



### The One Needful Thing

Original title: Yt etter evne, få etter behov

Publisher: Samlaget, 2020

Genre:

Pages: 191 pages

English sample

### Foreign rights

Danish: Turbine

Dutch: Uitgeverij Oevers

Serbian: Tréci Trg

### Awards

Winner of the P2 Audience Novel

Award 2020

NORLA Selected Title Autumn 2020



### Olaug Nilssen

Photo: Bent René Synnesvåg

## The One Needful Thing

*Who will shoulder a responsibility that nobody can really manage?*

In *The One Needful Thing* the reader gains insight into the daily life of an ordinary family that has ceased to be ordinary. Lea lies in bed playing Hay Day on her iPad and wonders whether she has chronic fatigue syndrome – she no longer has the strength to be a mother. Her sister Rakel, a dutiful person, balances along a tightrope in her role as the primary care provider for intellectually disabled nephew Benjamin. Their mother Gudrun focuses her time and energy on the youngest of the three sisters Linda, and her family. One day, Rakel is not home to receive Bjemain from a scheduled drop off after spending the weekend in respite care, and the rest of the family has to step in.

*The One Needful Thing*, nominated for the Brage Prize 2020, is simultaneously witty and serious. It is a continuation of the themes explored in *A Tale of Terrible Times* from 2017: Who will shoulder an impossible responsibility in the age of individualism? Can a balance be found between freedom and obligation, as community, family, and individual?

*6 out of 6 stars: Intense and essential reading [...] One of the highlights of the autumn book releases!*

Janne Bjørgan, BA

*So ruthlessly and compassionately written that the reader gasps for breath.*

DN: Bjørn Gabrielsen

*Olaug Nilssen's latest novels are striking in their acute urgency.*

Klassekampen: Tom Egil Hverven

### Olaug Nilssen

Olaug Nilssen (1977) made her literary breakthrough with *Turn me on, Dammit* in 2005. The book had a defining significance for an entire generation. Since then she has written books in different genres and made her mark as a unique and important voice in Norwegian literature. In her novel *A Tale of Terrible Times*, for which she was awarded the Brage Prize, she writes with unusual openness about the experience of being a mother of a child with disabilities. In her novel *The One Needful Thing*, published in 2020, she continues to explore the themes of *A Tale of Terrible Times*.

In 2021, Nilssen received The Fritt Ord's Prize, along with Bjørn Hatterud and Jan Grue. They were awarded the prize in recognition of their important critical contribution to illuminating the impact of cultural stigmas on the situation of persons with disabilities in Norway.

Her new novel *Undesirable Behaviour* was published in 2023.

In 2024, she received the prestigious Amalie Skram Prize for her authorship.