

GRAPHIC NOVELS

Exceptionally atmospheric tragicomedy with a sympathetic antihero

Dry Clean

JORIS MERTENS

François, in his fifties, with an eternal cigarette in the corner of his mouth and wearing a cheap suit, is a driver for a dry-cleaning business. His days follow monotonously one upon the other and are brightened only by newsagent Maryvonne and her daughter Romy. At Maryvonne's kiosk he plays the lottery every week, and he's been using the same number combination for years. If he wins he'll be able to give her and Romy a better life. But fate is not on his side. When he suddenly comes upon a gruesome scene and spots a chance to grab a bagful of money, it proves his downfall.

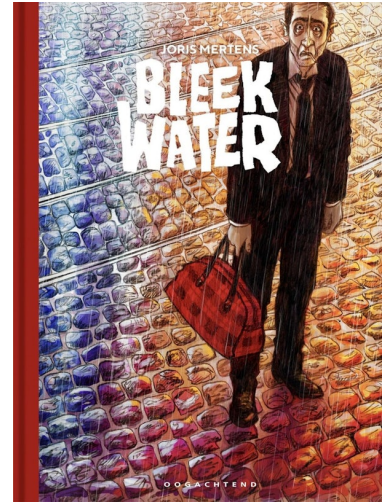
Wow. Astounding

TZUM

'Dry Clean' is packed with atmosphere. In panoramic spreads that highlight faded glory, Joris Mertens creates a universe all his own. Our dry-cleaning man is soaked by rain throughout the story, which gives the 1970s city in which François lives a fantastic radiance. Neon light bounces off the wet paving stones and the bad weather makes the whole day look like dusk. This noir atmosphere is offset by the tragicomic aspect that Mertens has given his antihero. A beautifully crafted graphic novel.

Unmistakably Mertens' own noirish universe

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Joris Mertens (b. 1968) has spent the past 25 years working as a set designer, art director, illustrator, storyboard artist, photographer and graphic designer. His work has given him a great deal of experience of telling stories through atmosphere, imagery and storyboarding, true to the idea of 'show, don't tell'. It was therefore only a matter of time before he produced a graphic novel, in which the drawings are the real medium: Beatrice is his debut. *Photo © Joris Mertens*

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