

Those who live for love will live forever

# Who Was the Hatter?

LOEKIE ZVONIK

Ghent, the early 1950s. Hermine and Didier, who are both studying German literature at the university with charismatic professor Herman, have a short-lived but passionate relationship. Then they go their separate ways, but twelve years later they meet again and drive to a conference in Vienna together. Although both are married by now, the passion is reignited during this trip and they embark on an intense affair. Hermine tries to temper Didier's all-consuming passion, but he is a tormented, suicidal writer who is heading straight for his date with destiny.

**A marvel of penmanship \*\*\*\*\***

DE VOLKSKRANT

In this autobiographical love tragedy, Loekie Zvonik brings a delicate pen and psychological finesse to the final few weeks in the life of Dirk De Witte, a troubled man who lost himself in the diaries, letters and novels of suicidal writers such as Stig Dagerman, Gérard de Nerval and Cesare Pavese. With disarming honesty and heart-warming authenticity, Zvonik lays bare her soul for her great beloved: unable to save him from death, she did save him from oblivion. The fact that more than forty years after its original publication this book continues to evoke emotion and recognition is proof of that.

**Zvonik's writing is clear and atmospheric and full of empathy. This chronicle of a proclaimed death still grabs its reader by the throat, even 43 years after its first publication.**

**\*\*\*\*1/2**

DE MORGEN



## AUTHOR



**Loekie Zvonik** (pseudonym of Hermine Marie Louise Zvonicek, 1935–2000) was a Flemish–Czech writer who made her debut with the autobiographical 'Who Was the Hat Maker?', which received the Debut Prize in 1976. Despite the success of her first novel, only two more books followed and eventually Zvonik retired from public life altogether. In 2018 'Who Was the Hat Maker?' was reissued and once again garnered very positive reviews.

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Hoe heette de hoedenmaker? (1975, Standaard Uitgeverij. Republished by Cossee, 2018, 224 pp.)

**PRIZES** Debut Prize

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