



Snare

Lilja Sigurðardóttir, Quentin Bates (Translator)

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After a messy divorce, attractive young mother Sonia is struggling to provide for herself and keep custody of her son. With her back to the wall, she resorts to smuggling cocaine into Iceland, and finds herself caught up in a ruthless criminal world. As she desperately looks for a way out of trouble, she must pit her wits against her nemesis, Bragi, a customs officer, whose years of experience frustrate her new and evermore daring strategies. Things become even more complicated when Sonia embarks on a relationship with a woman, Agla. Once a high-level bank executive, Agla is currently being prosecuted in the aftermath of the Icelandic financial crash. Set in a Reykjavík still covered in the dust of the Eyjafjallajökull volcanic eruption, and with a dark, fast-paced and chilling plot and intriguing characters, Snare is an outstandingly original and sexy Nordic crime thriller, from one of the most exciting new names in crime fiction.

Snare Details

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From Reader Review Snare for online ebook

Eva says

Ah, Scandi-Noir! We meet once more and again, you didn't let me down. *Snare* is one superb tense ride, centred around three characters who all find themselves trapped one way or another.

After a messy divorce, Sonja loses custody of her son. When we first meet her, she's smuggling drugs into the country. But there's more to her situation than meets the eye. It becomes clear quite early on that she's not exactly a willing participant but is finding it hard to escape the hold the vicious criminal world has on her.

Then there's Bragi, a customs officer. Close to retirement, he refuses to stop working because he has nothing to go home to since he had to make the tough decision of placing his wife in a care home. Bragi has years of experience and is keen to show the young recruits how it's done so when his instincts tell him Sonja is up to no good, he's like a dog with a bone.

And finally we have Agla, a bank executive, who's under investigation in the aftermath of the financial crisis in Iceland. She and Sonja have an incredibly complicated relationship. Agla carries a lot of guilt and shame with her which may just force her to sacrifice herself in order to protect a secret she's not willing to face up to.

The setting in Iceland works like a charm with its cold, dark and rather short days. It really adds to the level of tension and the threatening vibe, especially in combination with the ashes from the erupted volcano with the difficult name falling from the sky depending on how the wind blows.

What really got me though, were the moments when Sonja was at the airport. I'm a nervous wreck when I have to fly and go through security, even though I know I'm not doing anything wrong! Sonja, however, comes across as completely cool and collected, able to fool just about anyone. I found myself in this odd situation of barely being able to breathe until she made it out safely.

The author has created some brilliant characters and even though Sonja is basically a criminal in her own right, I felt for her and truly liked her. She's just an ordinary woman who finds herself in extraordinary circumstances, who realises she's way smarter than she thought and capable of things she never even considered. Especially when it relates to her son, who is always her first priority.

Snare is utterly chilling, compelling and incredibly original. With a brilliantly executed plot and characters you shouldn't really sympathise with but somehow do, I was completely enthralled. Full of suspense and intrigue, this crime story about love and revenge had me hooked from start to finish.

I can't possibly leave out the amazing translation by Quentin Bates. At no point did I ever feel I wasn't reading the original version. This is a fantastic addition to my ever-growing Scandi-Noir shelf and I very much look forward to more by Lilja Sigurdardottir.

Bandit says

Time for some international reading. Iceland this time, a land of readers and writers if statistics are to go by. Also a land of brutal weather, terrible food and gorgeous scenery. All these ingredients were presents and permanently featured, it's the story itself that was sort of underwhelming. Scandinavian fiction in general has a sort of flat aspect to it, but here it went beyond muted to plain averageness. Plus the ending was a definite detractor. Yes, I understand it's a first in a new series and series are nearly impossible to avoid, ok, but every entry should still be self contained and offer a proper resolution. This one sort of just ended in a pretty unsatisfying way. The plot is this...a woman goes through an ugly divorce and subsequent financial challenges entangle her in a...yes, you got it, Snare. Now she, Sonja, has to shuttle cocaine into the country. All the while hoping to get out of the racket and get back the custody of her child. All the while maintaining a terribly dysfunctional love affair with Agla, a woman who is ashamed of her sexuality and also embroiled in a financial scam investigation. And then there's a security person at the airport who is onto Sonja's act. So it's all challenging and complicated. And you'd think would be really compelling, but it's just compelling enough. The Sonja and Agla thing is just a nuisance, you'd think a country that essentially pioneered gender equality, gay rights and all that would see their citizens have a more progressive mentality, but no, Agla's so stuck in the closet, she can practically see Narnia from there and the entire relationship is just a sad mess. The state of the country in this book is also kind of a sad mess, set in 2010/2011 financial crisis, Iceland comes across as provincial and claustrophobic and gray. Maybe it just doesn't mesh with my romanticized version of it. Or maybe it's just the depressing reality of civilizations unable or unwilling to live up to the high standards nature sets. Anyway, this book had its moments, enough of them to make the reader care, probably enough to want to check out further installments...although it may not have been memorable enough to ensure the recollection of prior events by the time the sequel comes out. But actually I do think I may be invested enough in the character to want to see what's next. At least right now. Snare may also work as a manual for aspiring smugglers, Sonja has an OCD like precision about her work. But then again as the book demonstrates you might not want to go that way. The ending had a nice twist to it, really enhanced the story, although with the mystery out of the way, the next one is setting up to be just a straight up power struggle with known players. Time will tell. Maybe the author has some new tricks up her sleeve. Oh...is this still Scandinavian noir if it really isn't that noirish? It's definitely Scandinavian, but the style doesn't really suggest noir. Maybe it's become more of a general generic sort of thing now. Geographically specific thriller fiction. Thanks Netgalley.

Anne says

A snare is a trap from which it is difficult to escape. This book certainly lives up to its name. I was caught in Lilja Sigurdardottr's trap from the very first paragraph and she kept me captive until I turned the final page. This is one hell of a story, a mind blowing read.

Lead character Sonja is ensnared, she's caught up in a seedy, dangerous underworld. Smuggling cocaine into Iceland in order to save enough money to get her beloved son back from his father; her estranged husband. This author describes the snare vividly, not just dealing with operational aspects of the smuggling process but dealing with Sonja's desperation and determination too. Sonja's life is tangled and complicated. Her son Tomas is living with Adam, her ex husband, who is doing everything he can to make sure that Sonja and Tomas' relationship is not easy.

Also on the scene is Agla; the disgraced banker who is facing prosecution for her part in the downfall of the Icelandic financial sector. She's also the reason that Sonja and Adam are no longer married.

Whilst Snare is just a short book at around 220 pages, I felt as though I had travelled to Iceland many times, I

experienced the tension of the customs checks at the airport and the huge relief as Sonja escaped detection, time and time again. It is the fact that as a reader I was backing Sonja all of the way, despite the fact that she was mixed up in highly illegal activities, that proves how well this author can write. She's created a character in Sonja that defies my logic; she's a warm, loving mother who cares for those closest to her, and helps her neighbour, yet she doesn't think twice about allowing an innocent person to take the blame, and a possible jail sentence so that she can escape.

The reader is also treated to the wonderful Bragi. Nearing retirement age, Bragi is a customs officer. He is a beautifully crafted character, with a deep deep sadness that makes him so incredibly realistic. As he sits alongside his wife of over 50 years, who no longer knows him, due to her dementia; and brushes her hair and feeds her porridge, my heart almost broke. Yet he too, has a steely determination that runs through him, and he may have met his match in Sonja.

Snare is incredible. I loved every single page; the setting, the characters and the intricately woven plot. I am delighted that Lilja Sigurdardottir has two more books to come in this fabulous new series.

Has to be in the running for my Top Books of 2017 list. Outstanding. I loved it.<https://randomthingsthroughmyletterbox.com/reviews/snare/>

Megan (ChroniclesOfABookworm) says

Received on NetGalley

The ending just didn't do it for me. Super lackluster and devoid of any real thrill.

Miriam Smith says

"Snare" is a brilliant crime thriller with a very clever and intelligent storyline which is unique, original and gripping. It has a suspenseful plot line with incredible well defined characters and with it being so thrilling and fast paced this addictive book will have you reading well past your bedtime - I did and loved every minute!

It's the first in the Reykjavik Noir Trilogy and considering how good this book is I really can't wait for the next two!!

Set in a Reykjavik that is still covered in the dust of a recent volcanic eruption, Sonja has just gone through a messy and heartbreaking divorce which saw her handing over custody of her son to her husband. Falling into the ruthless and frightening criminal world to stay afloat she starts smuggling cocaine into Iceland.

Desperately now looking for a way out of trouble she pits her wits against her nemesis, Bragi, a customs officer who has been watching her from afar, every time she lands in Iceland. To complicate matters, Sonja is in a relationship with a woman, Alga. Once a high level bank executive she is now currently being prosecuted in the aftermath of the Icelandic financial crash.

I really loved Sonja and truly felt for her predicament, sympathising with her at every move, she's not a bad person but just drawn into a situation she has no control over and is meticulously planning a way out of it all, in the hope of regaining custody of her son Tomas. All through the book I felt trapped in the 'snare' with Sonja and felt her every emotion and action that she took.

I also liked the side storyline of Braji and his devoted wife Valdis, who suffering from Alzheimer's appears to be being abused in the care home she is in. Emotional and breathtaking this atmospheric thriller about love

and crime really does keep you enthralled until the exciting climax!

There's an excellent glossary at the beginning too, to thoughtfully help with the pronunciation of any Icelandic names you don't understand. Fabulously translated by the incredibly talented Quentin Bates, this book's narrative and dialogue flows seamlessly and really makes for an enjoyable read.

"Snare" is written by Icelandic crime writer Lilja Sigurdardottir, who has already written four crime novels and this book is hitting the bestseller lists worldwide with translation and film rights have already been bought. I can definitely see this author becoming very famous globally and I for one cannot wait to read her future offerings!

5 stars

Joanna Park says

Snare is definitely a book that will stay with me for a long time mainly because of its hard-hitting and sometimes harrowing, main story line about drug smuggling. It's a subject we hear a lot about in the news and I've often wondered how and why people resort to drug smuggling in the first place, especially with all the risks involved. In Snare, the author offers up one explanation in a gripping and unflinching narrative that really had me breathless at times as I wondered what on earth would happen next. Some of the passages describing the drug smuggling are quite harrowing and horrifying. I'd like to think such things don't happen in real life, but sadly I don't think this is the case, except maybe the tiger?! (I hope). The fear and desperation some of the characters feel throughout the book is almost palpable at times and you really feel for them in those situations as well as disbelief that people can be so unfeeling and cruel.

I really like Sonja. I thought she seemed a very in control, clever and resourceful woman who had some ingenious methods for getting drugs into Iceland. These were quite thrilling to read about as you were never quite sure if she'd get caught or not and I did find myself holding my breath at times as events unfolded. I found that I had a lot of sympathy with her and the situation that she finds herself in, not just in the drug smuggling but the tense home situation with her ex husband. I felt indignant on her behalf for all the upset she was suffering and warmed to her throughout the book hoping she'd find a way out of the mess. Her relationship with her son Thomas was really beautiful to read about and helped provided some light relief in a tense book. The passages describing their time together and their obvious love for one another bought a tear to my eye and I had a smile on my face as I read about their exploits. It was very poignant to read about the restraints on their relationship and my heart ached for the pair of them, imagining what they must be feeling.

The author mentions some interesting information about Icelandic traditions and food which was fascinating to read about. I was particularly intrigued by snowflake bread and wish to try it for myself.

Snare is the first book in the Reykjavik Noir series and I very much look forward to reading more from her. I'm hoping that the same characters are involved as I would like to find out what happens next for Sonja.

Huge thanks to Orenda Books and Anne Cater for my copy of this book and for inviting me on the blog tour.

Thebooktrail says

Fuller review to follow for Blog tour but just had to write this now as this was very unique and sharp as a knife!

Visit the locations in the novel: Visit Iceland

Read this last night and I had to write a short review now simply because it's quite unlike anything I've read before. The tension, being part of a drugs run. I even feel nervous going through customs anyway so when this woman does knowing she has something illegal in her bag – I can't imagine! The tricks that both sides use – the smugglers and the officials are quite the eye opener but it's the conditions that have led this woman to do this are also part of the story.

The chapters work well for this story theme as they're short, compact and they flit from one person's story to another, one angle of the CCTV camera to another.

The novel reads effortlessly thanks to the work of Translator Extraordinaire Quentin and the tension builds and twists until a very fitting ending. But it's the journey of cool collected Iceland, through the long dark tunnel from the capital to the frozen north that took me on a ride on many levels. It's going to be part of Hull Noir's reading focus and I'm not surprised.

Amy says

Snare is told via three separate points of view, that of Sonia, Bragi and Agla. All of their lives and stories merge at some point in really interesting ways and the cat and mouse game between Sonia and Bragi was unbelievably tense and exciting. My heart was in my throat for most of this book, as much as I shouldn't have wanted Sonia to keep getting away with drug running I couldn't help but sympathize with her and truly hoped she would find a safe way out.

Sigurdardottir is a fantastic writer, the scenes where Sonia was in the airport were so well written I felt panicky and anxious myself. There was a dark desperation lingering throughout this one, a strong sense of urgency that worked so incredibly well alongside the chilly Icelandic setting.

Snare was a highly original and tense read that I flew through, it gripped me immediately and caught me in its own unique snare, I read it in one breathless sitting. This was a different type of crime read, the type of book Orenda is known for, fresh, exhilarating and compelling. If you haven't had the pleasure of reading anything by them before you should definitely check out their catalog or if all else fails start with this one, it's outstanding.

Quick side note, I just saw it'll be the start of a new series and I couldn't be more excited!

Susan Hampson says

Sonja is a very convincing liar. Everything about her, from the successful business woman who her documents say she is, to the classy way she looks, it is all lies. Sonja is a high-class drug smuggler and to be honest she is bloody good at what she does. At just a phone call Sonja can be jetting off anywhere in the world to smuggle cocaine back into her home country of Iceland. Talk about crafty, phew I won't even glance at a stranger in an airport ever again never mind talk to one! This is one very determined lady and boy is she ingenious in the ways she works. I think that it is impossible not to like Sonja especially as the story unfolds.

Now the story is told through three people, another being Bragi, a very wise old Customs Officer with a feel for travellers that just aren't right. Sonja is like a beacon to him that flashes come and get me. Bragi becomes quite a determined fellow to catch this lady traveller out before he retires. It all makes for super reading. Agla is the third cog in this wheel, the lady Sonja's husband Adam found in bed with her and the final straw why Sonja and Adam's marriage ended which resulted in him winning custody of their son. Agla also works at the bank where Adam works.

What a fabulous story. My heart raced at every airport arrival, every heart wrenching visit Sonja had with her son and every time she met the man she worked for. Loved the tenderness of Bragi, the uncertainty of Alga and the strength of Sonja. All caught in their own snares.

I really think I came face to face with what evil looks like in this book and it took my breath. Just Brilliant. This is all I want in a book. I am also ecstatic that this is the first of three books.

Crime by the Book says

Find my full review here: <http://crimebythebook.com/blog/2017/1...>

A taut and engaging blend of Nordic Noir sensibilities and high-stakes action thriller! This is a strong series launch. Books involving the drug trade aren't typically my cup of tea, but I enjoyed this one!!

Janel says

Lilja Sigurðardóttir is a name I won't quickly be forgetting, *Snare* was an enticing read, filled with tension and a few heart-stopping moments. As the blurb indicates, there are three storylines taking place in this novel. Sonja caught up in the drug smuggling ring, looking for a way out and hoping to gain custody of her son. Bragi, a customs official, who suspects something is amiss with the beautiful woman who travels so frequently. And lastly, Alga, Sonja's 'kind-of' girlfriend who is facing prosecution. These storylines are weaved together perfectly to create a tension filled read.

Sonja is one of those characters you can't help but root for, yes, she's smuggling kilos of cocaine into the country but she just so damn likeable! She's very aware of the situation she's in and is so close to being able to escape the criminal world; every time Sonja comes through customs, your heart starts beating a little faster, hoping she's not caught. And this anxiety is heightened once Bragi sets his sites on her. So how does Alga's storyline fit in, well you'll just have to read this one for yourself to find out. But I'm willing to bet money that you cannot figure out how these intertwined storylines come together. It was so clever, so unexpected, and it made so much sense, I was mightily impressed.

In terms of characters, it was Sonja's son, nine-year-old, Tómas who stole the show for me. It's always hard

for a kid when their parents separate, and I liked that it was Adam who had custody, as it's not often in novels (or real life) that it's the father with custody and the mother with every other weekend visitation. The love and loyalty Tómas had for his mother was so sweet and this has me rooting for Sonja even more.

Snare is a truly gripping read, elements of the storyline were so original, and this made it harder to predict where the plot was going. The ending was as it should be, it wrapped up the novel nicely and left me eager for more, so I'm extremely grateful Snare is the first book in the Reykjavik Noir trilogy! You know you're hooked to a novel when you read words such as "Eyjafjallajökull", and know you're pronouncing it wrong but you don't even care because the writing is so smooth, it just flows. When I saw this novel being described as a "sexy Nordic crime thriller", I never paid too much attention to the word "sexy" because it's not one I'd used to describe a book – but I totally get it now! Snare is racy, not only in its fast-paced delivery but it has this seductive quality to it; you're drawn to its dark and tense atmosphere, but you're also drawn to Sonja.

Thanks must be given to Quentin Bates for the wonderful translation that allowed me to read this book, it truly felt like nothing was lost in translation.

Snare is dark, exciting, and sits where it belongs – alongside my other favourite Nordic Noir novels; the film rights have already been sold. It's official, Snare is a raging success, do yourself a favour and read this book!

My thanks to Orenda Books for providing me with a copy of this book

Janelle | She Reads with Cats says

Review to come

Julia Yeates says

I loved Snare.

For some reason I hadn't picked this one up from the Orenda Books shelf as soon as it was published, committed as I am to Karen's authors, so it was a pleasant surprise to read it and to be introduced to a new writer.

What did I love about Snare?

The setting, of course, I left a little piece of my chemo-damaged heart in Iceland a couple of years ago and have remained inspired by the country ever since. And, unusually for some writers of Icelandic thrillers, there is a real flavour of the country flowing through Snare, from the very Icelandic food that the heroine enjoys, to the places she passes through, to the description of the financial meltdown that many of us have forgotten seemed to first surface in Iceland. (I am still impressed that Iceland did not bail out its bankers but, instead, jailed them!)

The characters are so real I wanted to slap them. And to empathise with them. And to help a couple of them.

And the plot is brilliant, although it does make me wonder where Lilja Sigurðardóttir acquired her extensive knowledge of the tricks employed by drug mules. (Do not try this at home!)

So, yes, I devoured the book in a couple of days, I even rushed home from the beach to finish it and that, for me, is the best praise I can offer.

Every book leaves me with a taste, a real taste, in my mouth. After reading *Snare* that taste is of boiled fish, popcorn and pizza and a hint of sulphur. Very memorable!

Paul says

Snare – An Extraordinary Thriller from an Icelandic Author

Orkney Books are on a roll, they keep finding the best of Icelandic Noir, having Quentin Bates translate, and giving the English reader a new author. Lilja Sigurðardóttir is already a successful playwright and author, and she has written a brand-new series and *Snare* is the first in the series of Reykjavík noir series.

Sonja has recently gone through a terrible divorce from her Adam, and she did not get a very good deal from her lawyer. Her son Tomas lives with her ex-husband and only allows him to stay over at Sonja's rarely and then he complains.

With the whole world seemingly against her and the need to earn some cash she has been snared as a drug mule. Running drugs from Denmark and the UK at regular intervals, and at the same time safely putting some money in a safety deposit box and she also has some product saved too.

When she tells her contact she wants out she is beaten up and is in agony, and it does not help that a customs officer, Bragi, is on her trail and has worked out her routine. The more that she wants to get out the more she has been snared and there is no escape. Her love life is in tatters and her lover Agla is in the midst of a trial for share manipulation and the relationship is going down rapidly.

Snare is a taut, reassuringly excellent thriller in the best traditions of Icelandic Noir, that once you start you will not be able to put down. There are some great characters, and you will fall for Sonja and have some sympathy for the position she is in. The tension builds throughout the book and gives you a tense ending.

This really is an extraordinary thriller.

Raven says

Snare proved a curious mix for me, as my overriding feeling that this was almost two books running parallel to each other, with a gripping story of drug running, running alongside a slower *Borgen*-esque feeling of financial impropriety, and double dealing. I'll be honest, and say that I didn't take to the latter thread as much as the former, finding it a little turgid against the relative excitement of the drug smuggling narrative, and although I was slightly questioning of the veracity of single parent Sonja's involvement in drug running,

this was certainly the more compelling of the two storylines, and led to some real heart in the mouth moments. I also enjoyed playing witness to the touchingly sentimental ‘other’ life of customs officer Bragi, whose game of cat and mouse with Sonja was another enjoyable strand of the book. However, the emotional handwringing of Sonja’s romantic involvement with Agla, the bank executive under investigation, became increasingly tiresome, but cleverly the seemingly anodyne ending of the book must signpost further developments for the second part of the trilogy. A little unsure, but curious, and intrigued to see how the story progresses in the next instalment.
