

Lars Mytting

The Sister Bells

Søsterklokkene

Genre: Fiction
Category: Novel
Publisher: Gyldendal
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Astrid Hekne, a nineteen year old girl, lives in Butangen, an isolated village in Norway, in 1879. She yearns for knowledge and dreams of a life with more to offer than giving birth to a horde of children and dying working in the fields. Perhaps a future as the wife of the young local priest ...

Butangen's priest Kai wants to bring his congregation closer to the modern church even if it's against their will. An austere but warm church is essential in his plan and beautiful Astrid as his wife could be his link to the locals.

Built in 1170, the old stave church of Butangen is one of the few remaining examples of early Christianisation, unique in its architecture including effigies of pagan deities carved into the wooden walls. Even the bells – two sister bells moulded in the 16th century in memory of the Siamese twins Halfrid and Gunhild Hekne – are special. There is the legend that they ring of their own record when danger is immanent.

In Germany the University of Dresden is highly interested in art history. With Kai's approval they buy the stave church and send a student, Gerhard Schönauer, to Butangen to supervise the dismantling of the church and its resurrection in Dresden. Astrid is fascinated by Gerhard. He behaves and smells differently to anyone else but on the other hand is he the one who will take the sister bells away from her village. These magical, sonorous and powerful bells donated by her ancestors. The young woman strongly feels that she can't let them leave, and so she undertakes whatever seems necessary to keep the Sister Bells at home...

Nominated for The Norwegian Booksellers' Prize 2018

Lars Mytting was born in 1968 in Fåvang, Norway. He worked as a journalist and editor before writing full time. He has published two novels and a non-fiction book, which has been widely translated. His book *Hel ved* (Norwegian Wood) has sold over 240 000 copies in Norway and Sweden alone.

Foreign sales

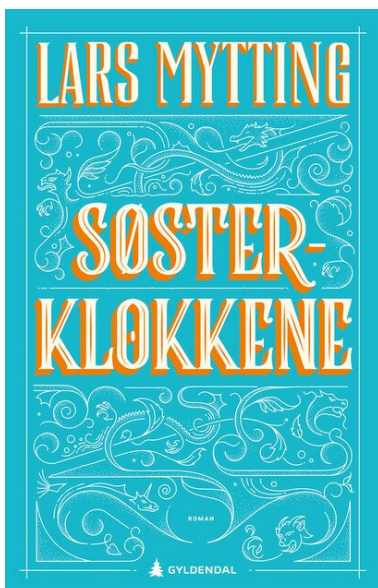
Denmark (Rosinante & Co), Finland (Sammakko), France (Actes Sud), Germany (Insel/Suhrkamp), Italy (DeAgostini), Lithuania (Alma Littera), Netherlands (Atlas Contact), Poland (Otwarte), Russia (Eksmo), Spain (Alfaguara) and for Catalan (Ara Llibres), Sweden (W&W), UK (MacLehose), US (Overlook Press)

Previous titles

Svøm med dem som drukner (The Flame Birches / The Sixteen Trees of the Somme), novel 2014
Hel ved (Norwegian Wood), non-fiction 2011
Vårofferet (Spring Sacrifice), novel 2010
Hestekrefter (Horse Power), novel 2006

Rightsholder

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"Magnificent historical novel."

Adresseavisen

"The Sister Bells is exciting. A real page-turner."

Østlendingen

"Lars Mytting's historical novel is captivating and engaging. (...) With his powerful narrative style, intertwined story and detailed knowledge of carpentry, fishing and stave churches, there is reason to believe that this time he will again reach many many readers."

Dagbladet