

Crime

By Ferdinand Von Schirach

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From Ferdinand von Schirach, one of Germany's most prominent defense attorneys, comes a jolting debut collection of short stories that daringly brings to light the motivations stirring within the criminal mind. By turns witty and sorrowful, unflinchingly brutal and heartbreaking, the deeply affecting, quietly unnerving cases presented in *Crime* urge a closer examination of guilt and innocence.

In "Fähner," a small-town physician and avid gardener betrays little emotion when he takes an ax to his wife's head, an act that shocks the locals but provides a
long-awaited reprieve for the good doctor. Abbas, a Palestinian refugee who is cornered into a life of crime, finds true love and seemingly a saving grace with a beautiful student named Stefanie in "Summertime." But when she is viciously murdered in a hotel room after having been paid to sleep with one of the country's wealthiest men, is Abbas to blame or is it the man who seems to have it all? And in the startling story "Love," a young man's infatuation with his girlfriend takes a grisly turn as he comes to grips with his unconventional—and uncontrollable—impulses to truly know a woman.

"Guilt," writes von Schirach, "always presents a bit of a problem." In this beautifully nuanced and telling collection, guilt is indeed never as clear-cut as the crime, and justice is more nebulous still.

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Crime By Ferdinand Von Schirach Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #683893 in eBooks
- Published on: 2011-01-11
- Released on: 2011-01-11
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In his fiction debut, a collection of 11 stories, German defense lawyer von Schirach displays a facility with contemporary noir in such tales as "Fähner," the depressing account of a troubled marriage that ends in violence, and "The Cello," which depicts the effect of a stifled upbringing on two siblings, but other selections will strike readers as sketchy or obscure. "Love," in which the defense attorney narrator represents a troubled student with a cannibalism fetish, reads more like a brief anecdote shared among professional colleagues than a story with a point. "The Thorn," in which a museum employee takes sadistic pleasure in planting thumbtacks to cause others pain, is equally enigmatic. Von Schirach's tendency to say less than is called for is also evident in his afterword, which confusingly delineates the differences between the American and German justice systems, then concludes that the differences don't matter. (Jan.)
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From Booklist
Von Schirach is a defense attorney currently practicing in Berlin. In this collection, he presents accounts of 11 of the cases he has defended. They read with all the character development and suspense you would expect in short fiction. But the spike is that all these heartbreaking cases happened. A young woman takes care of her brother after an accident; he declines unbearably, and she poisons him and rocks him to eternal sleep in the bathtub. An Eastern European woman is sold as a sex worker in Germany; a man dies while with her, and the gruesome dismemberment that her boyfriend embarks on can be seen as an act of love. A husband endures a loveless marriage until he can endure no more. Over and over, von Schirach lets readers know the context-rich backstories behind these human tragedies. He tells his tales with none of the charm, wit, and courtroom action with which defense barrister John Mortimer imbued his fictional Rumpole stories. These are unrelievedly grim but always compassionate and fascinating. --Connie Fletcher

Review

“*Crime* would command the attention due a carnival freak-show if von Schirach’s crisp, swift prose did not lend it such laconic authority. Save in the sparest of hints, he shuns forensic psychology. Each tale whips along, a shock at every turn, like some beast with eyes of red-hot coal panting down a forest track at night. For, courtroom procedure aside, the spirit of the German-language Märchen really drives this book: eerie tales of the uncanny, as practiced by Hoffmann, Kleist, the Grimms, and even Kafka.” —*Independent* (UK)

"Mesmerizing. . .a slim, utterly absorbing collection of 11 stories. . .told in a cool, patient voice that draws the reader in. Von Schirach guides us through the unpredictable sequences of events that can maneuver regular, flawed people into unbearable positions, leading them to abhorrent acts. . .[He] has the talent to dazzle." --*New York Times Book Review*

"An extraordinary book about ordinary crime, written with suspense, insight, and beautiful precision by an experienced defense attorney. An authentic thriller." --Bernhard Schlink, author of *The Reader*

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joni Thompson:

This book untitled Crime to be one of several books in which best seller in this year, that is because when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit in it. You will easily to buy this kind of book in the book store or you can order it through online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quicker to read this book, because you can read this book in your Touch screen phone. So there is no reason to you to past this publication from your list.

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