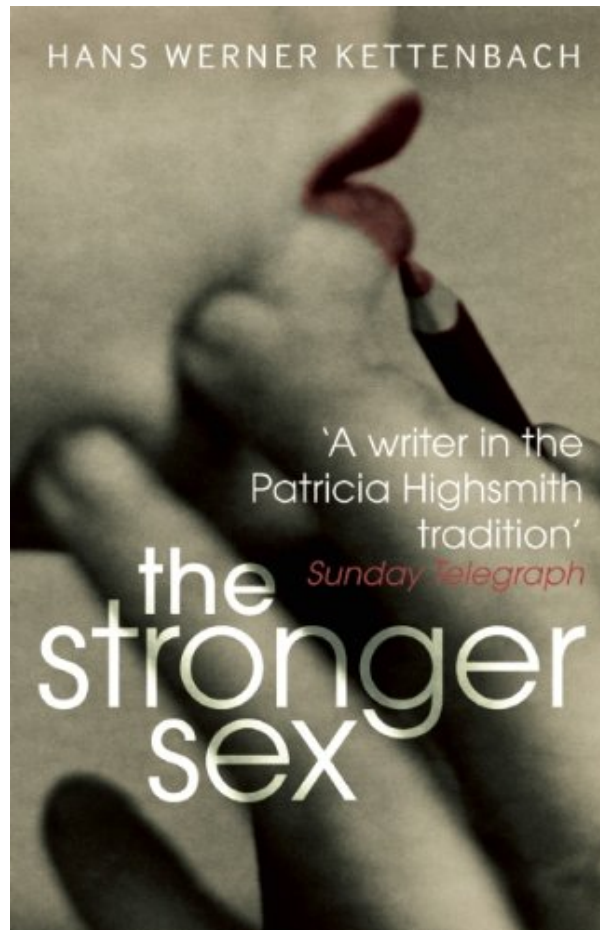


# THE STRONGER SEX BY HANS WERNER KETTENBACH



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HANS WERNER KETTENBACH

'A writer in the  
Patricia Highsmith  
tradition'

*Sunday Telegraph*

# the stronger sex

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From Publishers Weekly

Kettenbach (*David's Revenge*) takes a deep, and sometimes disturbing, look at the karmic consequences of a lifetime of depravity in this fusion of psychological suspense and crime fiction. Herbert Klofft, an aging and gravely ill industrialist, stands accused of wrongfully dismissing a female employee, Katharina Fuchs, with whom he'd been having an affair for more than a decade. The lawyer defending Klofft, 29-year-old Alexander Zabel, soon gets entangled in his own ethical quagmire as he finds himself sexually attracted to Klofft's elderly but alluring wife, Cilly. But as Zabel finds out more about his ill-tempered client, a self-professed adulterer and ruthless businessman, he begins to see Klofft—and himself—in a different existential light. While the legal issue is far from intriguing and the pacing not exactly breakneck, Kettenbach's highly contemplative prose makes this cerebral and melancholic exploration into morality and mortality a powerful and haunting read. (June)

Review

Praise for Kettenbach: 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. A" Die Zeit Kettenbach provides answers that are either darkly humorous or melancholically tragic, depending on how black the reader's heart proves to be. A" Booklist

About the Author

Hans Werner Kettenbach: Hans Werner Kettenbach was born near Cologne. He is the author of several highly acclaimed novels. He came to writing late in life, publishing his first book at the age of fifty. Previous jobs he has held include construction worker, court stenographer, football journalist, foreign correspondent in New York and, most recently, newspaper editor. His crime novels have won the Jerry-Cotton Prize and the Deutscher-Krimi Prize, and five of them have been made into successful films, including *Black Ice*, previously published by Bitter Lemon Press.

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"Black Ice is a devilish dive into an obsessed mind by a prolific German writer."—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

The cover cites Simenon and Highsmith in comparison. I'll not quibble with that."—Tangled Web

"A look into the individual's soul laid bare, into its abyss and its hopeless entanglements. Stories told along the razor-sharp edge of reality."—Die Zeit

Young lawyer Alexander Zabel has been pressured by the head of his law practice into defending the indefensible: a lying, power obsessed adulterer and ruthless industrialist accused of wrongfully dismissing his assistant and mistress. She is thirty-four; he, seventy-eight: a despot who has always had his way, now wheelchair-bound and dying of cancer. Alex must deal with a hopeless case, his growing sympathy for a repulsive client, and his sexual attraction to Klofft's elderly wife.

Less a thriller than an investigative and psychological cliffhanger, this novel examines how eroticism is somehow amplified by a sense of approaching death and presents insights into the corrosive desire for revenge, and the narrowing horizons of old age.

Hans Werner Kettenbach was born near Cologne. He published his first novel at the age of fifty. Previous jobs he has held include construction worker, court stenographer, football journalist, and foreign correspondent in New York. This is his third novel published by Bitter Lemon Press.

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## Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

intriguing psychological thriller

By A Customer

Dying wheelchair bound septuagenarian industrialist Herbert Klofft fired his thirtyish assistant Katharina Fuchs though they had an affair for most of the eleven years she worked for him. Outraged because the engineer felt she was extremely loyal to the ruthless elderly Klofft, Fuchs sues for wrongful dismissal.

Seventy-seven years old Dr. Hockepel orders employee Dr. Alexander Zabel to defend Klofft. The twenty nine years old attorney quickly realizes the case is a loser as his client is infamous as much for being a philander as he is for his unethical business practices. Worse Zabel is embarrassed that he is attracted to Klofft's elderly wife Cilly. His sexual desire makes him better understand his client as he sees similarities between them and between him and his boss, but the case remains hopeless.

This is an intriguing psychological thriller that is totally character driven by the three men in Frau Klofft's life as she is a seemingly benign femme fatale. The story line is leisurely paced to enable the audience to feel they are in Germany whether riding the car driven by Karl or smelling Cilly's perfume. Not for everyone as the action is limited, *The Stronger Sex* is a deep look at relationships that cross the acceptable ethical barriers.

Harriet Klausner

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