



by Hans Werner Kettenbach
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Fiction



The Goethe-Institut
supported the English
translation of this book.

The Stronger Sex

Das starke Geschlecht

review

The reader should feel sorry for young Alexander Zabel, who, at the age of twenty-nine, has been pressured by the head of his law practice into defending aged industrialist Herbert Klofft in a case for wrongful dismissal being brought against him by his former employee and mistress Katharina Fuchs. She is thirty-four, he is seventy-eight and dying of cancer. It is soon apparent to Alex not only that his client's case is weak, but also that he has been concealing material parts of the evidence. It only remains for Klofft to storm into the court in his wheelchair and create a deplorable scene for his case to be spectacularly lost.

Kettenbach the thriller-writer is already well launched in Britain, but this new offering is less a thriller than an investigative cliffhanger. It offers many insights – how this particular rich man's house is run, and what influence is wielded by his seventyyear- old wife Cilly, an artist with whom Alex finds himself drawn into a complex and unwilling relationship. And the surprise twist at the end reveals a good deal more about everyone, Klofft included. Comforting, in these hard times, even to be tempted to feel sympathy for a millionaire.

press quotes

'Reading Kettenbach means taking a look into the individual's soul laid bare, into its abyss and its hopeless entanglements. Those who read his books will gain a better understanding of why human beings do the things they do, even the most absurd and horrendous things. The result is stories told along the razor-sharp edge of reality. This is what raises his book far above the usual murder mystery genre.' – Die Zeit
'Hans Werner Kettenbach is in some ways the German answer to Patricia Highsmith.' – Die Welt

about the author

Hans Werner Kettenbach was born in 1928 and worked as a journalist and as a correspondent in Bonn and New York. He wrote his first novel at the age of fifty. He has now written twelve novels, five of which have been adapted for the screen. His books have been published in seven languages.

Previous works include:

Glatteis, 2007; *Zu Gast bei Dr. Buzzard*, 2006; *Kleinstadtaffäre*, 2005; *Die Konkurrentin*, 2004; *Grand mit vieren*, 2000 – all Diogenes. Also published in: English (Bitter Lemon Press); French; Italian; Polish; Spanish; Hungarian.

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