Extract from the book: Ódjór

**MONSTER**

*Translated by Marita Thomsen*

A car stopped for her and she hurried across the road. The sewers couldn’t keep up with the floods of water that gushed into them and swirled at full speed around her ankles. The cars looked like ships sailing down the road spraying as they ploughed through, she had to leap aside several times. Down, down, down, down the water tore its way. Down to sea. This wasn’t even the first time this spring that the roads in town were inundated. But it had never been as bad as this. And it wasn’t just on rainy days. Water would suddenly spew from the sewers, even when there wasn’t a cloud in the sky. That was when the rats emerged and took to the streets. She had also seen a lot of them under the trees in the park lately, but luckily she hadn’t seen any climb up the trunks. Yet.

The town stretched from the seashore up to the mountain slopes. Like a long hill with winding roads, shops, houses, little paths and open expanses, until it came to an abrupt stop up where the ravens waited for the town’s growing pains to resume.

With calm steps Asta approached the park on the edge of the town centre. She wasn’t planning on stopping today, but she still turned into the path. Walking home this way was only a slight detour. There was no point sitting in the tree in this rain. The pent roof she had built provided decent enough shelter, but not when it poured and everything was drenched and cold.

A few metres before she spotted the river, she heard it. It began so abruptly. Or ended, in fact. Water and then suddenly a road and asphalt. Like someone had changed their mind in the middle of a drawing. She glanced down at it as she walked past, and grimaced when she saw the stream where the water stopped. Brown water frothed around the rusty grid, and in all the froth danced the rubbish that was pulled along with the current. She wasn’t sure if it was just her imagination, but she always felt like she was hit by a rotten pong when she walked past this precise spot. That smell was quickly replaced by another, though, the sweet moist scent of wet soil hit her nostrils as soon as she stepped onto the narrow gravel path leading into the park. The river snaked alongside the path, a turbid and foamy companion. Sometimes it idled there modest and tranquil, barely audible even, but today its roar seemed to fill the entire park swelling to the tree crowns. The pine trunks were black from all the moisture and needles hung heavy on branches.

Asta’s legs immediately felt like dashing off the path and slipping unnoticed in between the trees. But she didn’t. Today she was someone who walked on the path. Civil. Instead she pulled the raincoat hood off her head and felt the rain wash over her skin.

Heavy drops drummed against an empty juice box someone had tossed right beside the rubbish bin. She kicked it. It didn’t go far, landed in a puddle next to the path. She took a few steps, but then sighed and turned back, bent down and picked up the filthy box. When she straightened up again, she noticed something among the trees.

Behind a trunk a few metres off the path stood a girl in a yellow parka looking at her. Asta’s hand stopped mid-air, like it had suddenly forgot what it was doing.

A pale face surrounded by dark hair.

For a moment Asta and the girl in the parka just stared at each other. Then it was as if the girl smiled at her, before she turned and headed deeper into the trees. Asta had a strange urge to run after her or to say something, but she did neither. Just stood there in the rain. Her long hair was glued to her chin and droplets trickled down her neck and under her clothes.

*She could feel the seething inside, and now she knew what was going to happen. She couldn’t stop it. Rage pulsated through her body, twisted, turned and spilled over through her hands. She saw her own outstretched hands in slow motion. Hands that pushed. The body in front of her tumbled backwards. Blonde hair flowed forward and veiled the falling face.*

*She didn’t want to.*

*Didn’t mean to.*

*But it was too late, and she couldn’t look away as the body fell down the stairs. The sound as the back of the head hit asphalt. The eyes staring at her.*