

"Her pen is like an arctic knife with eastern flavours."

Sofi Oksanen

Rosa Liksom

Compartment No. 6

Published by WSOY 187 pages

A Finnish girl studying archeology in Moscow in the late 1980s, leaves behind the big city, her boyfriend and the boyfriend's mother. She desperately wants to see the ancient rock-paintings in Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

She shares the train compartment with a huge Russian man in his forties, travelling with garlic and vodka in his bag. The girl is silent, the man speaks. His speech is loud and vulgar: it grows from hard experience and a grotesque view of the world. He has grown up in the streets, been in prison for murder, and is now on his way to a big construction site in Siberia.

The train lingers for a long time at many stations, sometimes more than a day. At these stops, a changing country can be seen – the Soviet Union, where "everything is moving, snow, water, air, clouds, wind, towns, villages, people and ideas." The girl becomes the man's prisoner, she cannot leave the cabin, she must see and hear all about Soviet life, and soon enough experience it herself.

The trip is a nightmare, and at the same time a twisted, beautiful story. Compartment no 6 is a novel, where there is room for both joy and piercing pain in the same sentence.

"The literary composition alone is worth the money, the melodic, rhythmic language, compressed, poetical and replete with fragrance and colour sensations... The girl and the man, this unlikely couple, accompany one another at the close across the plains as if progressing through a film by Andrej Tarkovskij."

Svenska Dagbladet

"The outcome is both atmospheric and beautiful, an elegy to the Soviet Union and its people, the land where 'unhappiness is perceived as happiness'."

Helsingborgs Dagblad



FOTO: PEKKA MUSTONEN © WSOY, FINLAND.

Rosa Liksom (born 1958 in Lapland, Finland) is a prize winning writer and two time candidate for The Nordic Prize of Literature, whose books have been translated into more than 15 languages. She is also a renowned painter and film maker. She is an expert on people who live in unconventional circumstances, on the borders of cultures. In her long awaited new novel, behind the spot-on realism, her subject is love.

FINNISH TITLE:

Hytti nro 6

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“All this black as night misery and despair are elevated by the writer into literature. She achieves this by means of the girl’s acute observations and sensitivity and the man’s luxuriating exaggeration and burlesque vehemence... The entire text is saturated with marked sensuality: the taste of buckwheat porridge, beetroots and rancid fat. And the human smells of sweat, fusel alcohol and poverty... And thus ‘Hytti no 6’ becomes a remarkable little book.”

Göteborgs Posten

“The wild stories of the rough fellow passenger make this journey increasingly absurd, giddy and captivating... It is a stroke of genius to describe a country and give form to one’s mixed feelings for it through such a figure. To me, he is the incarnation of the human factor, which means that reason can never prevail, neither in planned nor in Capitalist economies.”

Aftonbladet

“The most fascinating thing about this short novel is Rosa Liksom’s masterly ability to visualise life and landscape. She is an artist, after all, and the imagery in the book is often very surprising and always loaded with meaning.”

Hufvudstadsbladet



“Liksom is a master of controlled exaggeration. With a couple of carefully chosen brushstrokes, a mini-story, she is able to conjure up an entire human destiny.”

From the motivation for the Finlandia Prize

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