



A Tale of Terrible Times

Original title: Tung tids tale
 Publisher: Samlaget, 2017
 Genre: Novel
 Pages: 150 pages
 English sample available

Foreign rights

Swedish: Albert Bonniers
 Georgian: Academic Press of Georgia
 Danish: Turbine
 Croatian: antipöd
 Serbian: Trecí Trg

Awards

Selected prizes:
 The Brage Prize for A Tale of Terrible Times for best Norwegian fiction in 2017
 The "Nesehorn" (Rhinceros) Prize 2017 awarded by the daily newspaper Klassekampen.
 NORLA Selected Title Spring 2018



Olaug Nilssen

Photo: Bent René Synnesvåg

A Tale of Terrible Times

"It's a picture of Mum," you said from the back seat.

"Where's Mum?" I replied from the front seat.

You took a long time to formulate your answer, whether because your speech was in the process of disintegrating, or because you were searching for a poetic line. "On the car's ear."

A Tale of Terrible Times is an acute story on being the parents of a disabled child, about the fight to allow the child to be who he is, and to get the support that he and his family need. The book follows the mother and son, and the rest of the family, day by day from the last Monday in November until the third Thursday in May. It is a story about the fine line between accepting and giving up, and a moving story about how love can strike you down.

As a toddler, Daniel loses his speech and changes his personality, marking the start of a battle for his mother, Olaug. First, to understand what is happening to the boy, and then to help him get the care and resources he needs. The long and painful process is shared in this novel, and written with deep human insight and love, in the year Daniel turns ten.

Once again, Olaug Nilssen has shown herself to be one of Norway's sharpest literary voices. It is impossible to put Tale of Terrible Times aside unmoved.

Torborg Igland, Fædrelandsvennen

This book is a brilliant love story and absolutely the best novel I've read about autism.

Helene Larsen, Aspergerinformatør

...shocking, important literature.

Ingunn Økland, Aftenposten

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.