

Three generations of unconventional women

Pluto

LARA TAVEIRNE

Antonia grows up along with her three half-sisters and her flamboyant mother in the Flanders of the 1980s and '90s. Her father is out of the picture. When on an impulse her mother buys an old house on a dike in a remote place they call Pluto, Antonia has the time of her life all summer. Many years later, Antonia is suffering from severe depression and hopes a visit to Pluto will enable her to recover her joy in living. She returns with her two young children to the house on the dike, which is now a mouldy hovel. She struggles with a desire to die, but finds the strength to keep going until her children are a little older. Then she travels on to Greece, walks into the sea and never comes back, leaving her children Loekie and Rowan behind. When Loekie finds her mother's diary, she gets to know her mother's history rather better and gains an insight into where she comes from.

A grand and sorrowful novel

VPRO BOEKENGIDS

'Pluto' is a multifaceted family story that stays with the reader, in which strong but essentially lonely women are central. Taveirne expertly switches perspective; the family history written down in her mother's diary is supplemented by Loekie's reactions to what she is reading, her memories of her mother and the events that followed her death. With evocative writing full of sensual details, she creates an intimate world and presents a completely authentic view of major themes: loss, the desire for love and safety, the inability to form close relationships, absent fathers and the lack of an 'ordinary mother'. She describes her female characters, none of whom are truly at home in society, with great empathy and warmth.

In sensitive prose, Taveirne shows why the answers to the great questions in life are never straightforward but always complex and ultimately unfathomable.

HET NIEUWSBLAD



AUTHOR



Lara Taveirne (1983) writes novels and is a teacher and theatre director. Her debut novel 'The Children of Calais', based on a true story about two children who jumped off a rock, won her the Debut Prize. Taveirne writes poetically and engagingly, with a keen ear for vernacular dialogue. In her work she investigates the consequences of love: the destructive power of desire, the unreliability of memories, broken hearts and motherhood. Photo © Carmen de Vos

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