

Vigdis Hjorth

Is Mother Dead

Er mor død

Cappelen Damm 2020

368 Pages

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English sample translation available

FICTION
NOVEL



PHOTO: SARA ANGELICA SPELLING

Johanna, an artist, has spent the last three decades living in the US with her husband and their son. After her husband dies, Johanna returns to her native Norway. A gallery has invited her to create a retrospective exhibition, with a new, commissioned work as its centrepiece.

Johanna rents an apartment by the fjord, and a small cabin in the woods on the outskirts of the city. As she traverses the city, back and forth between the two places, she searches for a sense of direction in the work ahead of her, and for a discovery to bridge her past to the present.

What remains of the life Johanna left behind in Norway, several decades ago? What is she expecting to find upon her return? And what if that something should choose not to appear?

Vigdis Hjorth's novel *Is Mother Dead* is a riveting, immersive story about the most fundamental longings and disappointments of our lives. In her unmistakable voice, the author blends deep psychological insight and keen empathy with perspectives from art and literature. At the heart of this novel lies the question of what it means to come to terms with one's past, when neither making amends nor letting go is an option.

Longlisted for the 2023 International Booker Prize

Nominated for the 2020 Nordic Council Literature Prize, the 2020 Brage Prize,



'(...) an intergenerational bust-up that sends sparks flying. It's profoundly shocking, brutally honest, and intelligently conceived. The literary exploration of the mother-daughter relationship in *Is Mother Dead* is both universal and courageous – and delivered with linguistic aplomb and stylistic confidence displaying Hjorth's usual quality.'

Dagbladet

'Vigdis Hjorth is back at her best, with a raw and painful book (...) Brave and uncompromising.'

Dagsavisen

Vigdis Hjorth (b. 1959) has made an exciting literary career and has written many popular books for both children and adults. Today she is an award-winning author and one of Norway's most interesting, contemporary writers.

She has won a number of prizes and awards, amongst them: The Gyldendal Prize in 2011, the Critics Award in 2012, The Honorary Brage Award and the Amalie Skram Award in 2014, The Aschehoug Award in 2015 and the Booksellers Prize in 2016.

Her books have been published in 27 countries.

FOREIGN SALES

Brazil, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark (Turbine), Finland (Schildts & Söderströms), France, Germany, Greece (Potamos Publishers), Hungary, Italy (Fazi Editore), Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden (Natur & Kultur), Turkey, UK/US (Verso Books)

PREVIOUS TITLES

Selected:

The Teacher's Song, 2018

hush, 2018

What's With Mother?, 2017

Wills and Testament, 2016

A Norwegian House, 2014

RIGHTSHOLDER

Cappelen Damm Agency

NO-0055 Oslo

+47 21 61 65 00

foreignrights@cappelendamm.no

www.cappelendammagency.no

VIDEO

[See YouTube for the author's presentation](#)

the 2020 Literary Critics' Prize and the 2021 Young Readers' Critics' Prize