

Fairground life in a family saga

Candy Floss

ERIK VLAMINCK

A highly enjoyable narrative

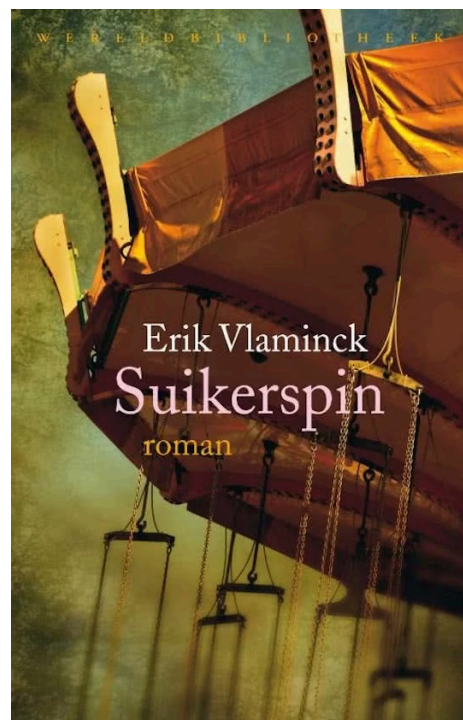
DE STANDAARD

In the early twentieth century, Jean-Baptist Van Hooylandt travels from fair to fair with his collection of living human curiosities. The most astonishing piece in his collection is a 'derodyme': female Siamese twins, who unfortunately die in dramatic circumstances in 1912. Decades later, Jean-Baptist's grandson Arthur attempts by all means to keep up with fairground developments. As he sees the income from a roundabout which he inherited from his father dwindle, he becomes embittered and marginalised. Then a writer appears on the scene, looking for information on the circumstances surrounding the death of the Siamese twins. A family secret is revealed...

The writing is as energetic as the showmen described in the story.

COBRA

This fascinating family epic of fairground life is filled with variety. Each character tells another incomplete or misleading version of the same story, thereby consistently putting the reader on the wrong track. The story is set in an extraordinary world and replete with dark intrigue, sinister secrets and much covert humour. Erik Vlamincx mixes fragments of past and present, and the colour of fairground life, with fiction as well as archival materials. He reconstructs these in a sophisticated novel, which is a riveting read.



AUTHOR



Erik Vlamincx (b. 1954) is a theatre-maker, columnist and author of a large oeuvre. In the tradition of Louis Paul Boon he writes with great psychological insight about family and ordinary people with striking life stories. His work is suffused with social engagement and always reflects an authentic working-class character. Many of his texts are based on (historical) fact or on his own experiences working in psychiatric care and in homeless shelters. Vlamincx's language is laconic, juicy, insightful and authentic. *Photo © Chris van Houts*

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