

Trap

Lilja Sigurðardóttir

Quentin Bates, Translator

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Trap, the fast-paced second entry in Lilja Sigurðardóttir's Icelandic crime trilogy, picks up mere weeks after its predecessor *Snare* ends and further showcases Sigurðardóttir's facility with intricate plotting and sympathetic characters.

Forced to flee her abusive husband Adam and her lover Agla, ex-drug runner Sonja is hiding out with her son Tómas in Florida. But when hired goons kidnap them and Sonja falls back under Adam's thumb, coerced into resuming her drug smuggling career, there seems little chance for freedom. Meanwhile, Agla is being prosecuted for financial crimes that took place just before Iceland's recent economic collapse. As shady criminals and the long arm of the law close in on the heroines, they rely on their wits and each other to regain the upper hand.

Trap globe-trots from Iceland to London and western Europe, with a pit stop in Mexico. Each brief chapter proceeds at breakneck speed as Sonja and Agla contend with shady business partners, dogged prosecutors, and most memorably a Mexican narco with a live tiger in his basement. Along the way, they make some unusual allies, including Bragi, the elderly customs inspector who was hot on Sonja's trail in *Snare*.

Sigurðardóttir knows how to ratchet up the tension, and Sonja's attempts to escape her predicament, especially during a nail-biting passage in which she is about to be caught red-handed with her latest shipment of drugs aboard an airplane, are riveting. More convoluted and slightly less interesting are Agla's money-laundering plans. Even though the two lovers don't get to share much time together, the tenderness of their relationship supplies *Trap* with an emotional core that maintains interest even during its more labyrinthine scenes, leading to a satisfying conclusion.

The suspenseful *Trap* takes full advantage of its fresh setting and is a worthy addition to the icy-cold crime genre popularized by Scandinavian noir novels.

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