

Earthy folktales

Dirty Skin

MARITA DE STERCK

In 'Dirty Skin' anthropologist Marita de Sterck has collected forty Flemish folktales, uncensored and as close as possible to the oral tradition. She unearthed these stories in old manuscripts, archives and forgotten collections. They are jam-packed with violence, lust, jealousy and the black arts. A mother lets cobblestones rain down on her daughter; men merrily behead women; brothers and sisters lie, cast spells on and murder each other.

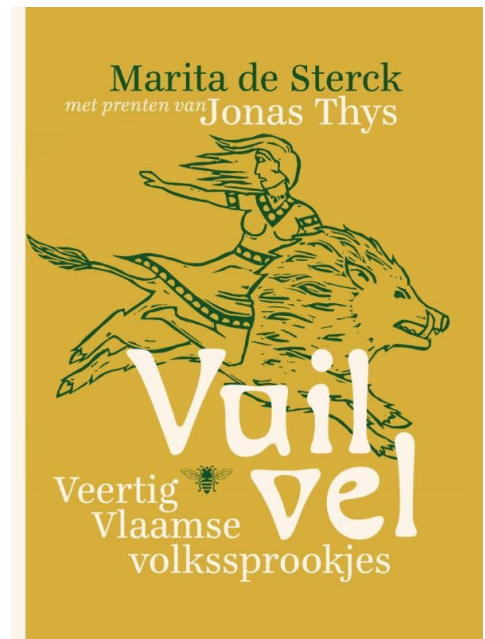
Daring, humorous and often quite cruel

METRO

Sometimes love conquers all in a happy ending, but most of the time the characters come to a bad end. The tales are sometimes farcical and often grotesque, and they are written in a zesty Flemish dialect. In her introduction De Sterck writes, 'Quite a few parents would balk at reading these uncensored horrors to the next generation, but earthy stories like these act as an initiation into the dramatic dimension of human existence. They present archetypes as a way of reflecting on the unthinkable.'

Succeeds brilliantly at giving back folktales their primal narrative force and raw energy.

NRC HANDELSBLAD



AUTHOR



Marita de Sterck (b. 1955) has spent much time travelling the world as an anthropologist, searching out narratives rooted in age-old oral traditions. Recurring themes in her work include learning to love without losing oneself, the power of stories, and the often complex relationship between generations. She has a very recognizable style that plays with registers and does not shy away from direct language. *Photo © Koen Broos*

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