

An ode to love and to the rocky road of (non-biological) parenthood

Night Parents

SASKIA DE COSTER

At the start of their relationship, Juli has something important to say to Saskia. There we go, Saskia thinks to herself, she's probably an alcoholic. 'But it was infinitely worse.' Juli wants a child.

Several years later, Juli gives birth to their son Saul. When the boy is a year old, Juli and Saskia travel to the Canadian hippie island where Karl, Saul's biological father and a good friend of Saskia's, grew up. During that trip, everything comes under a great deal of strain: Saskia's relationship with Juli, her bond with Saul, her friendship with Karl, her writing.

De Coster at her best. Or rather, at her gentlest and most beautiful ****

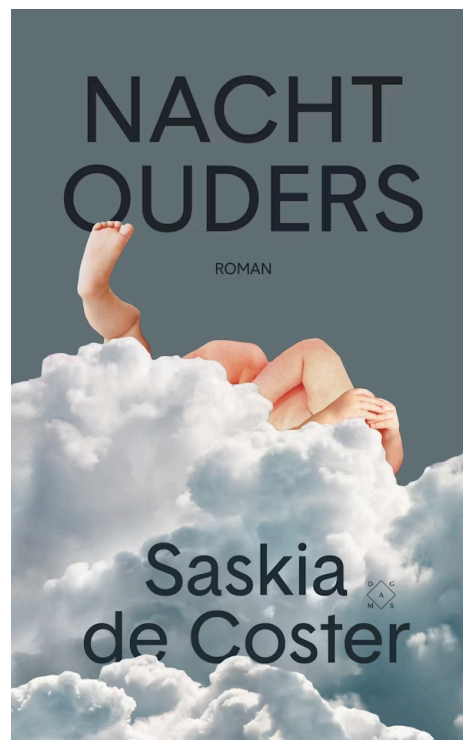
DE STANDAARD

In her (semi-)autobiographical 'Night Parents', de Coster describes her fear of looking after a child, her initial reluctance, the occasional sense of isolation from her new family and a non-biological mother's efforts to free herself from the deeply ingrained archetype of the earth mother. Her fears are channelled into an affair. At the same time, she struggles with her parents' rejection, who are principally opposed to gay parenthood and therefore do not see Saul as their grandson.

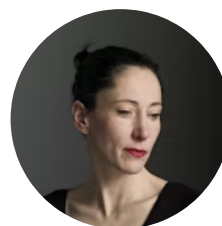
'Night Parents' is more than a topical novel, a journalistic travelogue or a memoir. It is a swirling mix of intimate night-time conversations, brooding diary excerpts, meaningful flashbacks and scenes filled with slapstick, culminating in a *gothic novel* complete with sawn-off fingertips and family secrets. But above all, 'Night Parents' abounds with (motherly) love.

A book of epic proportions *****

DE VOLKSKRANT



AUTHOR



Saskia de Coster (b. 1976) is an artist, playwright and regular participant in television debates, but above all she the author of a unique literary oeuvre. Her family chronicle *We and Me* became a bestseller and was nominated for just about every Dutch-language book award there is. The more personal and semi-autobiographical *Night Parents* is an ode to love and non-biological parenthood. Characteristic of De Coster's oeuvre are the striking images and profound stories. Most of her novels have been or are being translated. *Photo © Koos Breukel*

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