

Moving portrait of tortured souls

# The Hard Way

MARITA DE STERCK

Mira, a young woman with journalistic ambitions, adopts a rescue dog called Turbo. Turbo is a hopeless case. He's terrified of people, which often makes him aggressive. He needs someone who can restore his faith in humanity. Mira tries to hide the fact that she needs Turbo as much as he needs her. She recognizes herself in the dog's trauma and fears. While Turbo was mistreated physically, Mira suffered from the psychological terror inflicted on her by her father. When she's given a chance to write about Turbo for a local newspaper, she decides to look more deeply into Turbo's old life and sets out in search of the hunter who brought him up the hard way.

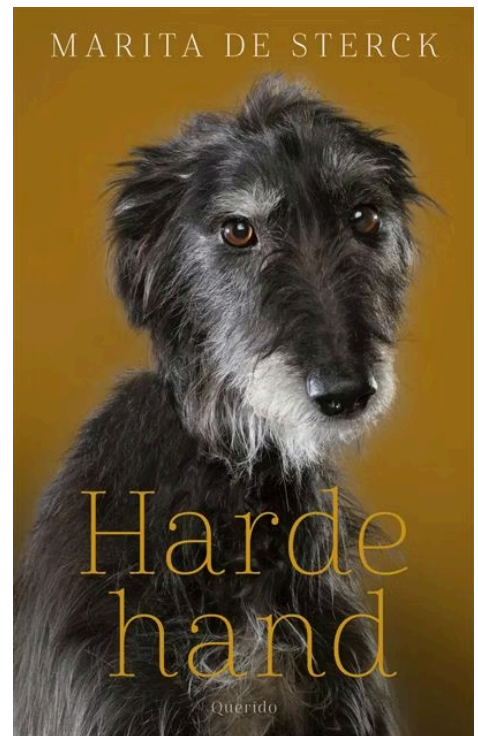
**The best book de Sterck has yet written. \*\*\*\***

DE VOLKSKRANT

In short chapters, Marita de Sterck introduces the reader to Mira and at the same time to old, proud hunter Stan, who regarded Turbo as the ultimate weakling. Stan's efforts to make a good hunting dog out of him broke Turbo. The contrast in their attitudes to the dog is played out until it becomes clear that Stan and Mira also share certain injuries. But Mira now has Turbo as a secret weapon with which to defy her traumas. De Sterck depicts the relationship between Turbo and his two owners realistically and grippingly, thereby creating once again a powerful novel in her unmistakable style.

**The unique combination of her highly individual themes and an authentic language and style is what sets De Sterck apart within the YA literary landscape.**

TZUM



## AUTHOR



**Marita de Sterck** (b. 1955) has spent much time travelling the world as an anthropologist, searching out narratives rooted in age-old oral traditions. Recurring themes in her work include learning to love without losing oneself, the power of stories, and the often complex relationship between generations. She has a very recognizable style that plays with registers and does not shy away from direct language. *Photo © Koen Broos*

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**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Luciënne van der Leije - l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl

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