Lovereading.co.uk
Helping you choose your next book

You loved your last book...but what are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

The Exiled

Written by Kati Hiekkapelto

Translated from the Finnish by David Hackston

Published by Orenda Books

All text is copyright © of the author

Please note that this extract is taken from an uncorrected proof

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.



THE EXILED

'A taut and provocative thriller with a raging social conscience ... cements Kati Hiekkapelto's position as one of Scandi-noir's most exciting and important new voices' *Eva Dolan*

KATI HIEKKAPELTO

The Exiled

Kati Hiekkapelto

Sequel to the award-winning *The Hummingbird* and *The Defenceless*
Book 3 in the Anna Fekete series

Kati Hiekkapelto was born in 1970 in Oulu, Finland. She wrote her first stories at the age of two and recorded them on cassette tapes. Kati has studied Fine Arts in Liminka Art School and Special Education at the University of Jyväskylä. The subject of her final thesis/dissertation was racist bullying in Finnish schools. She went on to work as a special-needs teacher for immigrant children. Today Kati is an international crime writer, punk singer and performance artist. Her books, *The Hummingbird* and *The Defenceless* have been translated into ten languages. *The Hummingbird* was shortlisted for the Petrona Award in the UK in 2015 and *The Defenceless* won the prize for the best Finnish Crime Novel of the Year 2014, and has been shortlisted for the prestigious Glass Key. She lives and writes in her 200-year-old farmhouse in Hailuoto, an island in the Gulf of Bothnia, North Finland. In her free time she rehearses with her band, runs, hunts, picks berries and mushrooms, and gardens. During long, dark winter months she chops wood to heat her house, shovels snow and skis. Writing seems fairly easy, after all that.

Twitter @HiekkapeltoKati
Facebook: Facebook.com/Kati.Kovacs
Website: www.katihiekkapelto.com

'Finnish Kati Hiekkapelto deserves her growing reputation, as her individual writing identity is subtly unlike that of her colleagues…her socially committed style acquires more polish with each successive book' **Barry Forshaw**

'There is something fresh and slightly subversive about Hiekkapelto's writing … that makes the novel stand out from the pack' **Doug Johnstone, *The Big Issue***

To arrange an event or an interview, or for further information, please contact
Karen Sullivan, Orenda Books: Karen@orendabooks.co.uk
Review copies will be available in August 2016

B-format paperback original
ISBN: 978-1-910633-51-9
EPUB: 978-1-910633-52-6
15 August 2016 EBOOK – 10 October 2016 PRINT
£8.99

Launching with Antti Tuomainen's *The Mine* as 'The Finnish Invasion'

Murder. Corruption. Dark secrets. A titanic wave of refugees. Can Anna solve a terrifying case that's become personal?

Anna Fekete returns to the Balkan village of her birth for a relaxing summer holiday. But when her purse is stolen and the thief is found dead on the banks of the river, Anna is pulled into a murder case. Her investigation leads straight to her own family, to closely guarded secrets concealing a horrendous travesty of justice that threatens them all. As layer after layer of corruption, deceit and guilt are revealed, Anna is caught up in the refugee crisis spreading like wildfire across Europe. How long will it take before everything explodes?

Chilling, taut and relevant, *The Exiled* is an electrifying, unputdownable thriller from one of Finland's most celebrated crime writers.

'Crisp and refreshing, with a rawness that comes from a writer willing to take risks with her work' **Sarah Ward, CrimePieces**

'An edgy and insightful chiller with a raw and brooding narrative. Skilfully plotted and beautifully written, Hiekkapelto has given us an excellent and suspenseful crime novel' **Craig Robertson**

'Seriously good! The taut elegance of the writing brilliantly contrasts the grit of the subject matter. Kati Hiekkapelto is the real deal' **Anya Lipska**

'A gripping slice of Scandi-noir' **Raven Crime Reads**

UNEDITED SAMPLER

Kati Hiekkapelto

The Exiled

Translated from the Finnish by David Hackston



ORENDA
BOOKS

Orenda Books
16 Carson Road
West Dulwich
London SE21 8HU
www.orendabooks.co.uk

First published in the United Kingdom by Orenda Books 2016
Originally published by Otava, Finland, as *Tumma* 2016
Copyright © Kati Hiekkapelto 2016
English language translation copyright © David Hackston 2016

Kati Hiekkapelto has asserted her moral right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publishers.

ISBN 978-1-910633-51-9

Typeset in Minion by MacGuru Ltd

Orenda Books is grateful for the financial support of FILI, who provided a translation grant for this project.

Published in the English language by arrangement with Otava Group Agency, Helsinki

This is an uncorrected sampler. All quotations or attributions should be checked against the bound copy of the final book. We urge this for the sake of editorial accuracy as well as for your legal protection.

Twitter @OrendaBooks
Facebook: Facebook.com/orendabooks

June 3

A small wine festival was under way in the park outside the town hall. To Anna the word 'park' seemed a bit over the top for the green but distinctly underwhelming strip of land bordered to the south by the town hall and to the east by the road slicing off a chunk of the town on its way from Horgos to Törökkanizsa and back. At the northern end of the park was the main shopping boulevard, and to the west rose the beautiful copula of the Orthodox cathedral. The area was barely a quarter of a hectare in size, nothing but a stretch of lawn standing in the shade of the chestnut trees right by the centre of Kanizsa. In the summer months people sat in the cool under the trees, watching passers-by, keeping an eye on their playing children and exchanging gossip. In the evenings the place was filled with youngsters. Fine, call it a park, thought Anna. After all, it even had the obligatory statues – busts of two local artists and a monument to commemorate the Second World War. *Za slobodu*, it read in Serbian. *In the Name of Freedom*. The park was as dubious as the freedom that existed in this country. It was a semi-park. They had a semi-freedom. Anna wondered how she might translate those words into Hungarian. She couldn't think of anything suitable. Word play worked better in Finnish, and in Finland the notion of freedom seemed to grow more absurd by the day.

The evening had grown dusky. Lanterns dangled from the trees like strings of pearls, lighting the asphalted path running through the park. The path was lined with wine-tasting stalls, tables and chairs. People crowded around them, drinking and laughing. Acquaintances, half-acquaintances and even a few complete strangers, who must have been friends of Anna's mother, stopped as they saw Anna and greeted her with light kisses on

both cheeks. Anna could smell the wine and tobacco on their breath as they went through the list of standard questions, excited and apparently with genuine curiosity. How are you doing? When did you arrive? How long will you be staying? Did you fly into Budapest? How long is the flight? I'm sorry about your grandmother. She was a good woman. Oh, you didn't make it to the funeral? Your brother has been here for a while now. How is he getting on? And how is your mother keeping? You must come and visit one day, any time you like. Finally they whispered to Anna, almost apologetically, that last year's festival had attracted many more people. What a shame it's so quiet this year. It's started already, thought Anna. The apologies. Had people apologised like this in Tito's day? Or had it only started after the war that led to the break-up of Yugoslavia? A sense of inferiority seemed to have descended over Kanizsa like a veil, like a layer of dust in an abandoned house, but the locals barely noticed it. Here, complaining about things and belittling themselves were an essential part of everyday communication, and nobody thought of the effect this had on the atmosphere, people's confidence or self-respect. People were slowly but surely giving up. Anna had sensed this in the past too.

To Anna's mind there seemed to be a surprising number of people at the festival. After the scorching daytime heat the evening was still warm, and a hint of approaching rain lingered in the air. People wove in amongst one another, and the atmosphere was almost jubilant. On a stage erected at one end of the path a band struck up and started playing covers of Hungarian hit songs so loudly that the music could probably be heard on the other side of town. Inferiority complex or not, at least people here knew how to have a good time, how to live in the moment, and the following morning nobody, not even the grumpiest old codger in town, would complain about being kept awake by the noise. The old folk were all probably enjoying the party too, asking their grandchildren to bring them little tasters of the different wines.

✶✶

Anna felt a violent shove in her back. She staggered against the table with

such force that Tibor's glass toppled over. Golden-yellow *furmint* trickled over the edge of the table on to the ground and splashed on Anna's legs. Tibor leapt to his feet and shouted something, and it was then that Anna noticed her handbag had disappeared from the chair next to her.

'My handbag!' she shouted. 'Someone's taken my handbag!'

Tibor and Ernő dashed into the crowd of people. 'Stop! Thief!' Tibor hollered. It sounded ridiculous, like something straight out of a cartoon strip. Anna rushed after them. She saw a figure running. The figure disappeared into the crowd, reappearing a moment later at the edge of the park. The situation had erupted so unexpectedly that nobody had time to react. Anna barged past people standing in her way, and when she eventually reached the pathway she caught a glimpse of two people running in different directions, a man and a little girl in a red skirt who swiftly slipped behind the high-rise apartment blocks rising up behind the Orthodox cathedral. The man was running towards the school. Both of them were carrying a bag. For a fraction of a second she considered which of them to run after; she chose the man. Ernő had run off in the same direction. He was in worse physical shape than Tibor – he had put on weight and smoked like a chimney – and there was no chance of him catching up with the thief on foot. Tibor had run off down the main road after the girl. The thief was already running past the school and disappeared round the side of the building. Anna couldn't see whether the bag in his hands belonged to her or not. She increased her pace and sped past Ernő, who by now was gasping for breath, and ran round the corner of the darkened school building until she reached the next road. From there she could see the main church and as far down as the district of Kőrös, but the fleeing man had disappeared from sight. Anna came to a halt at the intersection and listened. Normally it would have been easy to follow the echo of footsteps in the otherwise quiet town, but now the boom of music from the park drowned out all other sounds. A barn owl dropped from the cathedral copula and glided into a silent hunting flight. Its light silhouette disappeared behind the tall chestnut trees. Ernő caught up with Anna.

'Where did he go?' he asked, panting heavily. He rested his hands against his knees and grimaced.

'I don't know, and it's no use standing around wondering about it. I'll go that way towards Sumadija utca. Go and check round the church, maybe he's hiding somewhere, lying low in the roses bushes round the corner,' Anna replied.

'What shall I do if I find him?' asked Ernő.

'Catch him.'

'How?'

Fear flashed across Ernő's eyes. Fear and uncertainty. Anna didn't answer. This wasn't the time for a lesson in apprehending a suspect. She took off her high-heeled shoes and jogged off briskly down Sumadija utca, barefoot and almost silent, past the nursery school, hoping she would be the one to find the man and not Ernő. The darkness thickened around her. Small, sharp stones pricked the soles of her feet, but Anna didn't care. One of the aims of rigorous exercise was to learn to cope with pain, and Anna was the master of that. Be that as it may, she hoped she didn't step on a broken bottle. Even she had a limit.

The sound of the music had died down, or perhaps the band was having a break. Streetlamps were few and far between, and there were no cars in the street. Kőrös looked all but deserted. This area to the north of Kanizsa had once been at the bottom of a lake. During the Yugoslav boom years, it had been built up into a middle-class residential area with two- and three-storey blocks standing tall and silent, each in their own fenced-off garden. The empty, almost ghostlike feeling was heightened by the heavy shutters pulled across the windows at night, making the buildings look dark and abandoned. What's more, each building had its own garage, so there were no cars parked on the street. Nowadays few people could afford to keep those enormous houses heated during the winter months. As the price of imported Russian gas had skyrocketed, the upper floors of these apartment blocks were often left unheated all winter, and in a house with six rooms, people sometimes heated only two: the kitchen and the living room.

At the Szent János crossroads Anna again had to make a snap decision about which direction to take. She listened to the silent streets for the length of a long, deep breath. For no logical reason she decided to run off

towards the Gong and took the first left on to Szőlö utca. All of a sudden a metallic gate gave a clatter right next to her, as though something was trying to struggle through it. Anna gave a startled shout, and on the other side of the fence a mongrel with a tangled coat ran alongside her, barking wildly.

'Quiet!' Anna snapped at the dog, which remained standing at the corner of the garden, barking after her. Now they'll know exactly where I am, she sighed and at the next crossroads slipped into Tvirnicka utca. She jogged up and down the nearby streets. The small, sharp stones cut into her feet, tore a hole in one of her socks and scratched her heel, but still the thief was nowhere to be found. When she saw Ernő approaching her along Jesenska utca, Anna came to a halt and gave up.

'That bag had my passport and credit cards. Everything. *Perkele*,' she said, and noticed she was swearing in Finnish.

'What about your phone?' asked Ernő. He was so out of breath he could hardly speak. His cheeks were glowing red and his brow was covered in sweat. You should go for a run more often, Anna found herself thinking meanly.

She tapped her jacket pocket, saw that her phone was still there and showed it to Ernő with a look of victory on her face.

'Hah, at least they didn't get away with that.'

'Damn tinkers,' said Ernő.

'How do you know that?' asked Anna, somewhat taken aback. She hadn't got a good look at the thief, only glimpsed the back of his jacket.

'Well, the girl looked … you know. It's obvious.'

'Looked what?'

'You know … untidy.'

'How closely did you get a look at her? I didn't really see the man at all. Height 180 centimetres, average build, dark jacket, but if someone asked me to describe him I don't think I could do it. I guess he's probably fairly young, thirty at the most.'

'So you didn't get a look at him then? I don't think I'd be able to say anything at all about the girl!'

'Height? Age?'

'She couldn't be very old because she was quite small. Nothing but a kid. I didn't get a good look.'

'But you said she looked untidy. In what way?'

'I don't know really. It must have been her hair. Long and tangled.'

'And that automatically makes her Romani, does it?' Anna couldn't help showing Ernő the note of irritation in her voice.

'Come on, you'd recognise them a mile off,' he said, trying to defend himself.

'The girl was wearing a red skirt,' said Anna.

'Was she?'

Anna hadn't paid any attention to the thieves' ethnic background. And if Ernő hadn't noticed the girl's red skirt, how could he possibly have seen whether her hair was untidy? Ernő's observation was nothing but prejudiced supposition, thought Anna. Was there a single place on earth where 'gypsy' wasn't a synonym for 'thief'? She swallowed her desire to give Ernő a piece of her mind. After all, he might be right. To Anna the average Romani looked exactly like the average Serb or Hungarian. Over here the Romani women didn't wear frilly blouses and black velvet skirts and the men didn't wear straight trousers and a jacket like they did in Finland, where they clearly stood out from the crowd. Here they dressed just like everybody else. But still, people here seemed to know just by looking who was a Romani and who wasn't. As if having a skill like that was in any way important.

'The gypsy quarter is down there, isn't it?' asked Anna.

'I doubt they were locals.'

'What makes you say that?'

'This is such a small town that the locals have to go thieving elsewhere. Everybody knows everybody else. Almost.'

'Shall we go and take a look?'

'They won't let us in, and we can hardly batter the door down. They'd shoot us first. And if those kids have run down that way, they'll be well and truly hidden by now. The most sensible thing is to go straight to the police station and report the theft.'

Anna thought about this for a moment. The idea of snooping round the gypsy quarter by night appealed to her, but still she hesitated. Maybe

it really would be best to report the incident at the police station. What a great start to her relaxing holiday. Just then came the sound of a dog barking in the distance. Ernő turned his head and listened closely.

'That's coming from the gypsy quarter,' he said.

'Right, we're going down there.'

'In the middle of the night – the hell we are.'

'Are you afraid?' asked Anna.

'No.'

'Neither am I, so let's go.'

Anna wiped the sand and grit from her feet and put on her shoes. Her tights were torn to shreds and there was a bleeding cut on the ball of her left foot. She tried not to think about the searing pain that was now running up her calf muscle and that her high heels wasn't making any better. The clack of Anna's shoes echoed across the deserted street. She was annoyed. Of all her shoes, she'd had to pick these ones. And tights and a skirt to top it off. It meant something, she thought. She was wearing more make-up, more feminine clothes than in Finland. What exactly was she trying to hide? Or reveal?

The dog had stopped barking. The silence was sultry and oppressive.

The town came to an abrupt end at the brick factory right on the edge of town, as though it had been measured with a ruler and sliced off. On the final street before the factory stood a white, roughcast terraced house. The building's courtyard was on the side facing the factory. Its run-down façade was half the length of the street and completely concealed the view into the courtyard. The windows were all dark. Anna approached the locked gate.

'Is there anyone there?' she shouted. 'Open the gate!'

Tethered to a thick chain, a mongrel that resembled a dachshund appeared from behind the corner and growled.

Ernő stood further back, glancing nervously around.

'They might have guns,' he whispered.

'Nonsense,' Anna scoffed and rattled the gate. 'Open up!'

The dog started barking, a window near the gate opened and a youngish woman poked her head out.

'Who is it?' she asked.

Anna stepped closer and stood right beneath the window. The woman's thick, black hair was tied in a bun. Her skin was dark, and she was very beautiful. When she looked at Anna her eyes betrayed a sense of caution. There was something else in her expression too. Maybe pride, maybe contempt. Her eyes were large and pitch black.

'What do you want? You'll wake up the kids,' the woman snapped.

'We're looking for a young man and a little girl in a red skirt. I wondered if they'd just come into this house,' said Anna.

'Nobody comes in at this hour. Everyone's trying to sleep.'

'Mummy, who's there?' came the sound of a sleepy child, a little boy perhaps.

'Back to bed now, there's nothing to worry about,' the woman said gently before turning back to Anna.

'Has something happened?' she asked and looked Anna in the eyes.

Anna felt embarrassed. It was as though the woman could see right through her, as though she knew exactly what had happened and who they were looking for; and Anna no longer wanted to disturb the peace in their house. There was something very defensive about the woman's demeanour, and Anna couldn't tell whether this was aimed at her personally or the social demographic she represented. She wasn't welcome here; that much was clear.

'We're probably in the wrong place. Sorry to disturb you,' said Anna, and turned and nodded to Ernő as if to say it would be best if they left.

They had only walked a few metres when the woman's voice echoed across the stone walls of the houses.

'*Tiszavirág*,' the woman shouted in a voice that made Anna shudder. *The Tisza flowers*.

Anna and Ernő stopped and turned around, but the window had already closed behind them. The cut in Anna's foot was throbbing painfully.

'What on earth was that about?' asked Anna.

'I don't know, but I know that woman.'

'Really? Who is she?'

'Her name's Judit. She's an organiser for the local Romani community group. She runs camps for the kids, that sort of stuff.'

'But that sounds great,' said Anna.

'Well, it's probably paid for by the council,' Ernő replied. 'Let's call Tibor. Maybe he caught the girl.'

Ernő exchanged a few quick words with Tibor and shook his head at Anna. The girl had disappeared. Tibor and the others were going home for the night. They were in no mood for a party anymore.

'Let's stop by the police station. It's best to report the theft immediately and not tomorrow,' said Ernő after he finished his phone call. 'What a crap start to your holiday. Never mind, we'll make up for it tomorrow.'