

A wonderful collection of tragicomic stories

Greener Grass

ANNELIES VERBEKE

'Greener Grass' is a collection of stories in which a succession of people step into the limelight, all of whose lives contain substantial hidden realms: a woman who becomes fond of a bull; a tough self-defence teacher whose heart melts when she looks after a small refugee girl.

With their emotional isolation and longing for affection, the characters arouse sympathy and compassion, even if their self-control ends in a violent outburst. A postal worker, misunderstood by the people he lives with, his diligence unnoticed, puts on his best suit one day and goes out into the street with a gun. His hopelessness and wounded self-esteem lead us to see him as a tragic figure rather than simply a criminal.

Verbeke's assured and evocative style lends the stories enormous eloquence.

DE VOLKSKRANT

Annelies Verbeke's prose excels at evoking gradual loss, in strange harmony with undertones in a kind of atonal ambiguity. Things that remain implicit weigh heavily upon the characters' lives, but absurd touches, quirkily humorous traits and unexpected twists and turns add a bizarre light-heartedness to the shifting narratives.

In 'Greener Grass', Verbeke peoples her peculiar world with ardent, irresistible, intriguing characters.

Beautifully articulated and full of unexpected twists and turns

DE TELEGRAAF



AUTHOR



Annelies Verbeke (b. 1976) is a leading figure in Flemish literature. With translations in over 20 countries, her novel 'Slaap' is the most widely translated Flemish debut of all time. Her love of the short story form has made her an advocate of the genre. In addition, she has written columns, scripts, theatre texts, a graphic novel and a children's book. What makes her characters so powerful is their angular personality: they are familiar in their ordinariness, but also have a dark and unexpected side. Keywords: snappy, slightly absurdist, wistful nostalgia with keen observations. In 2022, she received the Ultima for Literature (The Flemish state prize for literature). *Photo © Alex Salinas*

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