**Anne Elvedal: *The Game of Death* – A YA Trilogy**

*The Game of Death* is a trilogy containing both original mysteries and a unique love story. The action takes place in Hommelvik, a small village in central Norway, and is focused around a car repair workshop for troubled young people. The trilogy explores existential issues around death and love, loneliness and grief, faith and belonging - to oneself, to other people, and to something that transcends our own existence. Is it possible that our lives are woven together with past lives, allowing old curses to haunt us, and giving love left unspoken another chance?

**Book 1: THE GAME OF DEATH**

***Rebekka***

While the rest of the country experiences a wet summer, it has been unusually hot and dry for three months running in Hommelvik. Sixteen-year-old Rebekka is looking forward to hitting the road with her father on their annual summer motorbike tour, but plans change abruptly when her father dies in an accident. Having argued with her father immediately before his untimely death, Rebekka is plagued by guilt and despair. She makes for The Barn, her father's car repair shop where he spent most of his time helping young people having difficulty in school or at work. Among vintage cars and tools, she stumbles across a spirit board. Hoping that this might allow her to communicate with her father, Rebekka uses the spirit board, and to her surprise she finds that she is not only able to communicate with her father, but that he wasn’t killed in an accident after all. Her father was murdered. But by whom?

Strange things begin happening around Rebekka, frightening things. She cannot understand what’s going on but finds out that her father was trying to solve a mysterious and unsolved murder that had occurred at The Barn eighteen months beforehand, when a teenager was stabbed at a party. Could her father have been killed because he found out who was responsible for murdering the teenager?

Both the police and Rebekka’s family remain convinced that her father died in an accident. Nevertheless, Rebekka receives the unexpected support of a boy she meets, the son of a family friend who is visiting the village for the summer. Martin is also sixteen, and is a mysterious, secretive type. He recently spent two years in a psychiatric hospital and tells her that he knows a lot about death. He believes that Rebekka’s father is trying to communicate the fact that he needs help to find peace, something that will only be possible if the person who killed him is revealed.

Rebekka and Martin work together to try to solve the mystery but end up entangled in a dangerous situation among partygoers and volatile young people at The Barn. But who are these young people really, and what is it about The Barn, the scratching sounds, and the locked loft? And what is the deal with Martin? Rebekka has the strange feeling that she has met him before.

For Rebekka, this becomes the summer she has her first encounter with death, but also her first experience of falling in love after meeting Martin; she has her first sexual encounter and drinks alcohol for the first time. At the same time, numerous inexplicable and frightening things happen in her life – and she begins to see her dead father. But is it real, or is her sorrow over her father’s death taking its toll on her mental health, as her mother believes is the case? Or does she actually have the same abilities that Martin claims to possess?

Martin claims that he can communicate with dead people, but that his medication dulls his senses. When the spirit board falls silent and they find themselves in the midst of the search for Rebekka’s father’s killer, Martin stops taking his medication in order to make contact with Rebekka’s father in other ways. But it is not long before Martin changes. He ends up in a fight at The Barn and disappears, only to later be found, apparently having attempted to take his own life.

This shocking event leads Rebekka to her Auntie Lina, who is keeping a secret: she has used the spirit board before. She believes that Rebekka and Martin have not, in fact, been in touch with Rebekka’s father, but another soul altogether: the teenager killed at The Barn. And now the teenager has used the spirit board to possess Martin’s body. Auntie Lina thinks that the spirit board can offer the dead a chance to come back to life because it was created by so-called Wanderers, who lived in the village long ago. The Wanderers are people with entirely unique abilities to communicate with the dead. They can wander through different dimensions and make contact with the dead as if they were physically living. Just like Rebekka’s experiences with her own father… does this mean that she, too, is a Wanderer? And what about Martin?

Either way, the race is on to help Martin, and the only way to do so is to expose the teenager’s murderer, so that his soul can find peace and release Martin from his grasp. Rebekka must rely upon her newly discovered abilities, and eventually succeeds in exposing the murderer, though simultaneously discovers that it was someone else entirely who killed her father; her father was murdered by her cousin.

To protect her family, Rebekka chooses not to reveal what her cousin has done, but she does succeed in saving Martin. The teenager’s soul leaves Martin’s body, but Martin becomes mentally ill from the strain and is admitted to a young person’s psychiatric hospital in Trondheim. Is it all over now, or is the enormous swarm of black butterflies that breaks free from the loft of The Barn a warning that something worse is to come?

Rebekka discovers that there is not only a dark force locked away within the spirit board, but that the Wanderers can drift between souls – and she and Martin have lived a past life in the village, as sixteen-year-old Helene and Tommy in the year 1991. That explains why there something has always been so familiar about Martin. Now they have met once again to stop what they started in this past – something connected to the spirit board and the unusual heatwave ravaging the village.

**Book 2: THE SHADOW BRIDE**

***Helene***

The year is 1991. Sixteen-year-old Helene is living with a foster family in Hommelvik. She is babysitting her foster sister May-Liss one evening and allows her to go the shop alone. On her way there, May-Liss disappears without a trace. Days pass without anyone finding her. Helene is overwhelmed by feelings of guilt but is convinced that May-Liss is alive. Helene is, in fact, a Wanderer, with the ability to make contact with the dead, and finds herself unable to communicate with May-Liss.

In her search for her sister, Helene meets Tommy, a boy at school who also turns out to be a Wanderer. Together they discover that a few days before May-Liss’ disappearance, she and her friend Lina had tried to use a spirit board they’d found at The Barn: the same place that Lina’s brother has just bought, and which he’s going to turn into a car repair workshop. Is the spirit board to blame in the case of May-Liss’ disappearance?

Helene and Tommy try the spirit board and manage to communicate with a dead girl who wants to help them: sixteen-year-old Elfrida. She lost her life one hundred years ago in a horse-sleighing incident on her wedding day, and the villagers claim that she haunts the site of the accident. But does Elfrida really want to help them, or is she actually involved in May-Liss’ disappearance and concealing another plan altogether? Is she the one controlling the dark forces contained within the spirit board, the same ones influencing Helene and Tommy and bringing them to do things that quite literally lead to them playing with death?

**Book 3: THE SERVANT OF DARKNESS**

***Martin***

Back in the present day, it’s December, and after spending four months on the psychiatric ward of the hospital in Trondheim, Martin returns to Hommelvik – but Rebekka no longer wants anything to do with him. At the same time, he discovers that strange things are happening in the village. Not only are there unfamiliar disturbances wreaking havoc, but the village has also been hit by several mysterious deaths, as if an epidemic is spreading, with no one able to work out the cause. Martin also grows very worried when he hears rumours that Rebekka might have killed her own cousin…

Martin seeks help from the spirit board and the young people at The Barn, exposing the fact that both he and several of the others involved in the tragic events of last summer are children of the young people who used the spirit board in 1991. It cannot be a coincidence. And it becomes a true game of death when Martin realises that he was the one who created the spirit board – in a past life one hundred years ago. He is to blame for the dark forces locked inside the board. It becomes a race against time, as the dark forces are not only in the process of possessing the villagers and burning down the village itself, but Rebekka has also been possessed by Elfrida’s soul, the shadow bride. The very bride that Martin was set to marry in his own past life.