

An insightful exploration of a child's psyche

Thirteen Running Deer

MATTIAS DE LEEUW & EDWARD VAN DE VENDEL

There are plenty of children's books about imaginary friends, but this poetic tale is just a little bit different. Moonie is staring at a vase one day when thirteen tiny blue deer come trotting out of it. They climb up her arms and their footsteps leave dents in her sleeve. And before they disappear into her hood, one of them whispers respectfully in Moonie's ear, 'Duchess.'

The deer do not turn out to be friends in whom Moonie can confide, and they don't come when she calls. They reflect her own character: jumpy, timid, sweet and fragile. Moonie's explosive brother Raf is completely different. He has a short fuse and often gets 'fired up'. The story culminates in a thrilling showdown between Raf's animal, a roaring lion, and Moonie's deer.

Great poetry in words and images

JURY DEUTSCHER JUGENDLITERATURPREIS

In his succinct sentences, Edward van de Vendel presents a convincing picture of the inner world and conversations of the two children. But young talent Mattias De Leeuw also produces most impressive work. His illustrations do as much to tell the story as the text does. De Leeuw employs a minimal background and simple lines and makes very effective use of colour. The little deer in particular are beautifully drawn: they dart and dash over the pages, expressing playfulness, submission and fear.

Its layers, the tension, tenderness and beautiful illustrations make this one of the finest children's books of the year

DE STANDAARD



AUTHORS



Mattias De Leeuw's (b. 1989) illustrations are characterized by spontaneous brushstrokes in fresh colours, which he combines with sweeping lines. His pictures convey as much magic as the text, and are packed with details and little side stories that appeal to both young and old. Photo © Noortje Palmers **Edward van de Vendel** (b. 1964) has written over fifty titles that are remarkable in their variety: nonfiction titles, YA novels and poetry. The award-winning Dutch author has also produced several picture books with Flemish illustrators. Photo © Lona Aalders

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