur stiffened, arched his back as far as his bonds would allow him and relaxed, while Hekla looked at him indulgently. She went to the bathroom, washed her hands and came back with a fluffy towel that she used to wipe the man's belly clean. 'Be careful in future, and no hard feelings, eh? Business is business,' Hekla said with a cheerful smile, looking down at the forlorn man in front of her as she swung the holdall on to her shoulder. 'Goodbye, Haraldur. Someone will be up to untie you in an hour.'

Revue de presse

A solid police procedural with some genuinely rewarding surprises at the end. When it comes to frosty crime novels, Iceland may just be the new Sweden.

Booklist

In addition to Bates well-paced plots, its his protagonist dealing in these pages not only with professional responsibilities, but with a personal one . . . who makes this procedural series a standout.

Kirkus s

"Liberally laced with laughter and menace . . . This woman [Gunnhildur Gisladdottir] is a keeper." Kittling Books

An entirely satisfying police procedural . . . A good recommendation if you like a slice of Scandi crime with a good plot, a twist of wry humour and an engaging and plausible detective.

Raven Crime Reads

Bates writes with growing confidence about a place and world he knows well . . . Iceland is brilliantly brought to life from high-life to low life in a plot that unpeels like an onion. Highly recommended.

Hack Writers

Chilled to the Bone is an excellent novel. The elements of the crimes in motion are nicely laid out through the different points of view . . . The book flirts with Scandinavian darkness, something that's built into the psyche of books like this, if only because of the enduring cold during winter.

Thinking About Books

I love this series. Gunna is a normal woman . . . [Chilled to the Bone] is set in a very believable Iceland to post banking crisis and with an economy which has to keep looking over the edge to see if it's still in freefall.

The Bookbag

Praise for Quentin Bates

"Required reading for anyone who wants a sense of how calamitous Iceland's meltdown was and what just might be in store for American police procedurals next."

Kirkus s

"Bates does a fine job with both Gunna and her town, her acerbic boss and an online blogger who keeps us abreast of events in Icelandic media and politics."

Toronto Globe and Mail

In Gunna Gisladdottir, Quentin Bates has created a character who appeals both on professional and personal levels." Examiner.com