The Blue Fox

by Sjón



About the Book

Set against the stark backdrop of the Icelandic winter, an elusive, enigmatic fox leads a hunter on a transformative quest. At the edge of the hunter?s territory, a naturalist struggles to build a life for his charge, a young woman with Down syndrome whom he had rescued from a shipwreck years before. By the end of Sjón?s slender, spellbinding fable of a novel, none of their lives will be the same. Winner of the 2005 Nordic Council Literature Prize --- the Nordic world?s highest literary honor --- THE BLUE FOXis part mystery, part fairy tale, and the perfect introduction to a mind-bending, world-class literary talent.

Discussion Guide

1. In the novel?s opening scene, as the Reverend Baldur Skuggason and the vixen interact, how do they balance the mutual danger with the fact that they find each other alluring?

2. How was your reading affected by the alternating points of view? How does the herbalist Fridrik B. Fridjónsson?s view of his community compare to what you see in the scenes of the Reverend Baldur and the vixen?

3. What does Hafdís Jónsdóttir?s childhood tell us about the culture that didn?t want to see her survive? What accounts for Fridrik?s unusual compassion toward her-?his Abba?and toward Hafdís?s sweetheart, Hálfdán Atlason, as well?

4. How did you interpret the conversations between the vixen and the Reverend Baldur? Reading the novel as a fable, what are its lessons?

5. How does the Reverend Baldur see his role as a religious leader? As he and the vixen debate electricity on pages 98?100, what do we discover about how their moral compasses are set? What do they believe is their source of ?power??

6. Discuss the landscape as if it were a character in the novel. In what ways is it threatening? In what ways is it enchanting?

7. In his letter in the book?s closing pages, what does Fridrik reveal to us about his Abba?s view of the world? Despite her dictionary, what emotions transcended language when Fridrik took her in?

8. When the Reverend Baldur meets his fate, is justice served? Is he destined to be the hunter, or the hunted?

Author Bio

Sjón is the author of, among other works, FROM THE MOUTH OF THE WHALE and THE WHISPERING MUSE. Born in Reykjavík in 1962, he is an award-winning novelist, poet, and playwright. His novels have been translated into twenty-five languages. Also a lyricist, he has written songs for Björk, including for her most recent project, *Biophilia*, and was nominated for an Oscar for the lyrics he cowrote (with Lars von Trier) for *Dancer in the Dark*. He lives in Reykjavík.

Critical Praise

"When I need something epic and lyrical I call upon Sjón . . . **The Blue Fox** is a magical novel."

? Björk

Praise for Sjón and his fiction

"An extraordinary and original writer."

? A. S. Byatt, **The Guardian**

"Sjón is the trickster that makes the world, and he is achingly brilliant."

? Junot Díaz

"An extraordinary, powerful fable?a marvel."

? Alberto Manguel on **The Whispering Muse**

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Publication Date: April 30, 2013
Genres: Fairy Tale
Paperback: 128 pages
Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
ISBN-10: 0374114455
ISBN-13: 9780374114459