

ANNIKA THOR



Foto Ulla Montán

Nominated for the 2020
Hans Christian Andersens Award

Nomination

Dear Jury Members and IBBY Secretariat

We are delighted to nominate Author Annika Thor to the Hans Christian Andersen Award in the author category 2020.

When the Board of IBBY Sweden decided to nominate the writer Annika Thor for the H C Andersen Award 2020, the principal argument was her strong advocacy for the human rights of children and young adults to be treated with dignity and respect. In her authorship, Thor centres on what it means to be human in relation to identity and belonging. The individual's struggle to find a place in existence is a motif, and the quests for love and community as well as loneliness are central concerns. Thor's texts draw attention to how migrants and refugee children are treated in their new context and social environments, in which identity and belonging are created in interaction with others. With gripping realism and insight into children's way of approaching reality, she depicts not least how refugees perceive themselves and are perceived by others as well as the experience of being viewed as an object or reduced to being part of a group without individuality.

In the historical novel sequel about the Steiner girls, *En ö i havet* [*A faraway island*,] (1996), *Näckrosdammen* [*The Lily Pond*] (1997), *Havets Djup* [*Deep Sea*] (1998) and *Öppet hav* [*Open Sea*] (1999), Thor deals with themes that are as central today as during the pogroms in World War II. In an historical context she portrays how young people's identity, social and cultural belonging can develop. The sequel is about two young Jewish sisters who arrive to an island in the Gothenburg archipelago with a refugee transportation from Vienna. They stay in Sweden till the spring of 1946, facing the challenges of encountering a new country and culture with little understanding of their cultural background, while they are developing from childhood, through adolescence to young womanhood. At the

same time, war is raging in Europe and around Vienna where their parents are. Despite the bleak situation, the girls still have hope.

The story of the girls' daily lives as non-accompanied refugee children takes place against the background of and in dialogue with the drama of history. As the refugee girls seek security in unknown space, their inner journey is portrayed as a flow between childhood, adolescence and adulthood. In other words, the sequel concerns the inner journey of the soul and the spatial journey from one place to another as well as the temporal journey from child to adult that we all make. The girls journey through cultures and religious spheres between, as well as within, countries. Thor does not shied away from representing the complexity of life: class, religion, and majority cultural expressions of tolerance and intolerance. All aspects invade their stories, interweave and interact.

This novel sequel was the start of a twenty-year long authorship of literature for all ages. In the novel *Om inte nu så när* [If Not Now, When] (2011), Thor returns to World War II as history. In the picturebook *Flickan från långt ifrån* [The Girl from Far Away] (2014), every word makes its mark and tells a story that cuts to the bones and stays there. Again, Thor addresses the issue of daring to open the door to the unknown and letting in whoever needs a safe harbour.

Since the publication of the Steiner sequel, the novels have been translated into around twenty languages. There are adaptations for film, the stage and radio and also audiobook editions. Thor's texts have made lasting impressions, and she has received a number of awards for her works in Sweden and abroad. Sadly, her central themes are increasingly topical in the world today and her novels call for renewed attention.

Biography

Annika Thor was born in 1950 and grew up in a Jewish home in Gothenburg. She has been a librarian and an arts director, as well as a freelance writer in film, media and children's culture. Annika also writes drama and film manuscripts, often for children and young people. Since her debut Annika Thor has become one of the most successful authors of books for children and young adults. Annika Thor's first book, *An Island in the Sea* (En ö i havet) was published in 1996. The story is set in the 1940s and is about two Jewish refugee sisters who come from Vienna, Austria, to live on an island in the Gothenburg archipelago. It met with great critical acclaim and was nominated for the prestigious August Prize. The book was followed by: *Lily Pond* (Näckrosdammen, 1997), *Sea Deep* (Havets djup, 1998), and the concluding volume, *Open Sea* (Öppet hav, 1999). The entire tetralogy has been widely appreciated by both critics and readers alike in many countries.

In all she has published more than twenty books for children and adults of all ages. Often they portray people in dire situations, struggling to find a place in this life, with psychological and existential conflicts strongly affected by the society in which they live. In her novel "If not now, when" (Om inte nu så när, 2011) she returns to the time before and during World War II that she depicted in her first book.

She is widely praised both in Sweden and abroad and has received numerous prizes such as the August Prize and the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis. So far, her books have been translated into 18 different languages.

Awards

- [1996 – BMF-Barnboksplaketten](#) för *En ö i havet*
- [1997 – Bokjuryn](#) (kategori 10–13 år)
- [1997 – Augustpriset](#) för *Sanning eller konsekvens*
- [1997 – Guldbagge](#) för manuset till filmen *Sanning eller konsekvens*
- [1997 – BMF-Barnboksplaketten](#) för *Sanning eller konsekvens*
- [1998 – Bokjuryn](#) (kategori: barnens eget val 13–19 år)
- [1998 – Wettergrens barnbokollon](#)
- [1999 – Nils Holgersson-plaketten](#) för *Havets djup*
- [1999](#) – Nordiske Börnebogspris
- [1999 – Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis](#) för *En ö i havet*
- [2000 – Astrid Lindgren-priset](#)
- [2000 – Bokjuryn](#) (kategori 13–19 år)
- [2004 – Schullströmska priset för barn- och ungdomslitteratur](#)
- [2005 – Maria Gripe-priset](#)
- [2015 – Elsa Beskow-plaketten](#),^[2] tillsammans med [Maria Jönsson](#)

Interview

Interview: <https://littlebookroom.wordpress.com/2010/02/05/an-interview-with-annika-thor-author-of-the-2010-sydney-taylor-honor-book-a-faraway-island/>

The Little Book Room: Book Reviews for Children

An Interview with Annika Thor, author of the 2010 Sydney Taylor Honor Book ” A Faraway Island”



Annika Thor

Photograph © Cat Lein

Annika Thor grew up in a Jewish family in Gothenburg, Sweden in the 1950s and 60s. She started work as a librarian, and then went on to work as a film and television critic, and finally dedicated herself to writing books, plays and screenplays for young people. She is one of Sweden's best known authors for young people. Her books have been translated into many languages, and have won many prizes.

"A Faraway Island," about Austrian refugee sisters, Stephe and Nellie, is the first in a series of four, and so far the only one to be translated into English. It has won awards in Europe, and has been made into a television series in Sweden. It received two United States honors this year; not only was it chosen as one of two Sydney Taylor Honor Books for Older Readers, but it won the Mildred L. Batchelder Award for best book in translation.

It is my honor to talk with Annika Thor.

Hello Annika,

Since many young people may not know much about the role of Sweden during World War II, I have a some questions about that, as well as questions about your

book, and Jewish life in Sweden during the war, and immediate post-war period, as well as now.

Sweden acted in many contradictory ways as a supposedly neutral country during the war. Nazi soldiers were allowed to travel through Sweden during the war years, and Sweden exported ore to the German government, which was presumably used for the building of tanks, airplanes, and weapons. On the other hand, Sweden rescued thousands of Jews through the work of Raoul Wallenberg and others, and saved almost all of the Jews of Denmark. Why do you think Sweden helped both the Nazis and the Jews during the war?

The principle that guided more or less all decisions taken by the Swedish government during the war was that of neutrality: of keeping out of the war at any cost. During the first years of the war, until the German defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, this meant making concessions to various demands from the Germans, who were seen as the stronger party, such as permitting soldiers and materials (though in principle not weapons) to be transported through Sweden, and continuing exportation of iron ore and other goods (which, of course, was also in the interest of Swedish industry). After [the Battle of] Stalingrad [in which the Germans were soundly defeated], fear of the Germans became less dominant and the transportation of soldiers ceased in the summer of 1943. As it became increasingly clear that the Allies would eventually win the war, the Swedish government gradually changed its orientation.

However, this is not the full explanation for the efforts that were made in order to rescue Jews. As for the Danish Jews (and also those of the Norwegian Jews who were not already deported in the fall of 1942), the feeling of Nordic solidarity was an important factor, and when the “White Buses” started rolling towards the end of the war, the primary goal was to rescue Norwegian and Danish citizens – Jewish and non-Jewish – from the concentration camps; although in the end many other nationalities were also brought to Sweden on the buses. Finally, a few

individuals played an important part. Without Raul Wallenberg himself, the Jewish businessman Gilel Storch, the Swedish count Lennart Bernadotte and many others, most of the rescue actions would probably not have taken place at all.

Can you explain what the “White Buses” were? What comes to my mind are the vans the Germans used to gas small groups of Jews before they began to use the gas chambers.

No, on the contrary! In the spring of 1945, the Swedish Red Cross, led by the Swedish count Lennart Bernadotte, drove buses (painted white with a red cross) to the concentration camps in Germany to bring prisoners back to Scandinavia. Permission to do this was negotiated with German authorities. Originally, the aim was to rescue Danish and Norwegian citizens only, but in the end at least 15,000 people (many of them women) of different nationalities were rescued. You can read more on: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Buses.

I find it interesting that you say that Nordic solidarity led to the concern for the Jewish populations of those countries, which was very much in contrast to the attitudes of other European countries who were only too glad to see the Jews as other, and to strip them of the protections of citizenship.

Yes, I think there was a difference in the way that Norwegian and Danish Jews could be regarded as “Norwegians” and “Danes” and therefore worthy of more concern than for example German or Polish Jews. Still, there was a lot of xenophobia and racism in Sweden as well, and some newspapers described the Danish Jews in a way that drew strongly on antisemitic stereotypes (for instance describing them as expensively dressed, in fur coats and with expensive jewelry ...) A very interesting doctoral thesis which was published a few years ago (“A brother, guest, and parasite”) deals with the interplay between antisemitism and “the Nordic idea” during and immediately after the war (unfortunately, it is

written in Swedish with only a brief English summary). On the whole, there has been a strong interest in this period among younger historians for the past fifteen years or so!

Of the many stories you could have written about the Swedish rescue of Jews during the war, what inspired you to write this particular story?

Quite a few of the Jews who were rescued from the concentration camps have written down their own memories, in the form of autobiographies or fictional stories. I feel that these stories should be told by the people who experienced them, because they are beyond the imagination of us who did not. In contrast, very little had been written by or about the children who came with the Kindertransport before the war until I started to work on this theme (a doctoral thesis on the subject was published in the same year as my first book, 1996), and I felt that the experiences that they went through are in a sense more universal and more suitable to interpret for someone with a different background.

Also, in the early 1990's, there was an increase in the number of children and teenagers coming alone as refugees from countries like Iran and Somalia, and I felt that writing about the child refugees of WWII could also have some bearing on the current situation. Finally, the theme gave me the chance of contrasting Central European Jewish culture with Swedish ways of life, something which I myself experienced a generation later.

What was it like for you to grow up as a Jew in the immediate post-war years?

I was born in 1950, so by the time I became aware that I was Jewish and started to have some sense of what that meant, it was already the early 1960's and fifteen years had passed since the war. Unlike many in my generation, I was not the child of survivors – my paternal grandparents had come to Sweden from Belarus at the turn of the century, and my mother came to Sweden in 1933, at the age of six, with her parents and younger brother. But the experience of the Holocaust was

still very present in the minds of my parents, their friends and our relatives, so there was a kind of fear that was transmitted to me and other children. At one point in the early 60's there was a brief outbreak of anti-Semitism in the form of graffiti on the doors of the synagogue and so on, and I remember being frightened that worse things would follow.

I was never explicitly told [about the Holocaust], but I knew anyway (and I did read a children's book by a Dutch author called "Star Children" which made such a strong impression on me that I never allowed my own children to read it ...) But I remember nightmares about Nazis coming to get me.

Also, in those days Sweden was not yet an immigrant country. I was the only one (or at least that is how it felt) in my class with brown eyes and black hair, and I felt different, which is a feeling that children usually do not like. I wanted to be like everybody else, and I hated it when strangers would ask me: "Where do you come from?" (I used to answer with the part of the city of Gothenburg where I grew up). But I think that this feeling of being different, of being an outsider, is very useful for someone who is to become a writer!

What is it like for Jewish children to grow up in Sweden today?

I am not really the right person to answer that question. My two daughters are now 33 and 28 years old, and their father is not Jewish, so they have not had the kind of Jewish upbringing that I myself had. But one negative thing that they did not have to experience is the feeling of being different that I just described. Today, there are many children and young people with brown eyes and dark hair in Sweden: some of them are Jewish, some are Kurdish or Turkish or Palestinian, or from Bosnia, Iran or Iraq – and my daughters have friends from most of these places. It is for this multicultural society that I write!

Were you surprised that your books about Stephie and Nellie are so popular in Sweden, and now in the rest of the world?

I was not so surprised that they became popular in Sweden – though neither I, nor my publisher could have foreseen the extent of their popularity, with still new editions being published after almost fifteen years and an even more popular TV-series which has now been broadcast for the third time. The books tell a story that has not been told before and that was not at all well known in Sweden when they were first published. At the same time, they depict events and emotions that are easy to identify with, even if you were born in Sweden and lived here all your life. And for many immigrant children in Sweden, they have become a way of processing their own situation “at a distance”, which is sometimes easier than through a story that is closer to their own lives.

What really surprised me was that the books also became so popular abroad, not only in Germany (which is, after all, not so surprising), or in the Nordic and other European countries, but also in countries like Japan and South Korea, where there is no Jewish population at all. This spring, I am going first to Japan, then to Russia, in connection with the appearance of the fourth and final book in the series, and I am really looking forward to discussing the books with readers in those countries.

The scene where Stephie and Nellie are taken to the revival meeting is very disturbing. Was it common for host families to take their Jewish children to Church, and did they often try to convert them?

According to Ingrid Lomfors, the Swedish historian who wrote her thesis on the children of the Kindertransport, only a minority of the children could be taken in by Jewish families (there were not that many Jews in Sweden at the time). Most came to ordinary Swedish families, which meant that it was very difficult for them to maintain Jewish traditions (but of course, quite a few of the children, like Stephie and Nellie, came from more or less secular Jewish homes). The majority of the Swedish families were probably only conventionally Christian, and did not try to convert the children, though they probably took them to church on Christmas and other special occasions. However, a minority of the host families

belonged to different evangelistic movements, and for them saving the children from the Nazis and “saving” them by converting them were more or less the same thing. The chapter about the revival meeting is based on a true story.

Actually, this scene is so shocking that I don’t think I would have dared to include it had it not been based on facts! I have had several interesting discussions with people belonging to evangelistic movements about conversions of the children; of course, nowadays even they agree that this was wrong.

I understand that you are the author of a great number of books besides the books about Stephie and Nellie. Do you often write about Jewish themes for children?

No, I do not consider myself a “Jewish writer” in that sense, though I believe that growing up in a Jewish family has affected my choice of themes and my manner of treating them profoundly. My father, a secular Jew who still identified strongly with the Jewish people, taught me that the essence of Judaism was to always support the weak against the strong. This is at the heart of my writing, along with moral questions and choices, and the feeling of being an outsider, but the books about Stephie and Nellie are the only ones so far where I have treated these themes in a Jewish context.

Annika, thank you so much for taking the time to answer these questions

Some Short Reviews

A Faraway Island

Book review by

[Matt Berman](#), Common Sense Media



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Parents need to know that this story can help kids start learning about World War II, Nazis, and child refugees. Stephanie is a relatable character who fights with her sister, worries about her parents (whom she is separated from), and discovers her inner courage. While the war is kept at a distance, there are moments when Stephanie remembers her life before she left Germany, including the beating of a couple and the killing of a dog.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

In 1939, Viennese Jewish sisters Stephanie and Nellie are sent by their parents as refugees to Sweden. They're placed with different families on a small, windswept island, where they hope that their parents will join them later. Nellie learns Swedish quickly, makes

friends, and lives with a kind family. But older sister Stephanie picks up Swedish more slowly, lives with a cold old woman, and is bullied at school. She longs for the day that she's reunited with her parents, but that's looking more and more unlikely. Includes Author's Note.

IS IT ANY GOOD?

This seamless translation from Swedish, based on an event little-known in that country, will help kids begin to learn about tough topics like World War II, Nazis, and child refugees. It takes place outside of the more extreme crimes of the war, but kids will still be moved by this realistic tale of children torn apart from their parents and learning to live in a foreign place.

See our discussion guide for ideas for delving into the themes here and our list of other recommended books for kids who are ready to delve more deeply into the stories of Jewish children in WWII.

TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT ...

- Families can talk about WWII and its impact on kids and families. What did kids know about the war before reading this book? How can they find out more?
- The author wrote this book based, in part, on interviews with 500 Jews who, like Stephe, spent WWII in Sweden as child refugees. Do you feel differently about the book knowing that real kids went through what Stephe did?

KIRKUS REVIEW

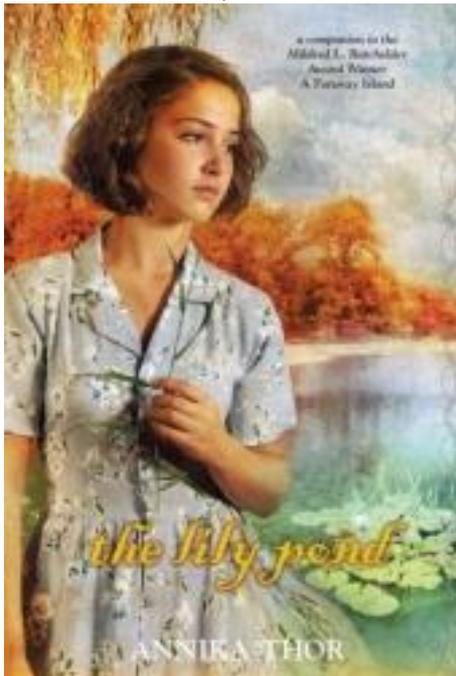
At the onset of World War II, Jewish Stephanie and her younger sister, Nellie, are sent to a Swedish island to live with separate host families while they await their parents' visas to America. Even after the turmoil of Vienna, Stephe struggles with separation from her sister and living with strict Aunt Marta in lonely isolation, while Nellie quickly finds friends and comfort. As time passes and her Swedish improves, Stephe learns more about why her circumstances are more

difficult than Nellie's. While the parents encounter multiple barriers to reuniting the family, some small adjustments are made in the girls' daily lives to ease their situation. The increasing involvement of Sweden in the war provides a commonality between the girls and the villagers, allowing Stephe to look outside her pain to find an inner strength and determination that she never knew she had. Straightforwardly told in the present tense and easier for tender hearts than the brutal stories of concentration camps, this still conveys the reality of war and the suffering of those displaced by it. (*Historical fiction. 9-14*)

The Lily Pond

Book review by

[Barbara Schultz](#), Common Sense Media



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Parents need to know that *The Lily Pond* continues the story of Stephe and Nellie, characters that author Annika Thor introduced in her novel [A Faraway Island](#). To protect their daughters from the dangers and poor living conditions for Jews in Austria during World War II, the girls' parents have sent them to live in Sweden

with foster parents. The book informs readers about the deteriorating situation in Austria through letters from Stephe's parents. In Sweden, Stephe also encounters adults who sympathize with the Nazis, and must navigate some challenging interactions with authority figures as a result. Parents may wish to explain some things about World War II and anti-Semitism. Also, the girls' foster parents are Pentecostal Christians, whose code of behavior is extremely strict: For example, they believe that attending concerts or seeing movies is sinful, and this might be confusing to readers unfamiliar with such beliefs. Stephe also develops a crush on a boy she's friends with, and believes she's in love, which could warrant some family discussion, as the novel is written at a fourth-grade reading level.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Stephe and her sister Nellie's parents have sent their daughters away from their home in Nazi-occupied Vienna to live with foster parents on an island off the coast of Sweden. Stephe, who is 13, has just completed the equivalent of elementary school, and her foster parents have arranged for her to go to grammar school (high school) in Goteborg on the mainland, where she will rent a room from acquaintances. In Goteborg, Stephanie falls in love for the first time and she makes close friends, but she also struggles with anti-Semitism, peer pressure, and concern for her parents back home in Vienna.

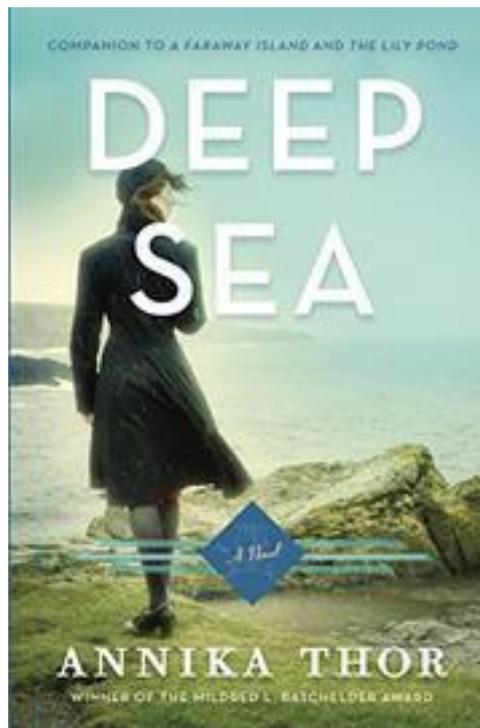
IS IT ANY GOOD?

THE LILY POND is a very nice, age-appropriate book about World War II for middle graders. Because the hardships Stephe's parents endure in Vienna are related by her parents, they're tempered in just the way a parent would break news to a child. Stephe is an intelligent, sensitive character with a rich inner world, and any preteen who's felt like a fish out of water will relate to her feelings of insecurity and longing for her parents.

TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT ...

- Families can talk about what Stephe's life is like away from her parents. Do you think her mom and dad did the right thing by sending Stephe and Nellie to Sweden?
- What do you think about the way Sven's parents treat Stephe, and why do you think it makes her so angry?
- Why does Stephe keep Alice's secrets? What would you do if you were in her situation?

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/book-reviews/deep-sea>



[Book-reviews/deep-sea.](https://www.commonsemmedia.org/book-reviews/deep-sea)

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Parents need to know that [Annika Thor](#)'s *Deep Sea* is the third in a series (following *A Faraway Island* and *The Lily Pond*) about Stephe, a Jewish girl

living in Sweden during World War II while her parents are in a concentration camp. A girl she knows tells her that some Jews are sent to death camps where lethal gas is used. Stephe's foster father worries about hitting a mine while fishing. Men are found dead in a submarine after they hit a mine. Germans shoot other boats down. A major character discovers her mother is dead and learns that her father has been transported to a worse camp. Stephe kisses a boy, who quickly gets overly physical with her, pushing her beyond what she wants to do. She overhears her friend having sex in the next room. A 16-year-old girl is pressured into taking racy photos and into having sex with the photographer. A teen girl gets pregnant. A boy calls Stephe a "Jewish slut," telling her to "go to hell"; a shopkeeper calls Stephe's younger sister a "little Jew brat." Stephe takes a sip of alcohol when she and Vera are with some boys; the boys drink more than one drink. Parents and teachers can use *Deep Sea* and the other series installments to talk about the Holocaust and World War II and what happened to Jewish children and families in Europe.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

In DEEP SEA, 15-year-old Stephe is about to finish primary school. Her parents are in a concentration camp, and she splits her time between boarding with a big, struggling but loving family in town and spending some weekends on the island where her Swedish foster parents and little sister live. When she returns to the island for the summer, things aren't perfect, despite a rather idyllic setting: She must study so she can pass exams that allow her to continue her education; a friend gets pregnant; her little sister is acting wild and hateful; and she worries about her parents, whose situation continues to worsen. Through it all, Stephe must learn to grow up and speak up for the things she wants, although she know that things might not work out exactly as she wants them to.

[Continue reading](#)

IS IT ANY GOOD?

Even readers who have not read the other two installments in this compelling series will have no trouble following Stephe's story here. Author Annika Thor mixes in details many teens face growing up -- fighting with siblings, helping friends through tough situations, figuring out how to pay for school -- with Stephe's stressful family situation, being separated from her parents during the Holocaust.

Readers will definitely learn a lot about what it was like to be a Jewish child refugee during World War II, but they also will find a tender coming-of-age story and a strong, smart, loving protagonist who's easy to root for.

TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT ...

Families can talk about the historical elements in *Deep Sea*. What do you know about what happened to Jewish children in Europe when the Nazis were in power? Why do you think the author chose to call this book *Deep Sea*? How does the setting reflect Stephe's story?

Did you know that this is the third book in a series that began with *A Faraway Island*? Why do you think the author continues to return to these characters?

Deep Sea

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/annika-thor/deep-sea/>

KIRKUS REVIEW

The third installment in a proposed quartet of books about Stephe's experiences as a Jewish refugee in Sweden during World War II that began with Batchelder-winning *Faraway Island* (2009) and honor book *The Lily Pond* (2011).

Now Stephe is 16, and her world has become increasingly complex; even her 10-year-old sister, Nellie, finds that it isn't easy to negotiate two worlds. The contrast between their Jewish heritage and faith with the Pentecostal Christianity of their

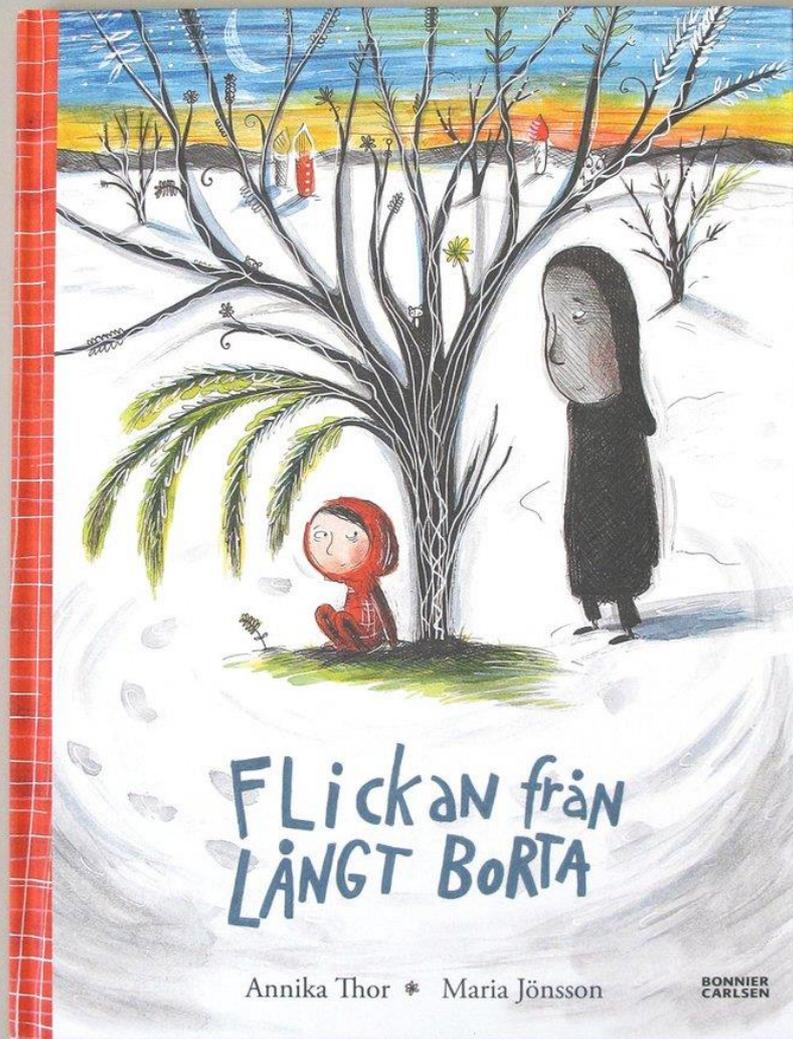
hosts is challenging, as is finding funds for high school. Meeting other Jewish refugees awakens Stephe to the broader ethical aspects of the war, and messages from her parents in Theresienstadt help her understand the horrors of the Holocaust. Her friend Vera's sexual entanglements make her uneasy, and Stephe is frighteningly vulnerable. Her friend May's family and Miss Björk, her teacher, come to the island for the summer, allowing readers to meet Miss Björk's partner, Janice, an Englishwoman with a frivolous bent. The intricacy of the issues examined here are all built on events and characters introduced in the previous books, making for a rich blend of emotional truths presented in relatively few pages—but readers need to be familiar with those earlier titles to appreciate them.

Readers who have come to love Stephe will be glad to see her world expand. (*Historical fiction. 12-16*)

[Flickan från långt borta /The girl from far away](http://www.litteraturmagazinet.se/annika-thor/flickan-fran-langt-borta/recension/erika-wallman)

<http://www.litteraturmagazinet.se/annika-thor/flickan-fran-langt-borta/recension/erika-wallman>

A cold winter night it knocks on the door. It's a lonely girl who wants to come in. *The Gray* thinks she can go somewhere else but still opens the door. She prefers to be alone, it's the most beautiful time. Or? She gives the girl a cup of warm milk and lets her stay overnight. First on a mattress but after a while she let her sleep in the bed. The girl thinks she can stay, but *The Gray* tells her to leave, to find someone else who wants to take care of her. The girl leaves the house, out into the cold. Nice to be alone, *The Gray* thinks. But everywhere in the house there are things and scents that remains of the girl ...





"The girl from far away" is a beautiful book about different kinds of loneliness, about finding something you didn't know you were missing, about the desire for affinity and not knowing how to get there. You quickly understand how the book is build; the stranger who wants to be alone, the conflicting feelings, the eviction. Then you think you know how it will end up, the long-awaited happy ending. But not in any sugar-sweet way at all, it is a melancholy and atmospheric tale in both text and image and the feeling remains all the way to the end. The book is merged with relief and confidence. There is hope for humanity.

Annika Thor is Sweden's most beloved writer, especially acclaimed for her youth books "Truth or Consequence" and "An Island in the Sea". This is her first book with illustrations, created together with illustrator Maria Jönsson, and what a fantastic debut it is. Although much is left untouched, there are no loose threads, the reader is always there, caught and engaged. What first hurts in the heart,

changes to a heat, then cools down and then heats up again. It's a roller-coaster ride with emotions.

The simple, sleepy pictures, the stripped but subtle text, the symbolism of the small details - I think we will look back at "The girl from far away" as one of this year's best children's books.



“What’s our responsibility towards our fellow humans? Do we have to participate in a social community? Grey lives alone in a house in the forest. There’s food in

the cellar, are burning in the stove, electricity for the hot plates and curtains for the windows. That's enough for Grey. Still, when on a dark night a girl shows up having walked through the snow, Grey reluctantly opens the door. The girl says she has no one to take care of her. Grey gives her a cup of hot milk and makes up a bed in the kitchen. In the morning the girl has to leave. She can't stay with Grey, because she wants to be on her own. But a smell lingers, piercing through the solitude. A forgotten hairband. Tiny details that nonetheless bind them together, regardless whether Grey likes it or not. Maria Jönsson's illustrations lend the story a striking fragility where Grey's subtle gestures and colours stand in direct contrast to the flowing lines of the conclusion and the rich tones dominating the climax. The girl from far away is a touching portrayal of our shared and unconditional responsibility towards our neighbour.”

[BARNOCHUNGDOMSBOKSBLOGGEN](http://barnochungdomsboksbloggen.com) -
[HTTP://BARNOCHUNGDOMSBOK.BLOGSPOT.COM/2014/04/FLIC
KAN-FRAN-LANGT-BORTA.HTML](http://barnochungdomsbok.blogspot.com/2014/04/flikkan-fran-langt-borta.html)

A lonely girl in a big forest. It is dark and cold and she is tired but she sees a small house. Where it shines.

But ... no one ever opens the girl knocking several times. Through the window she sees that Den Grå sits alone by a fire and has it warm and comfortable. She doesn't want to be disturbed.

But not even The Gray can steel itself against the little girl on the stairs and open the door in the end.

Can I come in? asks the girl. You get to warm yourself by the fire, said The Gray. Then you get to go. I'm not used to visiting. But the little girl is so small and Den Grå actually has a little milk to heat and a mattress that you can make.

You get to sleep in the kitchen but only tonight she says. The girl falls asleep immediately. But it seems a bit hard and a little cold. Barefoot sneaks up Gray and lifts it to his bed.

In the morning, the gray already boiled coffee and warmed milk and sits waiting for the girl at the kitchen table.

Can I stay now? asks the girl. "No, you can't," said the Gray. This is my house and no one else should live ...

The girl from far away is a heartbreaking story of loneliness and wanting to belong, but not knowing how. A "Who Will Comfort Toffle? ", "The Root Child" or the Lord of the Little Uncle "story. A story that makes one warm in the heart and soft in the stomach. You don't know where and how the girl is alone and not the gray one either is the longing for affinity and fellowship that is the central theme and which goes straight into the body."

Ten books by Annika Thor

Titles directly translated, not published in English, are surrounded by "".

En ö i havet/ *A faraway island*,

Näckrosdammen/ *The lily pond*

Öppet hav/ *Open sea*

Havets djup/ *Deep sea*,

Eldfågeln/ *"Firebird"*

Flickan från långt borta/ *"The girl from far away"*

Sanning och konsekvens/ *"Truth or Dare"*

Dit ljuset inte når/ *"Where light does not reach"*

Fyren och stjärnorna/ *"The lighthouse and the stars"* – tillsammans med Per Thor

Nu, imorgon!/ *"Now, tomorrow!"*

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9789163865862	De nya skorna	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2010-03-08	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163853425	De nya skorna	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2008-03-31	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163884405	Dit ljuset inte når	Thor, Annika			2015-09-10	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163838071	Eldfågeln	Thor, Annika			2000-06-08	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163888489	En annan resa	Thor, Annika			2016-08-09	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163833151	En ö i havet	Thor, Annika			2003-09-10	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163894480	En ö i havet	Thor, Annika			2017-04-27	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163834547	En ö i havet	Thor, Annika			2000-02-08	Bonnier Carlsen

9789163845857	En ö i havet : samlingsutgåva	Thor, Annika			2005-02-14	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163873348	Flickan från långt borta	Thor, Annika	Jönsson, Maria		2014-03-31	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163864377	Fyren och stjärnorna	Thor, Annika, Thor, Per	Wegelius, Jakob		2009-08-20	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163834837	Havets djup	Thor, Annika			2003-09-10	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163834943	Havets djup	Thor, Annika			1998-08-24	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163837081	Havets djup	Thor, Annika			2000-02-08	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163895289	Havets djup	Thor, Annika			2017-04-27	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163865879	Loves kanin	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2010-03-08 2010-03-08	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163853388	Loves kanin	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2008-03-31	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163888472	Meningen med livet	Thor, Annika	Nilsson Thore, Maria		2016-08-09	Bonnier Carlsen

9789178031016	Mirabell och Astrakan	Thor, Annika	Jönsson, Maria		2019-12-30	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163841705	Nu, imorgon!	Thor, Annika			2005-08-26	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163834011	Näckrosdammen	Thor, Annika			1997-04-23	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163833168	Näckrosdammen	Thor, Annika			2003-09-10	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163835513	Näckrosdammen	Thor, Annika			2000-02-09	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163894497	Näckrosdammen	Thor, Annika			2017-04-27	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163889431	Odjuret i labyrinten och andra grekiska myter	Thor, Annika	Wegelius, Jakob		2016-09-05	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163827334	Pirr i magen klump i halsen	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2003-09-25	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163853418	Roliga timmen	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2007-08-15	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163864261	Roliga timmen	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2009-09-14	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163826917	Rött hjärta blå fjäril	Thor, Annika			2002-09-18	Bonnier Carlsen

9789163826344	Sanning eller konsekvens	Thor, Annika			2002-09-18	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163836268	Sanning eller konsekvens	Thor, Annika			1999-11-04	Bonnier Carlsen
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9789163878039	Sanning eller konsekvens	Thor, Annika			2013-09-16	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163864254	Sova över	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2009-09-14	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163853395	Sova över	Thor, Annika	Torudd, Cecilia		2007-08-15	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163859274	Vad skulle du ha valt?	Thor, Annika			2008-08-11	Bonnier Carlsen
9789163835643	Öppet hav	Thor, Annika			2003-09-10	Bonnier Carlsen
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Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	Rys	Samokat
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	USA	Random House
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	Port/Bra	Record
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BV	Spa	Pearson
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	JP	Shinjuku Shobo
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	Viet	Tranan/
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	HU	Grafoproduct
Thor, A		En ö i havet serien 4 titlar pocket	BC	No	Omnipax
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	Fra	Thierry Magnier
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	IT	Feltrinelli
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	NL	Lemniscaat
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	Tys	Carlsen Verlag
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	Fin	Tammi
Thor, A		En ö i havet	BC	Ukr	Novyi Samokat Publishing House
Thor, A		Havets djup	BC	Fin	Tammi
Thor, A		Havets djup	BC	No	Omnipax
Thor, A		Havets djup	BC	Kor	Sigongsa
Thor, A		Havets djup	BC	Fra	Thierry Magnier
Thor, A		Havets djup	BC	Rys	Samokat
Thor, A		Havets djup	BC	JP	Shinjuku Shobo
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Thor, A		Havets djup	BC	Ty	Carlsen

Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	No	Omnipax
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	Fra	Thierry Magnier
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	Kor	Sigongsa
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	Rys	Samokat
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	USA	Random House
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	Ukr	Novyi Samokat Publishing House
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	IT	Feltrinelli
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	JP	Shinjuku Shobo
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	Tys	Carlsen Verlag
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	Fin	Tammi
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	Spa	Pearson
Thor, A		Näckrosdammen	BC	NL	Lemniscaat
Thor, A		Öppet hav	BC	Kor	Sigongsa
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Thor, A		Öppet hav	BC	Rys	Samokat
Thor, A		Öppet hav	BC	IT	Feltrinelli
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Thor, A		Öppet hav	BC	No	Omnipax
Thor, A		Öppet hav	BC	JP	Shinjuku Shobo(via TM)
Thor, A		De nya skorna	BC	Ty	Carlsen
Thor, A		Eldfågeln	BC	Fär	Bokadeildin
Thor, A		Eldfågeln	BC	Ty	Carlsen
Thor, A		Eldfågeln	BC	No	Omnipax
Thor, A		Flickan från långt borta	BC	Ty	Oetinger
Thor, A	Jönsson, M	Flickan från långt borta	BC	DK	Klematis
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Thor, A		Nu, imorgon!	BC	No	Omnipax
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Thor, A	Torudd, C	Pirr i magen klump i halsen	BC	No	Omnipax
Thor, A		Pirr i magen klump i halsen	BC	Dk	GB-forlagene
Thor, A	Torudd, C	Pirr i magen klump i halsen	BC	Fär	Bokadeildin
Thor, A		Pirr i magen klump i halsen	BC	IT	Feltrinelli
Thor, A		Pirr i magen klump i halsen	BC	NL	Lemniscaat
Thor, A		Pirr i magen klump i halsen	BC	Ty	Carlsen
Thor, A	Torudd, C	Pirr i magen, klump i halsen	BC	Pol	Czarna Owieczka
Thor, A	Torudd, C	Roliga timmen	BC	No	Omnipax
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