

A child who isn't at home
anywhere

Stella

GERDA DENDOOVEN

One day a fisherman and his wife find a little girl in their nets. No one knows who she is or where she's from. They decide to keep the child and they call her Stella, Star of the Sea. Stella turns out to be different from the other children in the village; she grows quickly and keeps on growing, until she's too big for the classroom, for her bed, even for the house. Then she no longer feels at home and decides to go in search of the place she came from.

'Stella, Star of the Sea' is a tale about loneliness, being different and searching for your place in the world. It is also a story about the boundless nature of parental love and about letting your children go so that they can be themselves.

Plenty of humour and imagination, with eloquent illustrations ****

DE STANDAARD

In 'Searching for Stella', father, mother and Bruno the dog sail over the seas to find Stella. They get lost, and no one seems to know where Stella lives. Until a whale flings them onto the beach and they discover gigantic footprints. On this island, where Stella has found a home, the roles are reversed. Here, it isn't Stella, but her parents that are the outsiders. But however different they may be on the island, Stella's parents are embraced lovingly. 'Searching for Stella' is a wonderful book about being different and about openness. But also about the unconditional love between parents and children.

In illustrations that are reminiscent of Permeke's work, Dendooven creates a universe all of her own. The grotesque, almost naturalistic figures, with their enlarged, misshapen limbs and their lively expressiveness, are typical of Dendooven's style.

A captivating fable with a combination of tragedy and optimism

JAAPLEEST



AUTHOR



Gerda Dendooven (b. 1962) is highly regarded both as an author and as an illustrator. She often employs archetypes and absurd humour. Dendooven's pictures are direct and emotional, sometimes almost confrontational. Her characters are distinctive and often almost like caricatures. She creates a bizarre, imaginative world that is funny and playful, but which can also be disturbing and frightening. Unique and intriguing: that is Gerda Dendooven's signature style. *Photo © Rika Vanhove*

ORIGINAL TITLE Stella. Ster van de zee (2016, Querido, 40 pp.), Op zoek naar Stella (2018, Querido, 48 pp.)

FORMAT 269 x 201

AGE 7+

PRIZES Woutertje Pieterse Prize

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