

Intense whodunnit about the conscience of the bystander

Liquorice

MARITA DE STERCK

Amber goes to live on her own in an old labourer's cottage that little by little reveals its secrets in the form of perplexing drawings by a child. It turns out that fifty years earlier it was the scene of the tragic disappearance of a seven-year-old girl. Sonja was never found. Neighbour Cecile seems to know more, but the other elderly women in the street warn Amber: Cecile is a drinker and as mad as a hatter. Before long, Amber becomes haunted by the case and old wounds are opened up. What happened? And why won't anyone talk about it?

Immensely exciting and heartrending. De Sterck writes in pithy, dazzlingly rich language.

BOEKWIJZER

In 'Liquorice' Marita de Sterck shows what the consequences can be when bystanders don't dare intervene in a troubling situation. By using different perspectives, she arouses sympathy for all those involved: little Sonja, who only wanted to be loved, Cecile, who so longs for a child, the 'gossipmongers', who function as a kind of Greek chorus and speak with one voice, and sensitive Amber. Even though it's a short book, each of the characters is complex and meticulously developed. In a mixture of vivid Flemish colloquial speech and poetic sentences, De Sterck rolls out a well-balanced plot with an exceptionally tragic ending that tears at the heartstrings.

Immediately grabs you by the throat and continues to reverberate long after you've finished the book. An intense reading experience

LEES-WIJZER



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*

ORIGINAL TITLE *Zoethout* (2024, Querido, 176 pp.)

AGE 15+

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