

A girl's search for her father and herself

# The Girl's Heart

TIM VAN DEN ABEELE & SISKA GOEMINNE

A girl searches in vain for her father. He's gone, but we don't know the circumstances. When she spots her father in the distance and walks over to him, he disappears, and then appears to be waiting for her again. But as soon as she gets closer: nothing, nobody. She braves sea, desert and forest – metaphors for the obstacles on the mental road she travels – but eventually, she decides to return to her mother, who has always provided her with the warm nest that she needs. Without being too blatant about it, this book addresses a topical issue: children in search of their roots and family bonds.

## You really do want to keep on looking at his illustrations

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The narrative is mysterious and emotionally profound, but with a light-hearted, optimistic tone. Goeminne evokes a range of emotions, builds suspense and then arrives at satisfying yet relatively open ending. This is a beautiful depiction of the girl's hopes and unfulfilled desires.

The illustrations help set the mood and they also tell a story alongside the text, making it more specific where the text sometimes leaves things open. Evocative and a little mysterious thanks to the use of silhouettes and the coloured layers, they encourage us to keep looking. The powerful monotypes, which are Van den Abeele's hallmark, give the book its distinctive, bold style as well as its charm.

## The poetic text guides you through the dreamy illustrations, each one of which is a little work of art. \*\*\*\*

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## AUTHORS



**Tim Van den Abeele** (b. 1987) works as an illustrator and art teacher. To him, illustrations do not merely complement a text, but they are a primary means of visualising and intensifying the emotions in a narrative. The use of the monotype technique, with its powerful colours and lines, allows him to imbue his work with extra personality. **Siska Goeminne** (b. 1968) writes and translates books for children of all ages: from picture books for the youngest readers to YA novels. Her style has been termed poetic and limpid, yet also philosophical, with a touch of humour. She loves to write about close, yet sometimes tough family relationships and about the courage to make one's own choices. *Photo © Andy Huysmans*

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