

# An ode to friendship and freedom

# Lara & Rebecca

KATHLEEN VEREECKEN

A Creole plantation on the Mississippi, in Louisiana. Lara, the daughter of the white plantation owner, has no brothers or sisters, and so her parents bring Rebecca, a slave of Lara's age, into the house. The two girls grow up together and become bosom friends. Their close relationship, however, is abruptly ended when Lara's grandmother discovers that Rebecca can read and sends her back to the slave quarters. The division between black and white, between slave and master, cruelly and irrevocably tears them apart. But fate spares no one, neither rich nor poor. Rebecca is raped by a white man and, after the death of her mother, Lara has to run the plantation on her own. Then the Civil War breaks out. The end of slavery is in sight; the world will never be the same again. The two women gradually find their way back to each other.

**Vereecken writes extremely atmospherically, drawing you in with her sensitive language and delicate treatment of emotions**

DE STANDAARD

Vereecken describes her characters with great subtlety and nuance. Unlike in many children's books involving racial issues, Lara is not a completely innocent character. The author maintains this nuanced approach throughout the book and the sparks of hope she provides are few and far between. A profound and compelling novel.

**A beautifully timeless tale of a war without heroes, in which feelings that cannot be expressed are cleverly suggested**

DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER



## AUTHOR



**Kathleen Vereecken** (b. 1962) is a freelance journalist and writer of fiction and nonfiction for children, young adults and adults. She made her debut in 1993, and published her first novel for adults in 2016. She has written mostly historical youth novels. Vereecken paints a convincing and almost sensorial portrait of the age, embedded in a meticulous structure that keeps the reader engaged.

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