

Ecological thriller about a community in decline

# Cape Ursus

DIMITRI BONTENAKEL

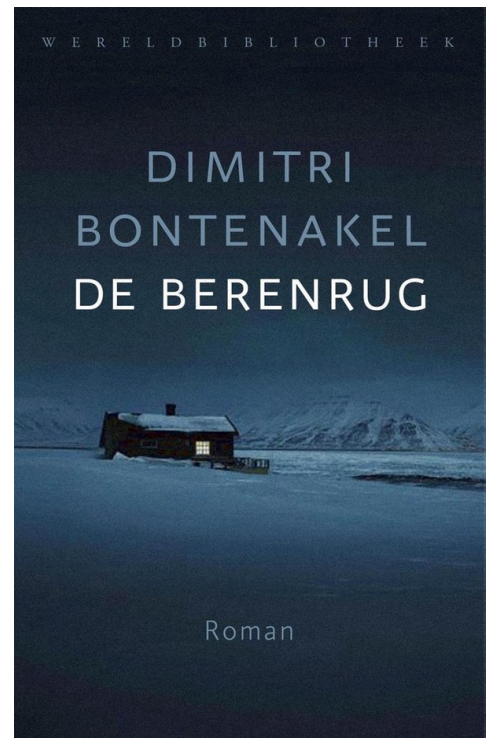
A natural disaster is destroying Cape Ursus, a remote island in the middle of the North-Atlantic. The trees are dying, the harvests failing, the women no longer bearing children. The small community that lives there in the late nineteenth century is descended from castaways and has to fend for itself.

Young teacher Ellie dreams of leaving the island, but her mother's dementia is stopping her. Meanwhile, her stepfather wants her to man the lighthouse with him, but Ellie wants to pursue her own course, in defiance of the community's suffocating expectations. Eventually, Ellie discovers someone else with serious plans to leave the island. Her father's brother, a hermit who lives away from the rest of the community, is secretly constructing a boat out of wreckage. In him she finds an ally, but as the date of departure nears, she learns that he isn't who he appears to be.

This historical novel was written from a contemporary perspective: a human-made ecological disaster and its many repercussions. However, more than just an eco fable, 'Cape Ursus' is also a cleverly told adventure story that addresses acute social issues such as the climate, human resilience and profound isolation. The bleak setting, the escalating tension and the surprising plot twists add to the novel's appeal.

**Bontenakel proves that he is a superb storyteller \*\*\*\***

DE STANDAARD



## AUTHOR



**Dimitri Bontenakel** (°1971) writes novels, theatre texts and short stories. He is also the editor-in-chief of a magazine for (budding) writers, and for many years he was on the board of PEN Flanders. Bontenakel's work reflects his love of tight composition, fluent prose and intriguing characters. He particularly likes to write about things that are foreign to him. © Koen Broos

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