

Waiting on the sidelines of life

# The Bench

INGRID GODON &amp; PAUL VERREPT

The loss of his parents causes a young man to take drastic action: he leaves the world he knows behind to sit on an apparently random bench in the park and watch the world around him go by. Passers-by come and go, occasionally stay a moment, exchange a few words. The man learns of their troubles.

## Pure emotion

DE STANDAARD

To begin with, the anonymous narrator is merely an observer. But as time goes by and the seasons pass over his sadness and yearning, the narrator begins to act, motivated by childhood memories. It seems as if the bench is also a place to sit and wait for someone from long ago. Someone who will never come. Someone who is always there. The apparently aimless waiting appears to have a goal, although the question of whether that ultimate yearning will ever be fulfilled remains.

'The Bench' is the moving story of a man overwhelmed by loneliness and anxiety. The poetic text and the atmospheric illustrations exude heartfelt melancholy and mournful solitude. Godon makes pain, desperation and yearning tangible and offers up a varied sample card of her abilities: from seemingly naïve pictures that represent childish happiness to hushed illustrations that harbour a world of unspoken emotions.

## Fascinating illustrations

TZUM



## AUTHORS



**Ingrid Godon** (b. 1958) enjoys international renown as an illustrator with her own style: stripped down and distilled to the essence. Her series of 'Nelly & Caesar' was made into cartoons that have been broadcast all over the world. With 'I Wish' she set a new course, a series of portraits which also appeal to adults. *Photo © Margot Krizsa*

**Paul Verrept** (b. 1963) is author and illustrator. There is a wooden quality to his figures, as if they are trapped in their own bodies, a feeling Verrept has said he knows all too well. He is a man of few words: he writes his gently philosophical stories about life, love and death with candour and an eye for vivid detail. © *Marleen Nelen*

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