

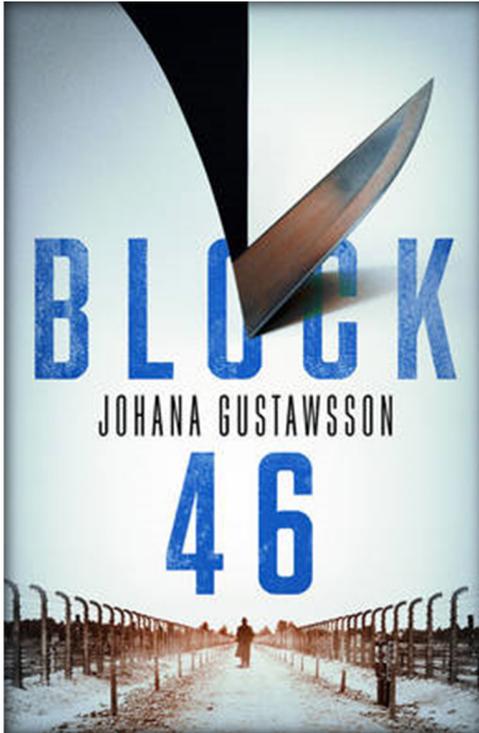


Helping you choose
your next book



LoveReading Reader reviews of **Block 46** by Johana Gustawsson

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Catherine Jenkins

A jewel of a read, made all the more startling and terrifying by being set in a landscape of fact.

A hard-hitting read that traverses both geographical and historical ground, this book gave me an insight into the realities of the Buchenwald concentration camp whilst also delivering the punch of a noir detective story. It will not be easily forgotten, as the author's - and translator's - gift for imagery has been used to great effect in the descriptions of the physical and mental scars left by war.

You can follow Catherine on Twitter:
[@cathlynnej](https://twitter.com/cathlynnej)

Phylippa Smithson

Raw, high energy and distressing, 'Block 46' brings something unique to the world of crime writing – profiler and real crime writer collaborating to solve a series of murders.

Not only a harrowing depiction of life for Jews in 1944 concentration camp. Not only a fast paced thriller of what seems to be unrelated attacks – except the bodies have been killed with the same mutilation – in modern London and Sweden. And not only are the lead investigators (a single minded, anti-social profiler, and a true crime writer who is seeking salvation in dedicating her thoughts to the solving of the murder to exorcise the overwhelming sense of loss as a result of the death of her husband 3 years previous) totally credible bringing something unique to the world of crime fiction. Block 46 brings all

three individual plots together and so much more.

The murder in Sweden brings the profiler (Emily) together with the writer (Alexis) as a result of Emily already working on a series of murders targeting 6-8 year old boys. Alexis is involved because it is her friend, 30+ year old Linnea who is the target of the attack. And the two crimes are linked because the disfigurement of the victims are the same. But why does the author bring in a seeming unrelated plot from 1944 Buchenwald concentration camp? Are there any links uniting the two?

This is quite simply oozing brilliance – story, writing style and intrigue.

Helen Lowry

Bodies are found in London and Sweden, with similar wounds. Is this one serial killer? The story moves between the two countries, with the grim conditions of a concentration camp in the background.

Definitely a book with page turning quality, from start to finish. *The body of a young jewellery designer is found in Sweden. Young boys have also been found with very similar wounds in London. Is there a link? In the middle of middle of this, the story takes us back to the grim conditions of Buchenwald Concentration Camp in 1944, and a man fighting for daily survival, Erich Ebner.*

Emily Roy, a profiler who often appears to lack people skills, but who can surprise everyone, has to try and work out if the murders are the work of one or two serial killers. If the work of one, what is the link between the two countries.

The book has short chapters, which I liked and found kept the pace and interest going superbly. All the characters are well drawn and each one adds to the plot in their own way.

More links between England and Sweden develop as the story unfolds, along with Buchenwald in the background. Without giving anything away, the story finishes with several twists.

I very much enjoyed this book and look forward to reading more from this author.

Andrea Rayner

Three different places, three different stories, all bound together by murder. The

body of a young woman is found in Falkenberg, Sweden. The bodies of three young boys have also been found on Hampstead Heath in London. What is the connection? Could the link go back many years to the relationship between a Nazi research doctor at Buchenwald Concentration Camp and a young German prisoner at the end of World War II?

Emily Roy, a Canadian Behaviour Investigative Adviser on loan to Scotland Yard, teams up with Alexis Castells, a French crime writer and friend of the woman found dead in Falkenberg, to investigate the case. As they travel between Sweden and London, they start to discover the true nature of the evil that lies behind these murders.

*'Block 46' is the first book in the Roy and Castells series. It is **a page-turner from the very beginning, and has a clever and involved plot which will keep you guessing right until the end. It is also extremely well written, showing the consummate skill of both the author, Johana Gustawsson and the translator, Maxim Jukubowski.** It is a very enjoyable and, at times, unsettling read.*

Robin Little

A gruesome noir tale of murder and mutilation. A fast paced thriller in which strands from contemporary London & Sweden combine with 1945 Germany. The story moves quickly between a murderer in the present and the horrors of a Concentration Camp in Nazi Germany.

A Scotland Yard profiler helps put together the pieces, perhaps a little too effortlessly. The profiler links up the rounded characters involved in the very dark story and drives forward a solution to the mystery"

Lindsey Whittle

An absorbing book, a challenging read and very different from the usual murder mystery/police procedural. French 'noir' with a Scandi twist.

The story is set in Sweden, London, and Buchenwald concentration camp, and while the investigation occurs over a few tight weeks in 2014, it relates to events in 1944 and onwards. Strong characters; British profiler Emily, French true crime author Alexis (also friend of a victim) and Bergstrom, the Swedish police Kommissionar.

Short chapters switch between different characters and these strands drive the story forward, building momentum. The Buchenwald episodes, although a small part of the book, are vital to the rest of it. There's a brilliant twist near the end that I didn't see coming!

The author is a former journalist, and her grandfather spent time in Buchenwald camp. This is the first in, hopefully, a series of books featuring Emily and Alexis. This story may appeal to anyone who enjoys the Scandi novelists.

I was gripped by this book, and would read others by this author. However, I sometimes found the translation from French to English rather clunky, for instance in the use of words like 'unctuous' and 'enucleation' (surgical removal of eye). I also found the idea that police would delegate a foreign profiler and a victim's friend to visit and 'interrogate' potential witnesses, and to check out an alibi frankly unbelievable. These things apart, 'Block 46' is still a very good addition to this popular genre.

Janet Gilliard

*This is a **stunning debut novel set in London and Sweden**. A young woman is murdered in Sweden, a young boy in London. A profiler from the RCMP round-up with a true crime writer from France to find out if there is a serial killer at work and if there is a connection to Buchenwald hence the title of 'Block 46'.*

This is the first in a series and I can't wait for the second.

Jennifer Merville

Having read the back page of this book I was nervous at finding that it wasn't set in a prison but in a concentration camp during the war in 1944. This sent shivers down my spine as I have read and seen footage of happenings in these terrible places. Yet it also inspired me to read on. Gripped by history and wanting the good guys to win glued me to the pages as they went by chapter by chapter.

History of these places should never be forgottenbut be remembered and tales told so they may never happen again.

As the author tells the story of two murders, the backdrop of Buchenwald and the life of one inmate, Erich, you feel like a part of you wants to save this man

*but you feel totally useless as the horrors are brought forward. **Travelling between the past and the present, Sweden and London it is a great tale to read.***

Jillian McFrederick

An intriguing read. This novel took a while to get me hooked but when it did I couldn't put it down! In the popular genre of Skandinoir, it is mainly based between Sweden and England with flash backs to Buchenwald Concentration Camp in 1944. The connections weren't apparent till late on in the story but certainly helped to put the jigsaw together. Murders of young boys in London are connected to a death in Sweden and profiler Emily Roy along with one of the victim's friends who is also an investigative reporter travel to Sweden to unravel the mystery with the help of local police. There are quite a lot of characters but the author manages to flesh them out well and after initial confusion each takes on a life of its own The identity of the serial killer and the extent of the crimes is not evident till the very end

An enjoyable and unpredictable read I would recommend to any crime reader.

Debbie Patrick

What an excellent first book. Really enjoyed this. I will be looking out for more books by this author. Well recommended.

It is mainly based in Falkenberg, Sweden where a mutilated body of a jewellery designer, Linnea Blix, is found in a snow-swept marina. Then moves to Hampstead Heath, London where the body of a young boy is discovered with similar wounds. Just to add to it, it also moves to Buchenwald Concentration Camp, 1944. In the midst of the hell of the Holocaust, Erich Hebner will do anything to see himself as a human again. Are the murders the work of a serial killer, and how are they connected to shocking events at Buchenwald? The Main characters are Emily Roy, a profiler on loan to Scotland Yard and Linnea's friend, true-crime writer Alexis Castells, who investigate the case. They travel between Sweden and London, and then deep into the past, as a startling and terrifying connection comes to light.

Jenny Shirley

A graphic and sometimes harrowing crime thriller with a twist I didn't see coming! A great read. I really enjoyed this book, it was fast paced and grabbed my interest right from the beginning. Set in both the past and the present the author intertwines the characters and settings perfectly to create a great crime novel. The chapters set in Buchenwald, a concentration camp in the Second World War, were graphic and harrowing to read but didn't shy away from the honesty of the truth. In fact the whole novel was graphic and had an authentication feel to it. I felt the characters could have been more in depth but as this is the first in what will become a series I think the author needed to save something for future books. Can definitely see this becoming a television adaptation. Great read and didn't see the twist at the end!

Jane Ashbrook

Great gripping thriller. I was hooked from the outset and the book kept up the pace. Well written and a great plot. Look forward to reading more from this author. Wow! I loved this thriller.

The novel switches between London and Sweden in the present day and Buchenwald Concentration camp in 1944. A serial killer is at large and Emily Roy - a profiler and Alexis Castells, a true-crime writer team up to solve a series of murders where bodies have similar wounds.

How do the horrors of the concentration camp connect to the murders?

Very well written, pacy and gripping I found it hard to put down.

Will be looking out for this author in the future.

Alison Greenacre

A great story encompassing Nazi Germany and modern day London and Sweden. Slow at times but an ultimately satisfying story line. Sometime quite clumsy writing, other points beautifully observed, although overall I think the translation worked well.

One negative point, I did not see the point of having two lead female characters. Not sure what value Alexis brought to the story. And I found the references to Emily's 'black box' annoying and very clumsily rolled into the storyline.

Overall a great story though will a great twist. Recommended!