

Eystein Hellstrøm Hoddevik

# Viruses on the Loose

## Virus på reisefot. En reiseskildring om virus og mennesker

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What is a virus? Viruses are tiny. But an invisible enemy like this can bring a whole world to its knees, just as it did in spring 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic. Through carefully selected stories, the author shows you what a virus is, what it consists of, how it is transmitted and how it produces disease.

Viruses and humans have coexisted forever, so this journey covers biological evolution, our own bodies, historical events, diagnostics, global politics, genetic material, ethics and biological warfare. The book is also about vaccines, one of our most important weapons in the war against viruses. The making of vaccines is in itself a science which is based upon our knowledge of how viruses are constructed and cause disease.

Viruses are bred to spread and don't hesitate to set off on intercontinental journeys, like the travel-loving stowaways they are. Some are extremely cunning and some are so dangerous their fatality rate is close to 100%. Viruses cause contagion by travelling, just as we do, but their journey doesn't stop there. The way in which they produce disease inside us can also be viewed as a microscopic travelogue. We shall therefore follow some viruses as they travel through our bodies to reach the cells they both hijack and harm.

If you are prepared to face what fear of viruses you might have, you'll discover it may help you survive and avoid diseases like warts, cold sores, shingles, blindness and even cancer.



Photo: Anna-Julia Granberg, Blunderbuss

Eystein Hellstrøm Hoddevik (b. 1980) has a PhD in molecular biology and neuroscience and works a medical doctor. He has lived in France, Scotland, Germany and Sweden and has previously worked in the navy, on ships, in internal medicine and in the accident and emergency department. He is currently employed at the Department of Pathology, Oslo University Hospital, and teaches at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo.

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