

Town and country in times of climate change

Hinterland

ELVIS PEETERS

Surviving in the countryside, Europe's scorching hot hinterland, is no picnic. There is no electricity, water is drawn from wells and people depend on their own land and livestock for food. In the cities everything appears to be under control: fresh produce is grown in carefully regulated agricultural towers and no trouble or expense is spared to provide city-dwellers with what little fresh water is available.

This novel grabs you by the scruff of the neck.

DE MORGEN

Fascinated by the tragedy of hopelessness, photographer Dora arrives in the countryside to portray death. When her car breaks down and she no longer has a phone signal, Dora has to rely on the local community's goodwill. Hundreds of miles away, in the city, her nearest and dearest are worried about her – and about the prolonged drought. Slowly but surely it becomes clear how town and country relate to one another and how life for one means death for the other.

'Hinterland' is a claustrophobic novel about solidarity and individuality, which makes us think about the way we treat the earth and our fellow man. If that world becomes a world that can no longer accommodate us all: who gets to stay and who doesn't, who belongs to 'our group'? The cinematic and smooth style lends this novel the same kind of eerie quality as Cormac McCarthy's 'The Road' and Philippe Claudel's 'Brodeck's Report'.

A doubly compelling story, with a conclusion that is as bold as it is optimistic. ****

NRC HANDELSBLAD



AUTHOR



Writing duo Elvis Peeters (b. 1957) writes fiction, poetry, scripts and children's books. They pour their social engagement and activism into beautifully crafted and unique narratives. In their novels, they succeed in addressing fascinating moral issues through what appears to be a simple story. In their picture books they're able to create maximum (poetic) effect with a minimum of words. Photo © Siska Vandecasteele

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