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KVENNABLAÐID MAGAZINE

MOONSTONE

THE BOY WHO NEVER WAS

The Icelandic Literary Prize 2013
The DV Newspaper's Cultural Award 2013
The Icelandic Bookseller's Prize 2013



Sublime Sjón.
WEEKENDAVISEN, DENMARK



A small, poignant novel
about the greatest things.
POLITIKEN, DENMARK

S J Ó N

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MOONSTONE – THE BOY WHO NEVER WAS

The year is 1918 and from Reykjavik the erupting volcano Katla can be seen colouring the sky night and day. Life in the small capital carries on as usual despite the natural disaster, shortage of coals and the Great War that still wages in the big world.

The sixteen year old kid Mani Steinn lives for the movies. Asleep he dreams the pictures in variations where the tapestry of events is threaded with strands from his own life. Awake he lives on the outskirts of society. But then the “Spanish influenza” epidemic comes ashore and forces thousands of the townspeople into the sick bed, killing hundreds. The shadows of existence deepen. The black wings in Mani Steinn’s breast beat faster. A chilling draught blows between the worlds in a place where life and death, reality and imagination, secrets and revelations jostle for dominance. 132 pp.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sjon (b. 1962) is the president of the Icelandic PEN Centre and the chairman of the board of Reykjavik, UNESCO city of Literature. His novels have been translated into twenty-nine languages. In 2005 Sjon won the prestigious Nordic Council’s Literary Prize for *The Blue Fox*. In 2009 the English edition of *The Blue Fox* was nominated for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize. Sjon’s novel *From the Mouth of the Whale* from 2008 was nominated for the Icelandic Literary Prize, short-listed for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize 2012 and for The International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award 2013. Sjon’s poems have been translated into more than twenty languages. His latest collection of poems was nominated for the Icelandic Literary Prize in 2007.

“It is a year, a bit more, since the boy discovered this girl. As if, for a tiny fraction of a second, he had been gifted with X-ray vision and he saw her as she really is. He had known what she was called, where she lived, who she went around with, what kind of family she came from – they are of much the same age and in a town of only fifteen thousand people you cannot avoid contemporaries knowing who each other is – but it was all beyond his reach and raised above the little patch of society he belonged to. So he hadn’t paid her any more notice than others of her kind. The discovery came to him at the early Saturday showing of *Les vampires* at The Old Picturehouse. He was sitting in his usual place and yielding to irritation at the whispering and giggling that was coming from a group of kids of his own age in the better seats in front of him. And just as he was about to shout down to them to lay off, that people were there to enjoy the picture, not the hullabaloo of rutting among the offspring of the town’s better citizens, he heard one of the girls say she didn’t feel like carrying on spoiling the film for others. And when the girl stood up to leave, it happened. The moment her silhouette fell across the screen they merged into one another, her and the person in the film. She turned round and the beam projected the face of Musidora onto her face. The boy froze in his seat. They looked exactly the same.” (from *Moonstone*)

SOLD TO: THE NETHERLANDS (DE GEUS); SPAIN (NÓRDICA); DENMARK (C&K FORLAG); FINLAND (LIKE); SWEDEN (ALFABETA); GERMANY/AUSTRIA/SWITZERLAND (S.FISCHER), USA/CANADA/PHILIPPINES (FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX); FRANCE/SWITZERLAND/ LUXEMBOURG/CANADA (PAYOT & RIVAGES); CZECH REPUBLIC (DYBBUK); FAROE-ISLANDS (SPROTINN); UK/AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND/SOUTH AFRICA (SCEPTRE); SLOVAKIA (SLOVART)