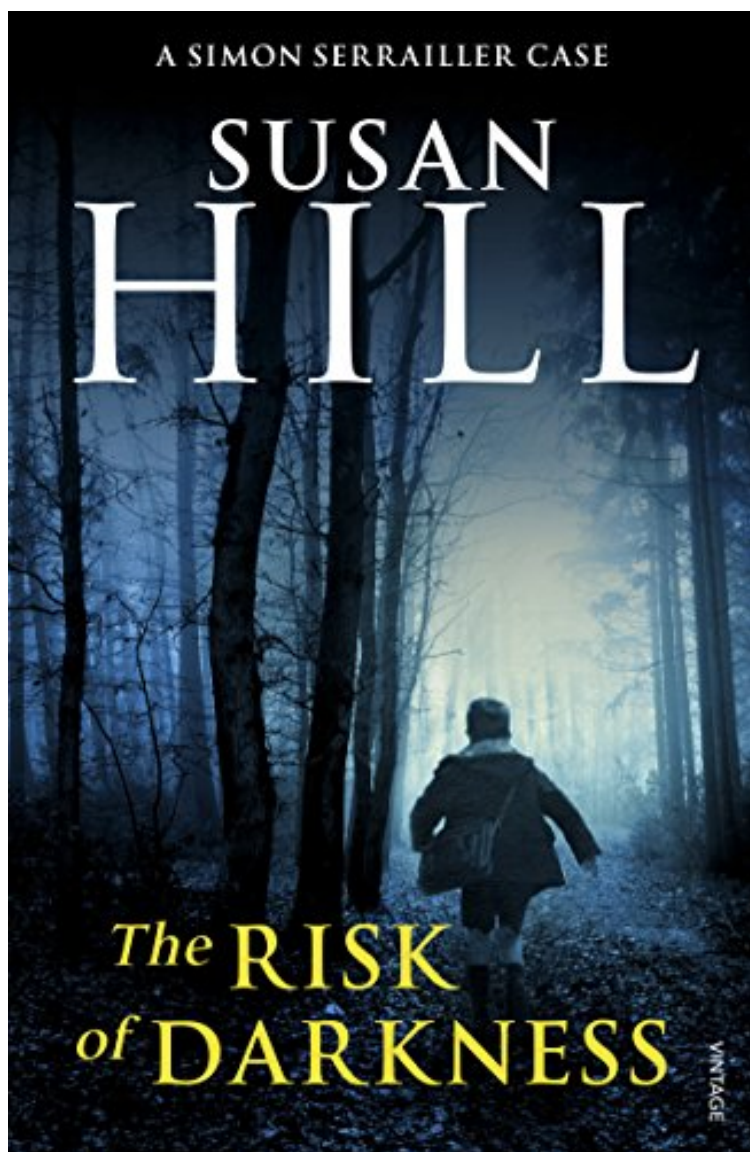


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# The Risk of Darkness: Simon Serrailer Book 3



*Par Susan Hill*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurChildren are vanishing.The village of Lafferton is shattered.There are no witnesses and no leads just a kidnapper at large.Then Detective Chief Inspector Simon Serrailer receives a call: a child has been snatched in Yorkshire. Has the abductor struck again? And will they find this child alive?ExtraitOneThere was no fly and there should have been a fly. It was that sort of room. Grey linoleum. Putty walls. Chairs and tables with tubular metal legs. But in these places there was always a fly too, zizzing slowly up and down a window pane. Up and down. Up and down. Up.The wall at the far end was covered in whiteboards and pinboards. Names. Dates. Places. Then came: Witnesses (which was blank).Suspects. (Blank.)Forensics. (Blank.)In each case.There were five people in the conference room of the North Riding

Police HQ, and they had been staring at the boards for over an hour. DCI Simon Serrailier felt as if he had spent half his life staring at one of the photographs. The bright fresh face. The protruding ears. The school tie. The newly cut hair. The expression. Interested. Alert. David Angus. It was eight months since he had vanished from outside the gate of his own house at ten past eight one morning. David Angus. Simon wished there was a fly to mesmerise him, instead of the small boys face.\*The call from DS Jim Chapman had come a couple of days earlier, in the middle of a glorious Sunday afternoon. Simon had been sitting on the bench, padded up and waiting to bat for Lafferton Police against Bevham Hospital 2nd Eleven. The score was 228 for 5, the medics bowling was flaccid, and Simon thought his team might declare before he himself got in. He wasn't sure whether he would mind or not. He enjoyed playing though he was only an average cricketer. But on such an afternoon, on such a fine ground, he was happy whether he went in to bat or not. The swifts soared and screamed high above the pavilion and swallows skimmed the boundary. He had been low-spirited and restless during the past few months, for no particular reason and then again, for a host of them but his mood lightened now with the pleasure of the game and the prospect of a good pavilion tea. He was having supper with his sister and her family later. He remembered what his nephew Sam had said suddenly the previous week, when he and Simon had been swimming together; he had stopped mid-length, leaping up out of the water with: Today is a GOOD day! Simon smiled to himself. It didn't take much. Howzzzzzaaattt? But the cry faded away. The batsman was safe and going for his hundred. Uncle Simon, hey! Hi, Sam. His nephew came running up to the bench. He was holding the mobile, which Simon had given him to look after if he went in to bat. Call for you. It's DCS Chapman from the North Riding CID. Sam's face was shadowed with anxiety. Only, I thought I should ask who it was . . . No, that's quite right. Good work, Sam. Simon got up and walked round the corner of the pavilion. Serrailier. Jim Chapman. New recruit, was it? Nephew. I'm padded up, next in to bat. Good man. Sorry to break into your Sunday afternoon. Any chance of you coming up here in the next couple of days? The missing child? Been three weeks and not a thing. I could drive up tomorrow early evening and give you Tuesday and Wednesday, if you need me that long once I've cleared it. I just did that. Your Chief thinks a lot of you. There was a mighty cheer from the spectators and applause broke. Were a man out, Jim. Got to go. Sam was waiting, keen as mustard, holding out his hand for the mobile. What do I do if it rings when you're batting? Take the name and number and say I'll call back. Right, guv. Simon bent over and tightened the buckle on his pad to hide a smile. But as he walked out to bat, a thin fog of misery clouded around his head, blocking out the brightness of the day, souring his pleasure. The child abduction case was always there, a stain on the recesses of the mind. It was not only the fact that it was still a blank, unsolved and unresolved, but that the boys abductor was free to strike again. No one liked an open case, let alone one so distressing. The phone call from Jim Chapman had pulled Simon back to the Angus case, to the force, to work . . . and from there, to how he had started to feel about his job in the past few months. And why. Facing the tricky spin-bowling of a cardiac registrar gave him something else to concentrate on for the moment. Simon hooked the first ball and ran. The pony neighing from the paddock woke Cat Deerbon from a sleep of less than two hours. She lay, cramped and uncomfortable, wondering where she was. She had been called out to an elderly patient who had fallen downstairs and fractured his femur and on her return home had let the door bang and had woken her youngest child. Felix had been hungry, thirsty and cross, and in the end Cat had fallen asleep next to his cot. Now, she sat up stiffly but his warm little body did not stir. The sun was coming through a slit in the curtains on to his face. It was only ten past six. The grey pony was standing by the fence grazing, but whinnied again, seeing Cat coming towards it, carrot in hand. How could I leave all this? she thought, feeling its nuzzling mouth. How could either of us bear to leave this farmhouse, these fields, this village? The air smelled sweet and a mist lay in the hollow. A woodpecker yaffled, swooping towards one of the oak trees on the far side of the fence. *Revue de presse* "Stunning" (Ruth Rendell) "Exhilarating...addictive...fascinating" (Independent) "A master storyteller" (Sunday Telegraph)