



Sölvasaga unglings

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Awards

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 category.



Arnar Már Arngrímsson
 Photo: Daníel Starrason

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Sölvi is a fifteen-year-old teenager in Reykjavik who is socially awkward, angry, and lonely. After a school yard altercation with his bully cousin, he withdraws and locks himself away in his room, disappearing into the online world of computer games and porn. Worried and with their own set of problems to deal with, Sölvi's parents decide to confiscate his phone and send him away for the summer to stay with his grandmother on her farm. He is full fear and loathing and is horrified by the idea of being offline the whole summer. Sölvi finds solace in rap music and keeps a note book with his own lyrics that he won't show to anyone.

At the farm, he is put to work by his tough-as-nails grandmother who has no time for self-indulgent moping and laziness. He finds a friend in the dog Sólon who follows him around as he sorts things for burning, burying, or donating. In his room, he discovers his dad's old books and vinyl records that help him pass the time. Feeling misunderstood and broken for so long he surprisingly finds an adult he can relate to in the elderly Tómas on the neighbouring farm. Tómas also has granddaughter staying with him who is both better at football and socialising than Sölvi. Their friendship brings him out of his shell and for a while things are looking up; he plays football with other teens in the area, goes sheep herding, dancing, and even finds a bit of romance.

The Saga of Sölvi the Youth (Sölvasaga unglings) is news, a believable story, brimming with the excitement of its era, about the generations and the bridges that must be built between them, as well as a tale about understanding and lack thereof. Sölvasaga is an enjoyable read, funny and imaginative, and is in no way less suited to adults than teenagers – age restrictions do not apply!

Einar Már Guðmundsson

Arnar Már Arngrímsson

The Saga of Sölvi the Young is Arnar Már's debut novel. It was nominated for the Icelandic Literary Prize in 2015 and was awarded the Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize in 2016. Arnar Már studied Icelandic and German literature at the universities in Reykjavik and Cologne. He has worked as a sailor, a caregiver, and a tour guide. He now teaches Icelandic at Akureyri Junior College.