

The madness of colonial aspirations

The Beetle and the King

THIBAU VANDE VOORDE

1899. This is the first time Belgian Joseph Lippens travels to the Congo, where his father, one of the main ivory suppliers to King Leopold II, disappeared off the face of the earth several months earlier. It's not long before Joseph's burning ambition comes to the fore, as does his urge to 'civilise'. During the journey through the Congolese jungle, a beetle flies into his ear, which, combined with the heat and his hunger for power, slowly but surely puts him in a feverish trance. Madness takes over.

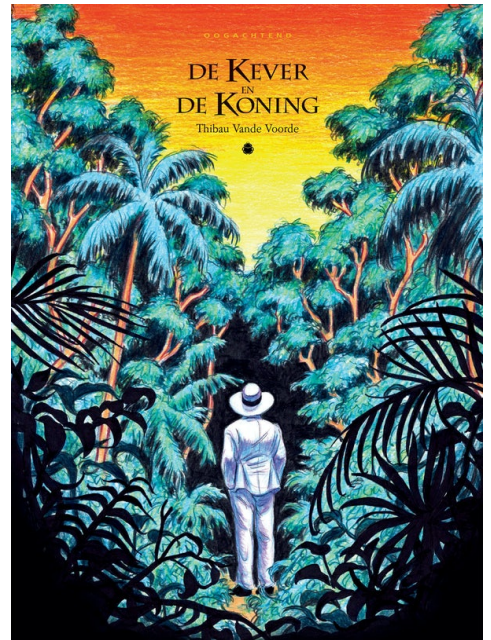
Subtle beauty

KNACK

In this scintillating debut, Thibau Vande Voorde shows us what he is capable of. With virtuoso control of his colour pencils, he conjures up the scorching heat and the beautiful abundance of Congo, as well as the contorted facial expressions of a man who becomes a victim of his own ambition. Add to this a powerful narrative with psychological depth, which is particularly strong on colonial Belgium's misplaced pride, and the result is an exceptionally good book.

Wondrous. Madness in the beauty or beauty in the madness, who's to say?

CUTTING EDGE



AUTHOR



Thibau Vande Voorde (1995) reworked his master's thesis, which he created for his Graphic Novel degree at Luca School of Arts in Brussels, into his debut *The Beetle and the King*. Using colour pencil, he conjures up the scorching heat of colonial Congo and conveys the madness of colonialism.

ORIGINAL TITLE *De kever en de koning* (2020, Oogachtend, 104 pp.)

FORMAT 220 x 292

TRANSLATION RIGHTS Ann Jossart - ann@oogachtend.be

TRANSLATION GRANTS Lien Devos - lien.d@flandersliterature.be