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Bjørn Sortland

Moment of Honesty

When she is seventeen, Frida is diagnosed with a serious eye disease. Desperate, her mind reeling, she spends the evening of the day she receives this devastating news walking aimlessly about the streets of Oslo. Driven by an intense desire to see the world before blindness overcomes her, she decides to travel. To see the world's beauty – before it is too late.

In Florence she meets Jakob, who, like herself, is Norwegian. A self-proclaimed art-geek, he is in Florence to write an article for a Norwegian youth magazine. Frida accompanies Jakob on his travels and, as their relationship develops, Jakob finds himself accompanying her – to show her the paintings he is studying while she can still see them; and to share her company. From the moment they set out together, the narrative so evolves as to braid ever more closely art history and the couple's odyssey. We follow the deterioration of Frida's condition much as one follows the plot of a thriller. She is by no means assured that the treatment she has been prescribed is working; nor does she always remember to take her pills and potions as regularly as she should. At the last moment she returns to Oslo, where she enters hospital and is operated on.

The book is beautifully illustrated by reproductions of all the 33 paintings the two teenagers admire throughout their journey.

Bjørn Sortland

Author, reviewer and journalist, Bjørn Sortland is represented in a number of anthologies, and he has also written for radio and television. His authorship, which spans children's, young adults and picture books, has won him a variety of awards. *Den solbrente mammaen som blei bytta mot ti kamelar* (1997) brought the author the Aschehoug Prize for the Best Children's Novel of the Year. *12 ting som må gjerast rett før verda går under* is also a prize-winning novel.



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