

Wondrous portrait of a family in despair

Fish Don't Melt

JEF AERTS

Matti sets out on the ice road to town on the coldest night of the year to bring his father's favourite fish to safety. His cousin Jarno wants the fighting fish that belong to Matti's depressed father to compete during the winter festival. Matti has to keep the fish alive in a hot water bottle on the long, freezing journey. Out on the ice at night, he meets Drika, who is almost blind, and who, like Matti, has a goal to achieve. The two strike up an odd friendship. Meanwhile, time is ticking and the temperature in the bottle is dropping.

Such layering, such rich atmosphere and magnificent dialogue, this is unprecedented.

JAAP FRISO

'Fish Don't Melt' is an atmospheric and exciting story about a night full of threat and disaster, but above all a book about love. It's about loving one another and finding a way to express that love. The wondrously icy setting adds a fairy-tale touch. In language that is both striking and original, Jef Aerts creates a layered picture of a family who clumsily get in one another's way. With wonderful dialogue and poetic imagery, he makes 'Fish Don't Melt' a sparkling narrative.

Jef Aerts excels for his writing style, with an eye for detail and the ability to write small scenes like works of art.

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Jef Aerts (b. 1972) started out as a writer for adults, but found his voice in children's literature. His books, characterised by their poetic undertone, have won several awards. With his powerful style, great sense for language and emotional sophistication, Aerts creates timeless children's literature. *Photo © Katlyn de Ghellinck*

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