

Haunting literary pearl

Bare Hands

BART MOEYAERT

Ward and Bernie are best friends, hand in glove. One New Year's Eve they are walking across the polders with Ward's dog, Elmer, when they 'accidentally' end up at Betjeman's farmyard, Betjeman 'with his plastic hand'. Ward takes Betjeman's old pet duck out of its pen and, during a game, he kills it. Whether it was an accident or not, the consequences of his act are serious. Betjeman takes revenge, and nothing will ever be the same again.

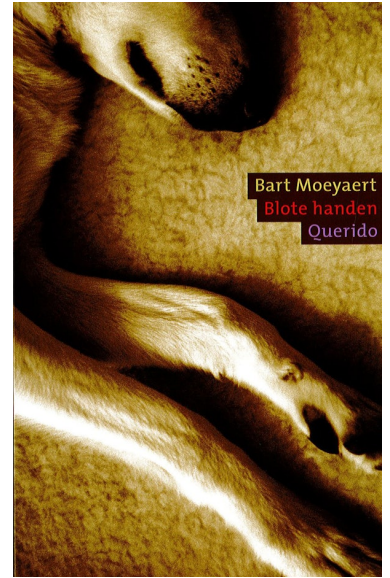
There cannot be many writers as tough and sensitive as Bart Moeyaert.

NRC HANDELSBLAD

'Bare Hands' describes a few hours in a boy's life, the final hours of the last days of the year, maybe the final hours of his old life. Because when the new year comes, everything will be different. For Ward, that's an absolute disaster. But this is not explained in so many words. A master of creating an oppressive atmosphere, Moeyaert succeeds in making his readers sense everything. There's no air, there's no escape, just an inevitable chain of events. In haunting and poetic prose, Bart Moeyaert displays his razor-sharp observation of the human psyche and the dangers of prejudice.

With its inventive composition, sober language and unbelievable power to evoke, this simple tale evolves from a haunting epic brimming over with vague and unexpressed emotions, into a literary pearl.

DE MORGEN



AUTHOR



Bart Moeyaert's (b. 1964) books often deal with complex existential subjects, in an insightful and accessible way. In 2019 he won the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. *Photo © Diego Franssens*

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