

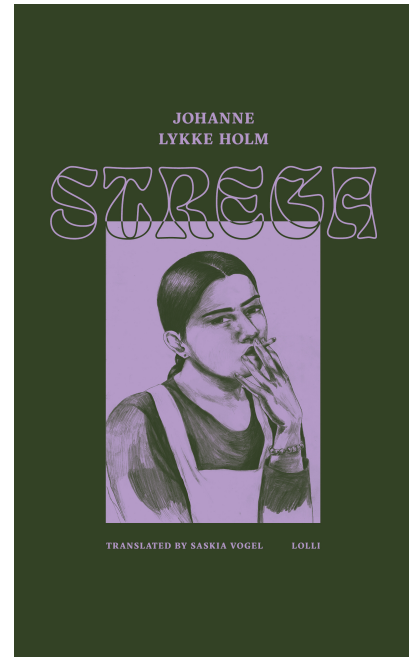
STREGA

by Johanne Lykke Holm

Translated from the Swedish
by Saskia Vogel

Winner of an English PEN Award
Nominated for the Nordic Council Literature Prize
Shortlisted for the European Union Prize for Literature

Publication: 1 November 2022
Description: Hardcover, 204 × 132 mm, 180 pages
ISBN: 978-1-9196092-2-5
Design: Ateljé Grotesk
Price: £14.99



Powerfully inventive and atmospheric, *Strega* is a modern gothic story of nine young women on the cusp of inheriting society’s submission to violence, and the age-long myths that uphold it

With little boxes of liquorice, hairbands, and notebooks in her bag, Rafa arrives at the remote Alpine town of Strega to work at the grand Olympic Hotel. There, she and eight other girls receive the stiff uniforms of seasonal workers and are taught to iron, cook, and make the beds by austere matrons. In spare moments between tasks, the girls start to enjoy each other’s company as they pick herbs in the garden, read in the library, and take in the scenery. But when the hotel suddenly fills with people for a raucous party, one of the girls disappears. What follows are deeper revelations about the myths young women are told, what they are raised to expect from the world, the violence they are made to endure, and, ultimately, the question of whether a gentler, more beautiful life is possible.

A monument to long-dead maids and their shrouded knowledge, Johanne Lykke Holm’s luminescent and jagged prose, delivered in Saskia Vogel’s incisive translation, resonates like a spell that keeps exerting its powers long after reading.

JOHANNE LYKKE HOLM (b. 1987) is an author and translator. Nominated for both the Nordic Council Literature Prize and the European Union Prize for Literature, she is establishing herself among the most promising up-and-coming literary authors in Sweden. She has also translated Yahya Hassan, Josefine Klougart, and Hiromi Itō into Swedish.

SASKIA VOGEL is an author and translator from Los Angeles, now living in Berlin. *Permission* (2019), her debut novel, was published in five languages and longlisted for the Believer Book Award. The Swedish edition was translated by Johanne Lykke Holm. She is Princeton University’s Fall 2022 Translator in Residence.

PRAISE FOR *STREGA*

'A work of mythic reinvention about the power of girls coming of age in a world hell bent on containing their passions and imaginations... *Strega* left me breathless, angry, and then thrilled by the dare it leaves in the reader's lap.'

– **Lidia Yuknavitch, author of *Thrust* and *The Chronology of Water***

'Utterly immersive, *Strega* is a modern-day fairy tale in the primeval sense, a visceral, hallucinatory allegory of coming into womanhood. It's at once timeless and completely new, with surprising and evocative prose – a glittering translation of a masterful work.'

– **Julia Fine, author of *The Upstairs House* and *What Should Be Wild***

'*Strega* is the kind of book Lolita would write if she wrote like Thomas Mann. This book is sprawling with heart-shaped mirrors in wet grass, peach-coloured bedding, neon lights, knives. All the paraphernalia of patriarchal violence. Johanne Lykke Holm is from the school of Fleur Jaeggy and Frank Wedekind, she uses the young women as her stage and transports you to another world, where everything is scenography. As uncompromising and brilliant as she is disturbing, I am forever devoted to the cult of her.'

– **Olga Ravn, author of *The Employees***

'If Fleur Jaeggy and Shirley Jackson had ever spent the night together in The Shining Hotel, their love child might have been *Strega*. As it was, this *Strega* came into the world through a different yet equally miraculous union: that of a writer and a translator of extraordinary talent. Its hypnotic, off-kilter prose dances the reader into a state of gloried frenzy, pressing the sometimes-nightmarish buttons of imagined memory as it probes the essence of being young, searching, and exploited.'

– **Polly Barton, translator and author of *Fifty Sounds***

'*Strega* is a charm: its vivid details work eerie magic. In sumptuous, prickly prose, Johanne Lykke Holm unsettles and astonishes her reader.'

– **Isobel Wohl, author of *Cold New Climate***

'Stylish and spellbinding... Readers won't be able to turn away from this gorgeous and captivating work.'

– ***Publishers Weekly***

'A fever dream meditation on girlhood, female friendships and unnamed dangers... *Strega* is riveting: surreal, ominous [and] sharp in its observations about the harms that girls submit to when they become women.'

– ***Shelf Awareness***

'"I knew that a woman's life can be turned into a crime scene at any moment", explains the protagonist early on in the book, giving the reader an indication of the violence to come... The female world that Lykke Holm depicts is remarkable and enchanting... When the maids' hair spill over the sheets "like spilled ink" I stand defeated, by great beauty and grief.'

– ***Dagens Nyheter***