



The Dresser

Original title: Påklederen
 Publisher: Forlaget Oktober, 2023
 Genre:
 Pages: 192 pages
 English sample

Foreign rights

Swedish: Heidruns Förlag
 World English: Seagull Books

Awards

2020: Gratias Agit (Czech Rep.)
 2014: The Saladin Prize (Turkey)
 2007: The Jan Holly-Prize (Slovakia)
 2006: The Cornelius - Medal
 (University of Bratislava)
 2001: The Dobloug Prize

A selection to name a few of many national and international prizes



Thorvald Steen

Photo: Trine Hisdal

The Dresser

The year is 1204. Massimo Gasparino is the chief secretary and most trusted colleague of Venice's doge, Enrico Dandolo. Now he's been demoted to dresser and kept captive by the doge and his security chief, Biraghi, in an apartment in Constantinople.

Here Gasparino writes a letter in which he admits to Pope Innocent III that he's been a witness to mankind's greatest crime. The doge was to lead the Fourth Crusade to Jerusalem, but has deliberately steered it to Constantinople. The city was plundered and the booty carried off to Venice. Only the doge, security chief Biraghi and Massimo Gasparino know how the crime could have been committed.

Page after page, the letter reveals the enormity of the misdeed and treachery. Will Gasparino manage to survive the letter, or will the doge get hold of it before it's dispatched? It's a matter of life and death for them both.

In his novel Thorvald Steen delves into Europe's history and turns up material which hasn't found its true place in the history books: the Fourth Crusade and how it was turned into an excuse to sack what was then possibly the greatest and most opulent of cities, Constantinople. It builds into an intense chamber play about conceit and thirst for power.

Thorvald Steen has transformed a history lesson into a dramatic story. He has also expanded our awareness and understanding of the powerful passions and forces at work behind catastrophes and wars. As he has done through the tightly spun and precise revelations of the Dresser. ... Conveyed in an understated and precise literary voice, the author demonstrates yet again how history's catastrophes can be reflected in the individual's most base and brutal qualities. The Dresser is also an illustration of the relationship between master and servant. Knowledge is not always power; it can also be your downfall.

Turid Larsen, Dagsavisen

Steen has written an ambitious novel based on little known historical events that had enormous consequences for posterity... I don't think I am the only reader who after finishing this epistolary novel was left with the desire to read more about the historical events and consequences of what took place.

Rolv Nøtvik Jakobsen, Vårt Land

Thorvald Steen

Thorvald Steen's literary career begun in 1983, he has since produced a diverse body of work spanning a variety of genres. Translated into 30

languages so far, Steen has received praise and prizes for the quality of his authorship in Norway and abroad.