

Seeing and being seen

I Can See You, Can You See Me?

SISKA GOEMINNE & ALAIN VERSTER

In 'I Can See You, Can You See Me?' the narrator unfolds a day in the lives of a handful of characters, uncovering their wishes, memories and doubts. Different lives touch on each other in a city square. Goeminne zooms in on seven people, including an old woman daydreaming on a bench, a young man obsessed with gleaming white teeth and a child who longs to get a dog. She shows how we are all passers-by in each other's lives, while we play the lead in our own.

Simple observations transport the reader into a silent world of universal emotions and wishes. Together with the outstanding illustrations this makes for a very special book indeed.

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The short, associative, expressive texts create evocative insights into the inner lives of people passing through the square during the day. The dreamlike images, filled with humorous touches, are an ode to beauty, nostalgia and imagination. They also emphasise the theme of loneliness the story touches upon here and there. The rather wooden figures look past each other and seem trapped in their own worlds. However, the soft patina enveloping these desolate scenes adds a sense of tenderness and consolation. The book invites readers to stop and reflect – not just on the lives of the people passing through the square, but on their own lives as well.

The young illustrator surpasses himself in this work.

CUTTING EDGE



AUTHORS



Siska Goeminne (b. 1968) has written and translated children's literature for over ten years. Her style has been termed poetic and limpid, yet also philosophical, with a touch of humour. She enjoys writing about close, yet sometimes tough family relationships and about the courage to make choices. Several of her books were nominated for the Gouden Uil and the Boekenleeuw. **Alain Verster** (b. 1984) makes collages that have a distinct nostalgic feel to them. By using old photographs combined with crêpe paper tape, pencil and paint, he creates sober and humorous illustrations, containing lots of details. His debut *The Pigeon That Couldn't Dive* has been translated into five languages.

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