

A dark universe, an elusive truth

Peeling

LENNY PEETERS

As children Felix and Louise, brother and sister, are inseparable. Everything changes when, on holiday, they are approached by the father of their playmates. He seems to catch the children playing sexual games, but there is every sign that he's taking advantage of the situation.

After that, nothing is ever the same. Felix's mental health gradually declines and he starts to hear voices: a nagging voice, a bullying voice, and a dirty voice that whispers all kinds of obscenities to him. Louise, who likes to be in charge, enjoys feeding her brother's fears. Her manipulative games drive him further and further into psychological isolation.

Lenny Peeters leaves you nauseated and craving for more. ****

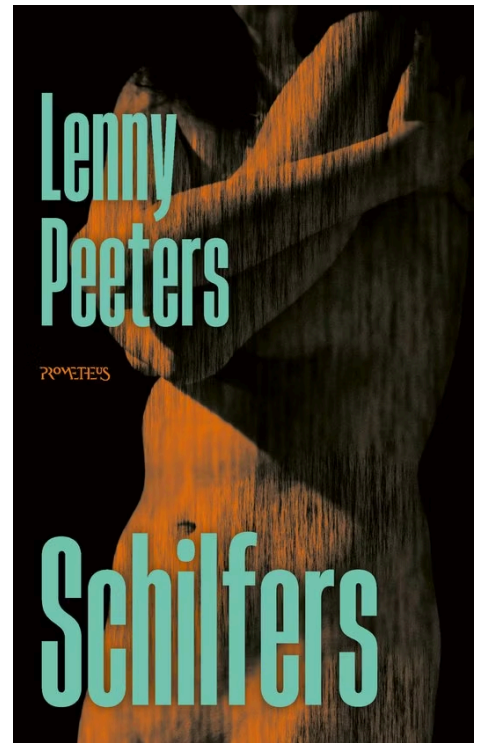
DE STANDAARD

At the start of the book we meet Felix in his forties. He has withdrawn to a remote hut in the woods and completely lost his ability to distinguish between reality and illusion. It was on Louise's advice that he secluded himself from the world, after his stepdaughter Ellie made a drawing at kindergarten of herself in the bath with him. Paranoid, Felix waits for Ellie's return while trying to escape the voices in his head.

Peeters' writing is razor sharp and makes her story capsize increasingly quickly, so that you tumble from one surprise into the next. *****

KNACK

In 'Peeling' Lenny Peeters plays a brilliant game with chronology and perspective. In a story that topples at an accelerating pace, the reader is challenged to discover the truth. Extremely unreliable narrators and suggestive dialogues reveal a terrifying and hideous universe full of ambiguity and gritty images. Peeters makes us feel Felix's mental dislocation, while Louise's manipulative obsessions come increasingly to the foreground. 'Peeling' is a novel that gradually takes possession of you and pulls you into a dark world that induces both disgust and



AUTHOR



Lenny Peeters (1975) teaches Dutch as a foreign language to adults. When she is not doing this, she writes in the Bourgogne in France. Her short stories have been published in magazines in Flanders and the Netherlands and some have won awards. Daughter, her first novel, received very favourable reviews in the Dutch and Flemish press. The book won the bronze owl, the most important debutant prize for literature. She spent more than six years on the book, in part because of the thorough research. "I'm quite an upbeat person myself, but my work is pretty dark," the author explains. Photo © Johan Jacobs

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