

An ode to unseen women writers

The Storms

MAAIKE NEUVILLE

Actress Abbie de Lange is playing the early 20th-century Irish writer Therese Mae Smith in a historical biopic. But during filming, she clashes with the male director, and in the screenplay the 'male gaze' is also palpable. A complex visionary author is rendered one-dimensionally as a hopeless, mentally-ill woman. In Therese's diary entries, Abbie discovers a very different story: an unhappy marriage, an intense romantic relationship with another woman in the convent, and a lifelong struggle for her literary ambitions not to be suppressed. Determined not to let history be erased again, Abbie decides to act.

Gradually, the line between the two women begins to blur. Abbie recognises herself in Therese: both lost their mothers at a young age, struggle with motherhood, and neither is taken seriously when it comes to their artistic ambitions. Their lives become increasingly intertwined, which is also reflected in the structure of the novel. Therese's poetic diary entries alternate with Abbie's story, until the distinction between them blurs and the two voices begin to merge.

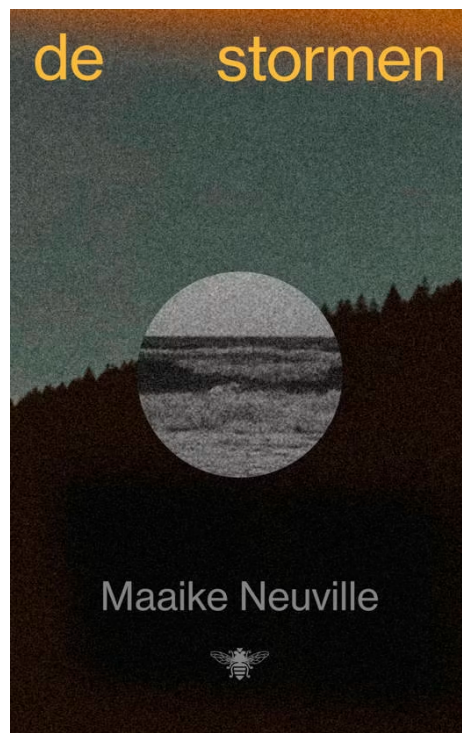
'The Storms' is a gripping novel about motherhood, longing, loss and female self-determination. It is an ode to all the women writers whose work has remained unseen.

'The Storms' is a novel you have to surrender yourself to. You open it and let it wash over you, as if stepping into the sea with death before your eyes, knowing that once you've reached the last page and are back on dry land, you'll be a richer person.

KNACK FOCUS

An ambitious novel that delves deep; it is of a high standard both structurally and stylistically, and offers a compelling reading experience.

HET NIEUWSBLAD



AUTHOR



Maaïke Neuville (b. 1983) is an actress, filmmaker, theatre producer and author. She graduated from the Studio Herman Teirlinck theatre school in Antwerp and went on to act for various theatrical companies and film producers. She also creates cinematic poems and short fiction films. Photo © Kaat Pype

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