

A bold exploration of refugee life and desire

The Seers

SULAIMAN ADDONIA

Young Eritrean Hannah arrives in London as a refugee, possessing nothing but the diaries of her mother, who died young. While the teenager tries to clear a path for herself through Britain's bureaucratic immigration policy, she recalls memories of her family, torn apart by war. With her foster mother Diana in Kilburn she reads her mother's diaries, and a person emerges from them who is quite different from the romantic image passed down to her by her father. Alone and far from her native country, Hannah has to go back to the start and learn how to relate to the shocking story she reads about her parents. Withdrawing to her room next to the tracks of the London underground, she immerses herself in the work of British poets and authors, and slowly falls in love with the city. After Diana dies, Hannah takes to sleeping under a tree in a park in Bloomsbury. There she discovers her subversive desires and along with Bina-Balozi, another asylum seeker, she explores her sexual boundaries.

'The Seers' is a lyrical journey of discovery. It reminded me of 'On the Road' by Jack Kerouac and 'Silk' by Alessandro Baricco

JUMOKÉ FASHOLA, BBC LONDON

'The Seers' is a compelling and powerful novel, exceptionally rich in imagery. In a single paragraph, which Addonia wrote on his iPhone in front of the Ponds of Ixelles during lockdown, he disentangles his characters' psychological and sexual lives by unparalleled means. This is a raw story about love, loss and inexhaustible resilience, colonial traumas, and the true face of Britain's immigration policy and its impact on young refugees. The experimental nature of the book, its poetic and suggestive language and deep psychological insights make this a confronting and chastening reading experience.

This is an exquisitely brilliant novel. Politically exciting and wild and beautiful

HOLLY PESTER

SULAIMAN ADDONIA



DE ZIENERS

roman • vertaald door Lucie van Rooijen

UITGEVERIJ JURGEN MAAS

AUTHOR



Sulaiman Addonia (b. 1972) is a British-Eritrean-Ethiopian novelist, who fled Eritrea as a child. He spent his early years in a Sudanese refugee camp and studied in Saudi-Arabia as a teenager. He ended up in London as an unaccompanied minor, without any grasp of English. His novel 'The Consequences of Love' (shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize) has been translated into more than 20 languages. Addonia now lives in Brussels, where he established a creative writing school for refugees and asylum seekers as well as the Asmara-Addis Literary Festival in Exile. *Photo © Alexander Meeus*

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