

The repercussions of looking the other way

Witnesses

RUDY SOETEWEE

When union official Martin looks away in terror from three youths who are spraying graffiti on a night train and then attack an elderly gentleman who says something about it, he finds himself in a moral quandary. Nobody notices him, he doesn't have a mobile phone and the victim doesn't seem to be in a bad way. Enough reasons for Martin not to call the police.

Soetewey paints a very subtle and detailed picture of the unavoidable downfall of a small, defenceless man.

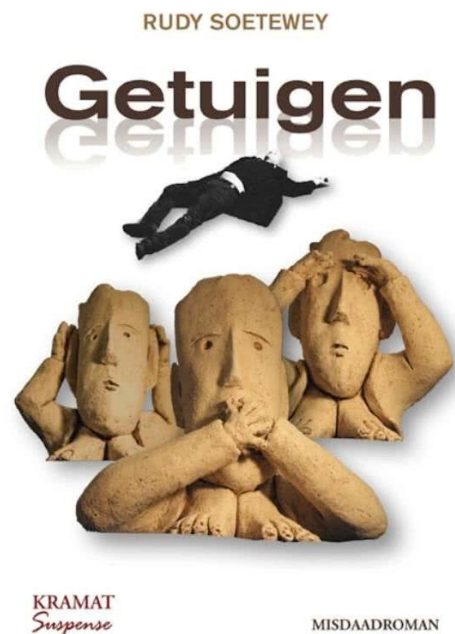
KNACK

Until he reads an article in the paper the following day... Martin's conscience troubles him and he decides to notify the police. But Martin's anonymous tip-off lands him in a sticky situation that may well prove too much for him. The youngsters on the train are of immigrant origin and their leader is the adopted child of rich parents. Martin is branded with the stigma of racism.

With great subtlety and minute detail, Rudy Soetewey traces the unavoidable downfall of this small, defenceless man. To get his life back on track, he will have to defy the betrayal, ridicule and contempt of all those around him. In 'Witnesses' Soetewey focuses on mundane cruelty, prejudice and gossip, insinuation and marginalisation. In 2011, the novel was awarded the Hercule Poirot Prize for best thriller of the year.

A clever thriller: exciting, with a well-rounded plot and very recognisable.

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AUTHOR



Rudy Soetewey (b. 1955) is a Flemish novelist and a writer of both humorous and suspenseful stage plays. Soetewey's prose debut 'Deceptive Simplicity' (Bedrieglijke eenvoud), a collection of short stories, was published in 1992. Since then, he has published several crime novels, including *Witnesses* (Getuigen), '2017' and 'Prove It' (Bewijs het maar). His thrillers are not just full of suspense, but they also explore everyday prejudices, cruelties and insinuations. Soetewey has received among others the Knack Hercule Poirot Prize and the Diamanten Kogel, an annual award for the best crime novel written in Dutch.

ORIGINAL TITLE *Getuigen* (2011, Kramat, 293 pp.)

PRIZES Hercule Poirot Prize

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