

A sketch of the deeply human ups-and-downs of life in a large modern city

What Only We Hear

SASKIA DE COSTER

One day the residents of the Atlas Building are told that they will have to leave their apartments within six months because the block of flats is to be demolished. For one person this news spells disaster, for another liberation. Will the residents succeed in uniting against the threatening doom? Or is it a lost cause in a world in which nothing stays the same? And what is the strange beeping noise some residents seem to hear?

A book that deserves to be read by many

CUTTING EDGE

We follow five characters closely: Anton, the caretaker of the Atlas Building and a security guard in a large department store who struggles with his bachelor existence; his sister Erin, who falls under the spell of her new neighbour; journalist and single mother Melanie, who has been laid off from work; her six-year-old son Claus who sees everything from the point of view of an innocent child; and George, a man with dementia looking to his wife and his cassettes for certainty. We join them in counting down to the day that the Atlas Building is knocked down. The book begins seven months before the destruction and ends an hour before.

'What only we hear' sketches the deeply human ups and downs of life in a large modern city. De Coster subtly intertwines the fates of her characters, with her typical stylistic bravura and humour.

A dynamic novel which will keep you completely absorbed for a full three hundred

NRC HANDELSBLAD



AUTHOR



Saskia de Coster (b. 1976) is an artist, playwright and regular participant in television debates, but above all she is the author of a unique literary oeuvre. Her family chronicle *We and Me* became a bestseller and was nominated for just about every Dutch-language book award there is. The more personal and semi-autobiographical *Night Parents* is an ode to love and non-biological parenthood. Characteristic of De Coster's oeuvre are the striking images and profound stories. Most of her novels have been or are being translated. Photo © Koos Breukel

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