



FABULOUS BOOKS

Áslaug Jónsdóttir
The Monster Series

Children's Books

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Áslaug Jónsdóttir (b. 1963) is an author, illustrator, artist and graphic designer. She has written and illustrated several books and plays for children, among them the award-winning title *Good Evening* (*Gott kvöld* 2005) which received the Bookseller's Prize as the best children's book of 2005 and the Icelandic Illustrator's Award for Children's Book, as well as a nomination to the Nordic Children's Book Prize. *Good Evening* was adapted to the theater and received the Icelandic Theatre Awards in 2008. Áslaug was also nominated to the Nordic Drama Awards in 2010 for the play. Áslaug received the Reykjavík Scholastic Prize for her work as an illustrator in 2000, and was nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award the same year.

Áslaug's illustrations have been selected for the International Board on Books for Young People Honor List twice: *Children's Verses* with text by Böðvar Guðmundsson in 2004 and *The Story of the Blue Planet* with text by Andri Snær Magnason in 2002, for which she and Magnason received the West Nordic Children's Literature Prize.

THE MONSTER SERIES

The six books in the Monster Series are written by Áslaug Jónsdóttir, Swedish author Kalle Güettler and Faroese author Rakel Helmsdal. The books are illustrated and designed by Áslaug. The stories tell of two close, but very different friends: the Big Monster and the Little Monster. Through simple stories about their doings – climbing a mountain, visiting a sick friend, going fishing – the series focuses on human relations and situations which all children face at some time. The simple narrations and powerful illustrations of the series open up a wonderful world of stories for children and parents alike.

The stories have recently been adapted to the stage by Áslaug who also designs the sets. *The Big Monster and the Little Monster in the Theater* is staged at the National Theater of Iceland during spring 2012.

Books in the Monster Series: *No! Said the Little Monster* (2004), *Big Monsters Don't Cry* (2006), *Monsters in the Dark* (2007), *Monster Flu* (2008), *Monster Visit* (2009), *Monster at the Top* (2010)

Áslaug received the Icelandic Illustrator's Award for *No! Said the Little Monster*, and for *Big Monsters Don't Cry* she received the Reykjavík Scholastic Prize and was nominated to Le prix des Incorruptibles in France. The Monster Series have repeatedly scored the top ten list of the Children's Book Jury in Sweden.

Age group: 2-6 years.

30 pp.



TRANSLATIONS/INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

The Monster series have been published in Sweden (Kabusa and Bonnier Carlsen), Denmark (Torgard), the Faroe Islands (BFL), Norway (Skald), Finland (Kustannus oy Pieni Karhu), Spain (Beascoa Random House Mondadori), China (Maitian Culture) and France (Circonflex/Millepages). Selected books are also available in English translations.

REVIEWS

Monster Visit (Skrímli í heimsókn):

“A book about the art of playing three together, a situation many readers will be familiar with. A gem from a trio of authors who dominate the art.” **(Sydsvenskan newspaper, Sweden)**

“Like the previous monster books, it is fantastic for all children, mothers and fathers.” **(Morgunblaðið newspaper, Iceland)**

Monster Flu (Skrímflapest):

“Monster Flu is a small gem.” **(fortaellingen.dk, Denmark)**

“Artistic, accessible and fun!” **(BTJ, Sweden)**

“Not only are the illustrations unusual and amusing, the stories are brilliant as well and will delight young and old alike.” **(Morgunblaðið newspaper, Iceland)**

Monsters in the Dark (Skrímli í myrkrinu):

“Few but juicy lines of text and clear and well constructed illustrations are joined in a simple, yet immensely exciting story.” **(Uppsala Nya Tidning, Sweden)**

“The same powerful and exuberant images as in the previous books.” **(Norrtälje Tidning, Sweden)**

Big Monsters Don't Cry (Stór skrímsli gráta ekki):

“... almost perfection in harmony between pictures and text.” **(BTJ, Sweden)**

“Big Monsters Do Not Cry increases the humanity of its readers.” **(TMM, literary magazine Iceland)**

No! Said Little Monster (Nei! sagði litla skrímslið):

“... A simple, beautiful and striking book that hits the spot. Best book I have read for a long time.” **(Morgunblaðið newspaper, Iceland)**

“This book will definitely become a children's favourite.” **(Norrtälje Tidning, Sweden)**

INTERVIEW WITH AUSLAUG JÓNSDÓTTIR

www.sagenhaftes-island.is

Monsters at the right temperature

“Each picture book needs to strike the right temperature, the right mood,” says author and artist Áslaug Jónsdóttir, whose visually striking and atmospheric books have enthralled children and adults alike for the past decade.

The three books I see lying on her living room table turn out to be three versions of the same work: her newest book – in Icelandic, Swedish and Faroese – fresh from the printing press.

“They’re not translations,” she tells me when I mention them. “The new book was published simultaneously in three languages. And even though the three editions tell the same story, their texts are all slightly different.”

The new book, *Skrímsli á toppnum* (lit. *Monster at the Top*) is the sixth book featuring



monsters by Áslaug and the other two authors - Kalle Güettler from Sweden and Rakel Heimisdal from the Faeroe Islands. The first book appeared in 2004. For a decade now, Áslaug has also written and illustrated books on her own. Her story *Gott kvöld* (*Good Evening*), the story of a young boy who learns to overcome his fear of the dark, was produced as a popular play in the National Theater in 2005, and now she is working on a stage adaptation of the monster series.

“It’s hard to tell how it’s going,” she says hesitantly when I ask about the play. “The monsters and all that happens to them are good material for the stage. I feel that I know these characters completely. But I’m still learning about the theater. It’s hard to write without visualizing each scene completely, literally picturing the eventual outcome. In my mind, the monsters are already bounding onto and off the stage, regardless of whether they’ll actually make it there or not.”

Black is a strong color



One of the defining features of Áslaug’s work is its intense atmosphere – conjured up by a combination of colors, lines and words. Her books have a definite presence and draw the reader in, almost hypnotically. Even though the young boy of *Good Evening* is home alone with only his teddy bear, the things he sees are thrilling rather than terrifying.

“I’m not afraid of black,” Áslaug says. “I know that some people will leaf through my books and feel that there’s too much black color and darkness in them. But children are smart, you see, and they know how to become fascinated without prejudice. The black color is graphically strong and helps me speak clearly through the pictures. In the picture books, I’m not creating a backdrop or playing second violin to the text. The text and the pictures are supposed to sing in harmony. Sometimes at the top of their lungs!”



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