

The debut of a prodigious young author

The Duck Hunt

HUGO CLAUS

Hugo Claus' literary debut is the story of a Flemish farming family during World War II. The centre of the family is the widow Metsiers, who is called 'the Mother'. Years ago, she murdered her husband, together with her lover Mon Verkindere, with whom she now lives on the farmstead. She has two children: Ana (from her deceased husband, Metsiers) and Bennie (from her lover, Verkindere) – the latter is a backward boy and everyone's favourite.

Ana has fallen pregnant with a boy from the village, but he wants her to get an abortion. Meanwhile, she meets Jim, an American soldier, who falls in love with her. In order to be close to her, he quarters himself on the farm. This causes tensions – the inhabitants of the farm don't accept strangers into their midst.

A seriously readable and gripping novel

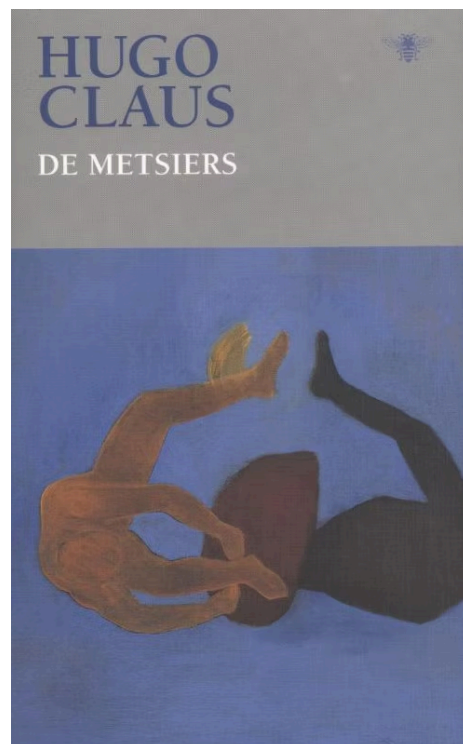
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As the environment in which they live becomes claustrophobic, Bennie and his half-sister are driven ever closer together, until a love grows between them that borders on being incestuous and for which Bennie eventually has to pay the price.

'The Duck Hunt' exudes the influence of Faulkner and his naturalistic novels. With his debut, Claus proves his mastery of language, structure and wielding multiple narrative perspectives. 'The Duck Hunt' is not just the start of but also a pinnacle in the body of work of Flanders' most important author.

Truly sublime

SIMON VESTDIJK



AUTHOR



Hugo Claus (1929-2008) is Flanders' most famous and most important writer of modern literature. He wrote dozens of acclaimed plays, scripts, stories, novels and collections of poetry. *Photo © Stephan Vanfleteren*

ORIGINAL TITLE De Metsiers of de Eendenjacht (1950, Manteau, 126 pp. Latest Edition by De Bezige Bij, 2018.)

PRIZES Leo J. Kryn Prize, Arkprijs van het Vrije Woord, Constantijn Huygens Prize, Grand Prize for Literature

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