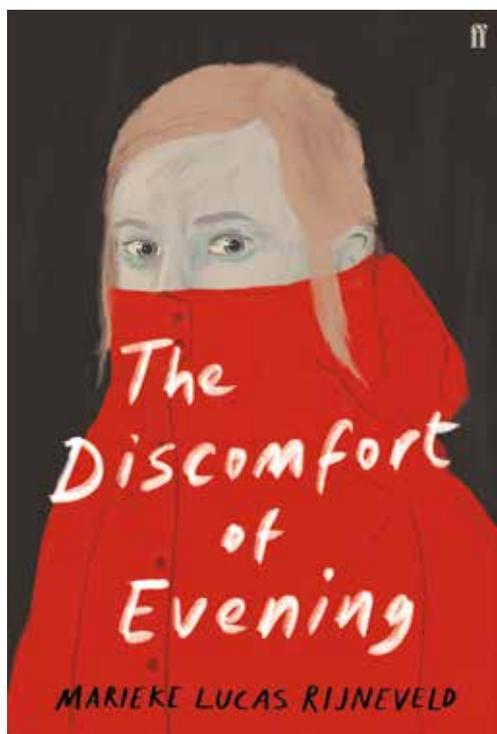


The
2020
International
Booker
Prize

Readers' Guide



The Discomfort of Evening

Marieke Lucas Rijneveld

Translated by Michele Hutchison

Faber & Faber

thebookerprizes.com

About the author

Marieke Lucas Rijneveld was born in Nieuwendijk, Netherlands, in April 1991 and uses 'they' pronouns. They grew up in a Reformed farming family in North Brabant before moving to Utrecht. One of the greatest new voices in Dutch literature, their first poetry collection, *Caulf's Caul*, was awarded the C. Buddingh' Prize for best poetry debut in 2015, with the newspaper de Volkskrant naming them literary talent of the year. In 2018, Atlas Contact published their first novel, *The Discomfort of Evening*, which won the prestigious ANV Debut Prize and was a national bestseller. Alongside their writing career, Rijneveld works on a dairy farm. They live in the Netherlands.

About the translator

Michele Hutchison was born in the UK in February 1972. After a stint as an editor, she became a literary translator from Dutch. Her translations include the bestselling *An American Princess* by Annejet van der Zijl, *Mona in Three Acts* by Griet op de Beeck and *Seaweed* by Miek Zwamborn. She is also co-author of *The Happiest Kids in the World*. She has lived in Amsterdam since 2004.

About the book

Jas lives with her devout farming family in the rural Netherlands. One winter's day, her older brother joins an ice skating trip. Resentful at being left alone, she makes a perverse plea to God; he never returns. As grief overwhelms the farm, Jas succumbs to a vortex of increasingly disturbing fantasies, watching her family disintegrate into a darkness that threatens to derail them all.

A bestselling sensation in the Netherlands by a prize-winning young poet, Marieke Lucas Rijneveld's debut novel lays everything bare. It is a world of language unlike any other, which Michele Hutchison's striking translation captures in all its wild, violent beauty.

What the judges thought

'Rijneveld's language renders the world anew, revealing the shocks and violence of early youth through the prism of a Dutch dairy farm. The strangeness of a child looking at the strangeness of the world.'

Discussion points

How relevant is Jas's age to the story?

What role do animals play in the way that the children cope with their grief?

How does Jas approach religion and her beliefs about God?

Rijneveld has previously written a poetry collection. Can you any see poetic influences in the novel's writing style?

Themed reading

Grief is the Thing with Feathers by Max Porter
Out Stealing Horses by Per Petterson
The Unseen by Roy Jacobsen
Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng

Useful links

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/mar/07/shock-of-new-novelists-stories-europe>

<https://www.dazeddigital.com/life-culture/article/48140/1/marieke-lucas-rijneveld-interview-the-discomfort-of-evening>

<https://literaryreview.co.uk/young-at-heart-4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNpi5NM4yJY>

@TheBookerPrizes

#FinestFiction
#InternationalBooker2020

THE
READING
AGENCY

