Harrowing yet life-affirming

When David Lost His Voice

JUDITH VANISTENDELA

David is diagnosed with cancer of the larynx, a terminal form of cancer that means he will soon be unable to speak. In ‘When David Lost His Voice’, Judith Vanistendael zooms in on David and the three women who surround him: Paula, his wife; Miriam, his grown-up daughter, who has just had a child; and Tamar, his young daughter. David has difficulty sharing his feelings with Paula and Miriam, who are angry and don’t know what to do with themselves. The only comforting and honest relationship is the one between Tamar and David.

A quietly overwhelming portrait

PAUL GRAVETT

For a book in which everyone is trying to cope, in their own ways, with loss – or rather, trying to avoid the issue of loss – ‘When David Lost His Voice’ is full of unexpected solace. Vanistendael’s illustrations are sensitive, intimate and successfully express the changing moods through the use of subtle watercolours and strong contrasts. A touching and subtle book that compassionately depicts the fruitless struggle to find the meaning of life.

Delicate, intimate and extremely beautiful. A worthy addition to the canon of graphic gems.

THE GUARDIAN

JUDITH VANISTENDEAL (b. 1974) gained international success with the black-and-white graphic novel Dance by the Light of the Moon and with When David Lost His Voice, painted in watercolours. To tell the story of Mikel, Vanistendael switched to coloured pencil. She is also an illustrator of children’s books, including the Rosie and Moussa series, in collaboration with Michael De Cock.

ORIGINAL TITLE Toen David zijn stem verloor (2012, Oog & Blik, 256 pp.)

FORMAT 260 x 197

PRIZES 3 Eisner Award nominations: Best Writer Artist, Best U.S. Edition of International Material and Best Painter

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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Marijke Nagtegaal - m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl

TRANSLATION GRANTS Lien Devos - lien.d@flandersliterature.be