

Masterful elegy on love, desire
and history

The Reflections

ERWIN MORTIER

After World War I Edgard Demont returns physically and emotionally wounded to his native country. In search of a safe place among the confusion and destruction he finds that lovers are more effective than medication in helping him live with injuries that go deeper than the scars on his flesh. Meanwhile there is nothing he can do as his country succumbs to new delusions. His reflections paint the self-portrait of a man eager to crawl away from the past into love and desire, whose praises he sings and of whose fragility he is well aware.

A writer at the peak of his ability

COBRA

Edgard's life story spans a long passage of time: from his sunny childhood years and awakening sexuality, the trenches, the hospital and the deceptive peace of the interbellum, to the Blitz in England and the late love affairs. Erwin Mortier has written a story brimming with memories, letters and musings, with a variety of voices and addressees. The interplay of raw testimony and elegy, of sensuality and abstraction make 'The Reflections' an ambitiously conceived novel.

Beneath this stylistic tour de force lies a wealth of meaning. Mortier can recount the smallest details of the biggest history lessons with a sensitive, melancholic voice.

The subtlety with which Mortier lays out his narrative is breathtaking. Masterful. *****

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Erwin Mortier (b. 1965) made his mark in 1999 with his debut novel 'Marcel', which set the tone for a consistent oeuvre of a very high literary standard. A grand stylist, his evocative descriptions bring past worlds brilliantly to life. His majestic 'While the Gods Were Sleeping' was shortlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, while the modest 'Stammered Songbook' won the Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger in France. *Photo © Lieve Blancquaert*

ORIGINAL TITLE De spiegelingen (2014, De Bezige Bij, 304 pp.)

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