

A heart-warming tribute to friendship

Vasco the Soccer-Pig

ALAIN VERSTER & EDWARD VAN DE VENDEL

Matteo gets a soccer ball and a pig for his birthday. For Vasco the pig, it's also the best day of his life – it's not even his birthday and he still gets Matteo. Vasco and Matteo quickly become best friends. Matteo is mad about soccer, but that's precisely the thing Vasco can't do very well together with Matteo. So they set off in search of real opponents to play soccer with. When Vasco wakes up, he sees that Matteo has found such friends, but he doesn't notice that, as the keeper, he's positioned in front of the goal. And so it turns out there's a soccer-pig in Vasco after all.

Verster is a master at evoking atmosphere and longing.

JAAPLEEST

In 'Vasco and the Green Monster', Vasco feels a pang of jealousy when Matteo drops their game of football to pick up his new present. He sounds out the other animals about what the present could be. The horse thinks it's something to do with 'John'. Vasco is afraid that he's going to be replaced as a friend. Until Matteo comes home with a John Deere tractor that he can use to mow the grass on their football pitch.

Edward van de Vendel beautifully describes the loving friendship between Vasco and Matteo, while Alain Verster adds another dimension to the story through his illustrations. His reworked photographs are full of funny details. The scenes he creates are nostalgic and dream-like, with their beautiful, muted colours.

On a drizzly autumn day it can warm you to the cockles, like a softly crackling wood-burning stove.

COBRA



AUTHORS



Alain Verster (b. 1984) makes collages that have a very distinct nostalgic feel to them. By using old photographs combined with crêpe paper tape, pencil, acrylic paint and oil paint, he creates sober and humorous illustrations, containing lots of little details. His debut 'The Pigeon That Couldn't Dive' has been translated into five languages. 'I Can See You, Can You See Me?' won the Boekenpauw Reader's Prize.

Edward van de Vendel (b. 1964) has an award-winning oeuvre that consists of over fifty titles that are remarkable in their variety: nonfiction titles, young-adult novels and poetry. He has also produced several picture books with Flemish illustrators. His many awards include the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis and the Woutertje Pieterse Prize. *Photo © Lona Aalders*

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