

# SAGENHAFTE BÜCHER

Guðrún Helgadóttir  
A giant love story



## BIOGRAPHY

Guðrún Helgadóttir was born in Hafnarfjörður on September 7th, 1935 and grew up there as one of many siblings. She worked as a secretary at Reykjavík Higher Secondary Grammar School 1957-1970 and as department manager at the National Health and Insurance Office 1973-1980. Guðrún represented the People's Alliance on Reykjavík City Council 1978-1982 and was a member of the Icelandic legislative assembly 1979-1995. She was Speaker of the Althing 1988-1991, the first woman to hold that position.

Guðrún's first book, *Jón Oddur og Jón Bjarni* (Jón Oddur and Jón Bjarni), appeared in 1974 and is the first of three about these scheming twin brothers. All have been republished numerous times and a film based on the stories was released in 1981. Helgadóttir is one of the best known writers of children's fiction in Iceland and her books have been translated into eleven languages. Helgadóttir's books have obtained excellent reviews at home and abroad, where she has been compared to authors such as Astrid Lindgren, Thorbjörn Egner and Anne-Cathrine Vestly. She received the Nordic Children's Book Prize in 1992 for her book *Undan Illgresinu* (From Beneath the Weeds), was nominated for the H. C. Andersen Award in 1988 and has also received various awards and recognitions for her work in Iceland: In 1994 she received the The Reykjavik Educational Council Children's Book Prize for *Litlu greyin* (Poor Little Things), in 2005 the book *Öðruvísi fjölskylda* (Different Family) received the Young Readers' Selection Book of the Year Prize and later that year the Jónas Hallgrímsson award for her contribution to the Icelandic tongue.

Guðrún Helgadóttir mainly writes for 7 - 13 year old readers, but has also published a few illustrated books for young children with illustrations by known artists as well as a television play and a novel for adults. Her children's play *Óvitar* (Infants) opened in the National Theatre of Iceland in 1979 and has also been staged in the Faeroes and in Norway.

In 1981 Schaffstein published a translation by Gerda Neumann of the book *Jón Oddur og Jón Bjarni* in Germany with the title *Jon und Jan*.

## A GIANT LOVE STORY (1981)

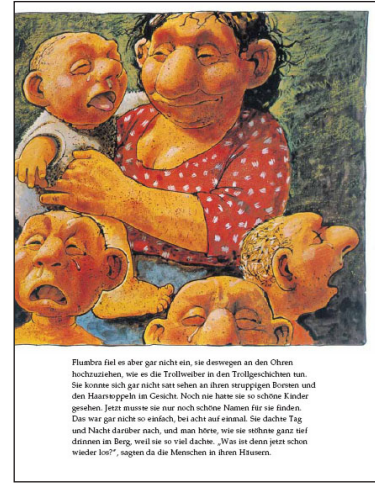
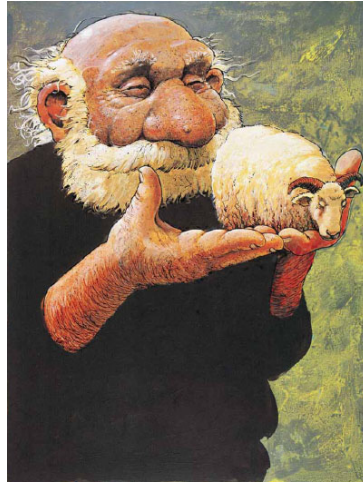
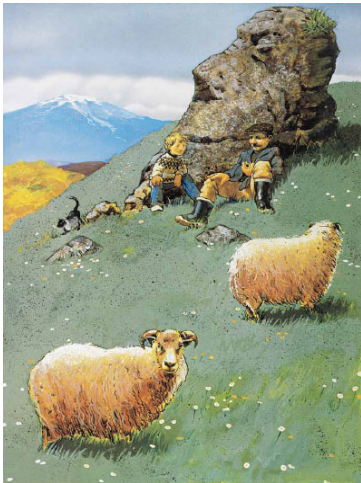
One of Iceland's most popular children's books is *Ástarsaga úr fjöllumum*. It was first published in 1981 and has since been translated into several other languages. It is a story about Icelandic trolls, filled with love, compassion and humour which appeals to children all over the world. Beautifully illustrated by Brian Pilkington. The rights have been sold to Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Faroe Islands, USA and Japan. The Icelandic publisher has already published a German translation in Iceland with the name *Flumbra, eine isländische Trollgeschichte*.

**Margrét Tryggvadóttir, Member of the Icelandic Parliament, [www.bokmenntir.is](http://www.bokmenntir.is)**

*“One of Helgadóttir’s distinctive features as an author is the child’s point of view. She has the ability to be able to place herself in the shoes of a child and show the world as it sees it. The child’s vision is always fresh and thus her work ages so well. There is often a delightful discrepancy between what the children in the stories feel and reality. (...)*

*Many adult lovers of children’s literature demand that books for children carry with them a sound moral message. This Helgadóttir’s novels most certainly do. The rights and position of those who are worse off are always close to her heart. On the Icelandic Althing Guðrún Helgadóttir, the MP, has fought for the improvement of people’s conditions. In her novels the battle is rarely about money or fish, but about children’s rights and the rights of those who are worse off and without a voice in society. In her works she points out the lack of children’s rights and how dependant they are on the will and opinions of adults. (...)*

*[A giant love story] has been a classic in Iceland for a long time, understandably since it merges a great story and amusing pictures. The story is based on Icelandic folklore and tells of the troll woman Flumbra who goes out to meet her lover but turns into stone when the first rays of sunlight reach her. In the story various natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, are explained by the trolls’ behaviour.”*



## OTHER WORKS

### **Heaven's Host (Sitji Guðs englar)**

In Heaven's Host readers make the acquaintance of a remarkable family in the Fjord, and especially the serious-minded Heida. War rages in the outside world, American soldiers march in the streets, and society is rapidly changing. Great changes take place in the children's world, too. They have fun and games but the circumstances are dangerous: the threat of poverty, of the sea and the war, and grief casts a shadow on their play. The book is humorous, exciting and educational.

### **Round and Round (Saman í hring)**

This book is an independent sequel to Heaven's Host. This is the story of Loa-Loa, Heida's sister, a girl who is discovering the world, and not least learning about the adult world.

### **Around my Bed (Sænginni yfir minni)**

This is the third book about the sisters Heida, Loa-Loa and "the other" Abba from Heaven's Host and Round and Round. „The other“ Abba tells what happened one summer in the Fjord, shortly after World War II. Beneath the humorous and gripping surface is an educational story which appeals to both young and old.

### **Pleasure's Mine! (Ekkert að þakka! 1995)**

Pleasure's Mine is a wonderful story of a boy and a girl, Eva and Ari Sveinn, who find a bag containing lots and lots of money, which was thrown from a speeding car by some shady characters fleeing from the police. They start giving the money to people who need it very badly, like their parents, without letting anyone know who the donor is! A great mixture of suspense and humour. Available in English.

### **Don't You Believe It! (Ekkert að marka! 1996)**

We meet again the delightful characters from the best-selling Pleasure's Mine! who find themselves in another adventure. Something strange is happening at Lína's house at dead of night. Even though they find out the truth, nothing is what it seems, and there are various obstacles in their path ...

### **You Never Know! (Aldrei að vita!)**

You Never Know! has all the qualities of a good story: an exciting plot, humorous episodes, and well-rounded characters. In the book we meet once again the characters from the best-sellers Pleasure's Mine! and Don't You Believe it! The children are on a visit out in the country when they notice strange goings-on at a sea-rescue cabin. Before they know it, they are caught up in midnight adventures.

### **The Angel's Christmas Tree (Englajól, 1997)**

While awaiting Christmas the angel-children decorate the most wonderful Christmas tree in the world – in their imagination. A wonderful fairytale with illustrations by Brian Pilkington, which has already aroused great interest in several countries. Available in English translation.



## RECHTE

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### Forlagið

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