

# Reading for empathy

29 children's  
books  
to build  
understanding

The left side of the page features a decorative background with a solid orange field. Overlaid on this are several large, soft-edged, pinkish-magenta shapes that resemble stylized leaves or petals. These shapes vary in size and orientation, creating a layered, organic feel. A thin vertical line separates this decorative area from the white text area on the right.

## Reading for empathy

‘Every person is a story that is nothing like the story of anyone else. By reading, you get to find out what other people think and feel.’

Sjoerd Kuyper wrote these words in his latest novel for young people, *Bizar* (2019). And he is absolutely right. Stepping into a story takes you into another world, where you encounter people you would otherwise never have met. They naturally evoke all kinds of feelings. Some of those emotions are familiar, so we sympathize with the characters. Others actually require us to adopt the character’s point of view and to call upon our empathy. We have to make an effort to understand and feel the thought processes and intentions and emotions of that person.

More and more research has shown that reading stimulates our imagination and

empathy. It has been found that adults and children who are carried away by the stories they read and strongly sympathize with their characters also find it easy to identify with others in everyday life.

‘Reading fiction can undermine prejudices and preconceptions and help us to develop a sense of common humanity and social justice’ (*De impact van het boek*, Eerde Hovinga, Blue Yard, 2019) for KVB Boekwerk, the knowledge and innovation platform for the Dutch book sector).

The 29 beautiful books presented by the Dutch Foundation for Literature in this brochure, all in their own unique way, have the capacity to teach young readers to see the world through someone else’s eyes and, more importantly, to understand them.

As Sjoerd Kuyper put it, ‘Every person is a story that is nothing like the story of anyone else. By reading, you get to find out what other people think and feel.’

Title **Flopear**  
Author **Dick Bruna**

0+

Pages **32** / 275 words  
Publisher **Mercis**  
Rights sold Japanese (**Fukuinkan Shoten**),  
**Chinese (Children’s Fun Publishing)**,  
**Norwegian (IKO Forlaget)**  
Rights manager **Karin van Zwieten** /  
**karin@mercis.nl**

Miffy bravely  
stands up for the  
new boy in class.



Miffy makes it absolutely clear to her classmates that insults and nicknames are not the same thing, and that you’d better call someone by their real name if you really want to get to know them.

When a new boy joins Miffy’s class, everyone’s curious to find out what he’ll be like. The teacher says that he’s ‘perfectly ordinary, just like you’. But when the little rabbit steps into the classroom, the children don’t agree. One of the boy’s ears won’t stand up straight, and that isn’t ordinary for a rabbit at all. From that moment, he becomes known as Flopear. Luckily, Miffy bravely stands up for him. *Hangoor* (Flopear, 2006) is one of many books about Miffy the rabbit, who came into the world in 1955 when Dick Bruna, her creator, found inspiration during a holiday with his young son.

Dick Bruna (1927–2017) began his career as a designer. He became famous all over the world for his picture books about the little rabbit Miffy, who has her roots in the French avant-garde style of the first half of the twentieth century and the

Dutch art movement De Stijl. Miffy has been translated into more than 50 languages. Bruna won the Max Velthuis Prize (2016) for his oeuvre.

0+

Title **Frog and the Falling Star**  
 Author **Max Velthuijs**

Pages **32** / 1.000 words  
 Publisher **Leopold**  
 Rights sold **German** (Freies Geistesleben), Danish (Turbine Forlaget), Swedish (Berghs), Frisian, Zeelandic, Brabantian (Bornmeer)  
 Rights manager **Sophie Mulder** / [sophie.mulder@wpgmedia.nl](mailto:sophie.mulder@wpgmedia.nl)

Frog cheers up at the thought of making his friends' wishes come true.



Whether it's about being in love, the fear of the unknown, death, or feeling left out, the world of Frog and his friends Pig, Hare and Duck is recognizable for readers everywhere.

So the positive outcomes offered by Max Velthuijs are very welcome. No matter how complicated Frog's dilemmas are, there is always a solution in the end, just as long as everyone is willing to help each other out a little, as this book beautifully illustrates.

One summer night, when Frog and his friends are watching a clear sky and hoping to spot a falling star, he looks the wrong way at the all-important moment, and so he is the only one who cannot make a wish. However, this does not stop him from thinking about how he can make his friends' wishes come true. And, in turn, they come up with a plan to help their sad friend to reach the stars after all.

Max Velthuijs (1923–2005) was the creator of the picture books about Frog, the friendly amphibian in the baggy red-and-white swimming trunks who is known all around the world. His oeuvre also includes titles such as *De schilder en de vogel* (1971) and

*Klein-Mannetje heeft geen huis* (1983). He won the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2004.

0+

Title **Friends**  
 Author **Mies van Hout**

Pages **12**  
 Publisher **Lemniscaat**  
 Rights sold **German** (Aracari), Italian (Il Castello), English (Lemniscaat Ltd.), French (Minedition), Japanese (Nishimura), Korean, Afrikaans, Chinese (Tomorrow), Spanish (Tarttalo), Danish  
 Rights manager **Robin van der Gaag** / [rechten@lemniscaat.nl](mailto:rechten@lemniscaat.nl)

Real friends know how to have arguments and cry together.



Real friends can laugh, have arguments and cry together, just as long as they trust each other. This universal fact is as old as time. And yet Mies van Hout has succeeded in making it the basis of a magnificent picture book. In *Vriendjes* (*Friends*, 2012), we meet two colourful monsters per spread, created in pastels on a black background, in a style that's reminiscent of the CoBrA artist Karel Appel. The expressive monsters, who are all different in appearance, have fun playing together, but they're also very good at arguing and fighting when they get bored. They're real friends though, so they hope it will all turn out okay in the end. And they're right. Soon enough, they're laughing together again and their trust is restored.

Van Hout skilfully portrays the phases of the emotional peaks and troughs that every friendship goes through. This book is not only a feast for the eyes, but also an effective introduction into learning how to deal with conflicts.

The stylistic range of Mies van Hout (b. 1962) is huge. Her earlier work, such as *Bang mannetje* (2005, with Mathilde Stein) consists of somewhat traditional picture-book illustrations. Her more recent work (*Vrolijk*, *Vriendjes*, *Poesje Mauw*, 2011, 2012, 2014), mostly in

pastels, is characterized by a more direct style.

4+

Title **Tiger**  
Author **Jan Jutte**

Pages **24**  
Publisher **Lemniscaat**  
Rights sold **English (Lemniscaat Ltd.), French (Les editions des Elephantes), Korean (Moon 1000), Danish (Turbine)**  
Rights manager **Robin van der Gaag / rechten@lemniscat.nl**

Sometimes  
you have to say  
goodbye even  
though you love  
each other.



Sometimes you have to make difficult decisions because you love each other. You might even have to say goodbye. It hurts, but it can also be a new beginning. This is a warm and touching read-aloud story about a woman who takes a tiger home from the forest. They become best friends and her neighbours get used to the predator being around too. Slowly, however, it becomes clear that the tiger is unable to settle in the city. Josefen knows that there's only one solution, so she takes her friend back to the jungle, where the tiger belongs. She does this out of love, although saying goodbye is very difficult for both of them. The tiger flourishes and Josefen is soon happy again too, but she never forgets her friend.

Jan Jutte (b.1953) has won the prestigious Gouden Penseel, the most important Dutch prize for illustrated children's books, three times, including for *Een muts voor de maan* (2004), which he wrote with Sjoerd Kuyper. In his masterpiece, *Andersen*

(2014), he gave a new form to the fairy tales that everyone knows.

4+

Title **Because I Love You So Much**  
Author **Milja Praagman**

Pages **32 / 305 words**  
Publisher **De Eenhoorn**  
Rights sold **Korean, Spanish, Galician, Chinese (simple)**  
Rights manager **Sarah Claeys / sarah@eenhoorn.be**

Feeling at home  
in the world,  
just as it is.



A picture book about the natural warmth and love between a grandma and her grandchild, in which cultural diversity is taken as given. A white grandmother and her dark-skinned granddaughter are walking through the town. They meet a lot of folk: a tramp, a baker, a punk and people with lots of different skin colours. Ibi is impressed by what she's seen. Grandma ponders her question about what she saw: 'I think I was just looking at you,' she says. This is an original picture book about a sense of security and feeling at home in the world as it is.

Milja Praagman (b.1971) is a well-known illustrator, who won a Zilveren Penseel for this book. At the start of her career, she made illustrations for newspapers and animations for *Sesamstraat*, the Dutch *Sesame Street*. Her picture books reveal a subtle

sense of humour, which also appeals to the parents who are reading them out loud. Her stories are an ode to the imagination.

4+

Title **Bear Loves Butterfly**  
 Author **Annemarie van Haeringen**

Pages **32 / 400 words**  
 Publisher **Leopold**  
 Rights sold **French, Korean, Chinese Simplified, Spanish, Denmark, Germany, United Arab Emirates**  
 Rights manager **Sophie Mulder / sophie.mulder@wpgmedia.nl**

How do you put what you feel into words?



It's hard to understand each other, particularly when love is involved. How do you put what you feel into words?

Bear, from Annemarie van Haeringen's *Beer is op Vlinder* (*Bear Loves Butterfly*, 2004), is struggling with this problem. He's seriously in love with Butterfly, who is as beautiful as 'a cut-out piece of heaven'. Full of enthusiasm, he tries to win her heart, but Butterfly doesn't understand his message of love. She erases the hearts that he draws on the trees, and she thinks the house he builds for her is too high. Bear becomes so frustrated that he sets his building on fire. The resulting heart-shaped clouds of smoke cannot be misunderstood, however, and so Butterfly falls for Bear after all. The simple illustrations say it all in this straightforward and poetic story about the art of communication.

Annemarie van Haeringen (b. 1959) has illustrated work by Bibi Dumon Tak (*Siens hemel*, 2016), Imme Dros (the tales of 1001 nights) and Rindert Kromhout (the series about Little Donkey), but her own books, such as *De prinses met de lange haren* (1999),

*Beer is op Vlinder* (2004) and *Sneeuw-wijte breit een monster* (2014), are the core of her highly acclaimed work and her distinctive illustrative art, which employs mixed techniques. She has won the Gouden Penseel three times.

4+

Title **To the Wolves**  
 Author **Anna Woltz**  
 Illustrator **Ingrid & Dieter Schubert**

Pages **32 / 496 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold –  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / lvan.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

Getting less attention because of a new family member doesn't mean you're loved any less.



Fabeltje the dog doesn't think much of the new baby in the house. But then a fairy-tale adventure makes the pup realize that Benjamin is more than 'a toy'.

Anna Woltz's very first picture book, *Naar de wolven* (*To the Wolves*, 2019), is all about Fabeltje. He really is the sweetest dog. The opening picture leaves no doubt about how important he is: Fabeltje is loftily posing on a pile of cushions like a prince on a pea. But this elevated position in the family changes as soon as Benjamin arrives – and Fabeltje is relegated to the dog basket. When Fabeltje hears the neighbour telling Benjamin not to howl so much or he'll have to go and join the wolves, Fabeltje decides to reclaim his place as the centre of attention. What follows is an imaginative dream journey, which ends with four hungry wolves and teaches Fabeltje the error of his ways, depicted beautifully, sensitively and affectionately by the incomparable Schuberts.

*Naar de wolven* (*To the Wolves*, 2019) is the first collaboration between the successful writer Anna Woltz (b. 1981) and the famous married couple of illustrators Ingrid & Dieter Schubert (b. 1953, 1947), who have been praised for their distinctive, naturalistic style

in soft watercolour shades ever since their debut, *Er ligt een krokodil onder mijn bed* (1980).

Title **Aadje the Pirate –  
A Barrel Full of Stories**  
Author **Marjet Huiberts**  
Illustrator **Sieb Posthuma**

Pages **128 / 3.100 words**  
Publisher **Gottmer**  
Rights sold **Other books of the Aadje Piraatje series have been sold to Nha Nam (Vietnamese), Turbine (Danish and Swedish), Publishing House of Electronics Industry (Simplified Chinese)**  
Rights manager **Lorain Grabowski / lg@gottmer.nl**

Compassion for the eccentric characters in our world.



So pirates are all thieving sea robbers, are they? According to writer Marjet Huiberts, the boat on which her protagonist, Aadje the Pirate, sails the seven seas is more of a care boat for the disabled. Her rhyming stories for young readers feature characters including No-Hand Jon, Wooden-Leg Joop and Eyeless Jeff, who have been taken under the loving wing of Father Pirate. The picture-book stories were illustrated by Sieb Posthuma, who was a master at finding the right balance between humour and tragedy. When Aadje writes a letter to his mother, because he misses her very much, he gets some help from No-Hand Jon, a kind pirate whose hair is sculpted into the same shape as the hook on his arm. Sitting on a canon, the two of them write a sensitive letter.

This book contains the best stories about the beloved young pirate. An endearing read-aloud book packed with great humour and pace and with compassion for the eccentric characters in our world.

Marjet Huiberts (b. 1960) wrote for the theatre and children's television for years before entering the world of books with her light-hearted rhyming picture books.

Sieb Posthuma (1960–2014) was an illustrator, theatre designer and picture-book maker. His work won the Gouden Penseel twice.

Title **I Never Think of  
Nothing**  
Author **Hans & Monique Hagen**  
Illustrator **Charlotte Dematons**

Pages **56 / 1.638 words**  
Publisher **Querido**  
Rights sold –  
Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / L.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

Poems about how to deal with your own thoughts, about love and friendship, about death, God and Heaven.



'I dream myself happy again' is the beautiful closing sentence of this light collection of poetry, which does not shy away from important themes. How do you deal with your own thoughts, which can come in the strangest forms? 'I never think of nothing, because when I try to do that, I'm still secretly thinking of something.' The lines are about love and friendship, including towards yourself, and also about death, God and Heaven. The authors ask questions without passing judgement: 'Is there a Heaven? And if there is, where might it be?' It's a book that makes children think. The poems are accompanied by stunning illustrations by the award-winning Charlotte Dematons.

Hans & Monique Hagen (b. 1955 & 1956) are a married couple who write together. They won a Zilveren Griffel for this collection of poetry. From 2017 to 2019, they were the Dutch children's book ambassadors.

The illustrations of Charlotte Dematons (b. 1957) have a fairy-tale atmosphere and many, many details. She has won Zilveren Penseel awards, for *De sprookjes van Grimm* (2005) and *Nederland* (2012), and a Gouden Penseel for *Sinterklaas*, in 2008.



Title **Everything I Feel –  
The Big Book of Emotions**  
Author **Stine Jensen**  
Illustrator **Marijke  
Klompmaker**

Pages **160** / ca. **24.000** words  
Publisher **Kluitman**  
Rights sold –  
Rights manager **Mariska Budding** /  
[mariska@kluitman.nl](mailto:mariska@kluitman.nl)

Finding words for  
big emotions, from  
courage, hope  
and pride to fear,  
disgust and shame.



This is a book that helps children to find words for big emotions, for when you have big, big feelings, but not the words to describe them.

The philosopher Stine Jensen focuses on twenty emotions: from courage, fear and hope to pride, disgust and shame. Being sad because your cuddly toy has disappeared. Hoping that the nicest boy in the class likes you too. Not inviting a classmate to your birthday party out of revenge. Jensen explores the many facets of emotions. Anger doesn't necessarily have to be negative, and embarrassment also has a function and can come in very handy. The experiences of children themselves are covered in detail, and the author addresses the target group directly with personal questions: 'When was the last time you were furious?'

Stine Jensen (b. 1972) is a Danish–Dutch philosopher and writer who is known for her TV appearances and has written several books for adults and children. She won a Zilveren Griffel for a children's book about the big important questions of life.

Title **I'm Vincent and I'm  
Not Afraid**  
Author **Enne Koens**  
Illustrator **Maartje Kuiper**

Pages **184** / **36.155** words  
Publisher **Luitingh-Sijthoff**  
Rights sold **German (Gerstenberg)**  
Rights manager **Dorien van Londen** /  
[dorien@sharedstories.nl](mailto:dorien@sharedstories.nl)

Convincing insight  
into the thoughts  
and emotions of a  
bullied child.



You could describe this as a classic book about bullying, but that would be doing a disservice to Enne Koens's talent as a writer. In lucid language, she has penned a very moving story. Eleven-year-old Vincent is constantly in survival mode. At school he gets excluded and mistreated, and he doesn't really understand why. He finds consolation with a succession of imaginary animal friends and with his babysitter, Charlotte. She's firm with him when it matters, and kind to him when he needs it. His new classmate, Jasmijn, is a bit like her. To Vincent's surprise, Jasmijn wants to be his friend, but that still doesn't get rid of the bullies. At school camp, the events reach a climax and Vincent finally dares to speak out. A beautiful children's book that gives young readers convincing insight into the thoughts and emotions of a bullied child.

In her psychological novels for children, Enne Koens (b. 1974) combines serious themes with a pleasantly light writing style, appreciated both by critics and by juries of young readers. She also writes for the theatre.



Title **A Brother's Secret**  
 Author **Emiel de Wild**

Pages **176 / 41.206 words**  
 Publisher **Leopold**  
 Rights sold **Slovenian (Zalozba Zala), German (Freies Geistesleben)**  
 Rights manager **Sophie Mulder / sophie.mulder@wpgmedia.nl**

Can you still love a brother who has done something unforgivable?



Can you still love a brother who has done something unforgivable? This intriguing question forms the basis of Emiel de Wild's debut for young readers. One day, Joeri is somewhat abruptly sent to stay with his grandma. When he comes back, he finds that not only has his brother Stefan disappeared, his parents are doing their best to forget he ever existed. Joeri has no idea what's happened, and his parents turn a deaf ear to his fury and alarm. What on earth is going on?

De Wild impressed readers and critics alike with his nimble style and the exciting premise of his story. Eventually Joeri finds out what Stefan has done: a crime that went further than schoolboy mischief – with disastrous consequences. Joeri has to make up his mind. Does he still want to be Stefan's brother?

With this award-winning debut novel, praised by publishing professionals and readers, Emiel de Wild (b. 1978) put himself and his writing on the map. In his complex and layered portraits of adolescents, he presents his characters

with difficult questions and really captures the zeitgeist.

Title **Jim**  
 Author **Judith Eiselin**  
 Illustrator **Monique Bauman**

Pages **224 / 24.277 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold –  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / lvan.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

Kiki has to deal with a brother who, according to her parents, is 'extremely sensitive' and 'exceptionally gifted'.



Just as many other people have a cat that pees all over the house, Kiki has Jelmer. A brother who's a complete waste of space, if you ask Kiki. No matter how well she hides her belongings, he always manages to break something. According to her feuding parents, Jelmer is 'extremely sensitive' and 'exceptionally gifted', but to Kiki he's just the nasty boy who beheaded her favourite cuddly toy and is tearing their family apart. Her frustration becomes so extreme that she dreams up a fantasy brother for herself.

Judith Eiselin never states in *Jim* exactly what is up with Jelmer, but his behaviour does show some signs of autism. Not that *Jim* is a problem book, though. Eiselin has written an exciting, sparkling holiday story set on the Channel Island of Sark, where Kiki's fantasy brother, Jim, actually appears to exist. The surprising denouement not only ensures that Kiki gains more understanding for Jelmer, but so does the reader.

Judith Eiselin (b. 1970) wrote reviews of children's books for ten years before making her debut as an author in 2004. Her deftly written children's books feature unconventional children and often revolve around a secret.

Title **A Visit from Mister P**  
 Author **Veronica Hazelhoff**

Pages **168 / 33.098 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **German (DTV)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije /**  
**l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

Two children  
 struggling with an  
 uncertain future.



Pain is never far away in Jo-Jo's life. Mister P is his name for the uninvited guest who torments his limbs and joints with tingling sensations and fierce stabbing pains. In this book, Veronica Hazelhoff writes frankly about a boy with rheumatism, a sickness from which the writer herself also suffered. Jo-Jo is a footballer, but if Mister P has anything to do with it, he'll soon have to give up his position in goal. His body seems to be going on strike more and more often. In parallel to Jo-Jo's battle with his illness, there's a storyline about his friend Lena, an asylum-seeker who doesn't know if she'll be allowed to stay in the Netherlands. These are two children who are struggling with an uncertain future.

The effective and penetrating way in which Hazelhoff intertwined their stories earned her a Zilveren Griffel.

In the understated novels of [Veronica Hazelhoff](#) (1947–2009), young people are in search of their own identities. Her sober style and idiosyncratic protagonists earned her several Griffel awards, including a Gouden Griffel for *Auww!* in 1984.

Title **The Cockfight**  
 Author **Hans Hagen**  
 Illustrator **Philip Hopman**

Pages **106 / 9.960 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold –  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije /**  
**l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

Sensitive insights  
 about human and  
 animal suffering  
 in a world where  
 poverty forces  
 people to make  
 difficult choices.



In *Het hanengevecht* (2012), Hans Hagen effortlessly transports the reader to another culture, offering sensitive insights into a world where poverty forces people to make difficult choices.

When the Filipino boy Pio finds a rooster by the waterfall as he's handing out drinks to tourists, he knows that it could be his golden ticket. What if he could keep the bird and train it for one of the upcoming cockfights? Once they've escaped poverty, his unemployed father will be able to buy a new taxi and Pio can go back to school. Hagen subsequently confronts the reader with an account of the cruel practices involved in cockfighting. At the same time, he cleverly succeeds in looking at the world from the boy's point of view. The result is a story about human and animal suffering that is both touching and empathetic without being overly moralistic, written in striking, precise sentences that show Hagen is not only a prose writer but also a poet.

[Hans Hagen](#) (b. 1955) made his name with his books about the headstrong little *Jubelientje* and the children's poetry collection *Van mij en van jou* (2007). He has won numerous literary awards for his stories about distant countries, *De dans van de drummers*

(2004), *Verkocht* (2007) and *Het hanengevecht* (2012).

8+

Title **Polleke**  
 Author **Guus Kuijer**  
 Illustrator **Alice Hoogstad**

Pages **486 / 92.606 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **Afrikaans (Protea), French (L'école des loisirs), Czech (Albatros)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**



How to be happy  
 in a world full of  
 conflicts both large  
 and small.

In all his books, Guus Kuijer shows complete solidarity with children's hearts and souls. He understands better than anyone else that children just want to be happy. But in a world of conflicts both large and small, that's not always easy, as Polleke, one of the best-known characters in Dutch children's literature, knows only too well.

In this collection (2009), we follow Polleke's everyday adventures over the course of five books, with her COMPLICATED DAD (CD), her mum, who's doing it with her teacher, and her Moroccan boyfriend, Mimoun. In this complex multicultural society, the rebellious, witty Polleke, who wants to follow in her father's footsteps as a poet, manages to stand firm. She has the support and understanding of her grandparents, and also finds comfort in the expressiveness of language. Her candid poems might be short, but they help Polleke to fathom her own feelings.

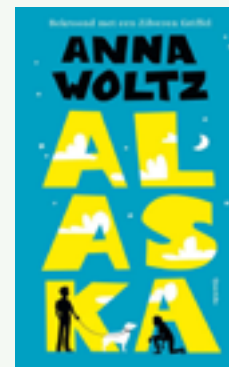
Guus Kuijer (b. 1942) is the unsurpassed Dutch master of the contemporary children's book. Whether he is writing about children, old people or animals, his keen skills of observation always allow him to find exactly the right language and balance

between philosophical profundity and poetic lightness. In 2012, he won the *Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award*.

8+

Title **Alaska**  
 Author **Anna Woltz**

Pages **184 / 33.255 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **German (Carlsen), English (OneWorld), French (Bayard), Japanese (Froebel-kan), Russian (Polyandria), Slovenian (Mis Založba)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**



About the masks  
 we wear.

*Alaska* (2016) is about our constant search for identity and the battle between appearance and reality in a world that's often dark and confusing. 'So we'd better take off our masks,' writes Anna Woltz, and simply 'be there' for each other.

The driving force behind this contemporary, exciting adventure is a dog. Alaska once belonged to Parker, but her little brother was allergic to dogs, so Alaska had to go. Just when she is getting used to 'the dog-shaped hole' at home, she discovers, after a disastrous first day at her new school, that Alaska is now an assistance dog for her annoying new classmate, Sven, who suffers from epilepsy. Parker decides to go and see Alaska and she surprises Sven with a visit at night. This results in some beautifully cinematic night-time scenes in which Woltz subtly balances the children's actions between 'play' and reality. In the end, their touching dialogues about being different and living with fear unexpectedly bring them closer to each other and to themselves.

Anna Woltz (b. 1981) combines a childlike gaze with a literary style to create captivating characters that you can't help empathizing with. She is popular with both readers and critics and has won prizes for her books, including *Mijn bijzonder rare week met*

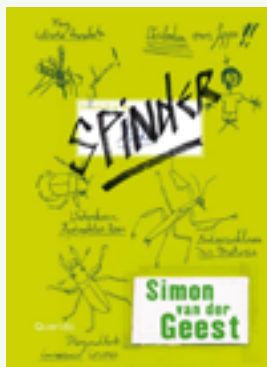
*Tess* (2013), which has been made into a film, *Honderd uur nacht* (2014), *Gips* (2015) and *Alaska* (2016).

8+

Title **Sputterfly**  
 Author **Simon van der Geest**  
 Illustrator **Karst-Janneke Rogaar**

Pages **232** / **45.789** words  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **Danish (Turbine), German (Thienemann-Esslinger), French (La Joie de Lire), Latvian (Petergailis), Polish (Format)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

A grim battle between two brothers, which makes you part of this family's deep, shared grief.



*Spinder* (2012) by Simon van der Geest is a story about a grim battle between two brothers. The younger brother takes the readers into his confidence in his logbook, making them silent but understanding witnesses to the secret that's hidden behind the exciting and sometimes disturbing events.

What sparks the fight between Hidde – alias *Sputterfly* – and the older Jeppe is the secret cellar under the garden shed. Jeppe wants to turn it into a music studio. But the cellar has been Hidde's refuge for three years. Ever since their big brother, Ward, passed away, Hidde has built up an impressive collection of insects down there. What begins as an ordinary argument between boys develops into a vicious war. Hidde's direct diary style and his drawings of insects, which illustrator Karst-Janneke Rogaar has created in the form of charming doodles, draw you into this original story, making you part of this family's deep, shared grief.

With his clear writing style, powerful imagination and great sense of empathy, *Simon van der Geest* (b. 1978) is one of the big new voices in Dutch children's literature. For his second book, the *Odyssey* adaptation *Dissus* (2011), he won the Gouden Griffel, the

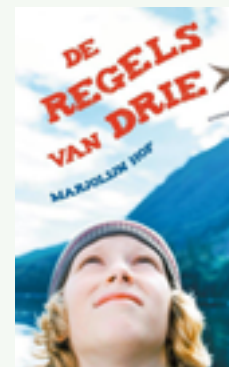
Netherlands' top prize for children's books, and he went on to win the same award the following year too, for his third title, *Spinder* (*Sputterfly*, 2012).

8+

Title **The Rules of Three**  
 Author **Marjolijn Hof**

Pages **120** / **23.190** words  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **German (Aladin), Slovenian (Mis Zalozba)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

A powerful argument against patronizing both children and elderly people.



Four generations meet up in Iceland to fetch Grandpa Kas, who is 'almost done'. His daughter and granddaughter think it's time for him to go to a care home in the Netherlands. It doesn't matter what the old man and his great-grandchildren, the twins Linde and Twan, think about that. Marjolijn Hof is known as a chronicler of contemporary Dutch family life. Her stories are about children who are confronted with adult issues over which they have no influence. But that doesn't mean they don't have an opinion. In short sentences, with plenty of room for dialogues and laconic humour, Hof confronts the readers of this book with an important question: As an older person, to what extent can you remain independent and in control of your own life?

'A powerful argument against patronizing both children and elderly people,' was the verdict of the jury that awarded the Woutertje Pieterse Prize to this book, also nominated by the Flemish children's jury.

The pure childlike gaze in her work has won *Marjolijn Hof* (b. 1956) the status of one of the most frequently translated Dutch authors of children's books. *Een kleine kans* has been translated into 14 languages. Her compact stories are characterized by

realistic dialogues and a keen sense of humour.

10+

Title **Code Catnip**  
 Author **Jacques Vriens**

Pages **128** / ca. **30.000 words**  
 Publisher **Van Holkema & Warendorf**  
 Rights sold –  
 Rights manager **Merith van de Hoek**  
**merith.vandehoek@unieboekpectrum.nl**

A warm book about  
 a sensitive theme:  
 euthanasia.



This is a warm book about a complicated and sensitive theme: euthanasia. And about how you can try to understand each other, in spite of your own sadness.

A sick grandfather talks to his grandson about the end of his life. 'Maybe I'll die naturally, but if there's no other way, I want euthanasia.' Together they go on one last bike ride and talk, with a lot of humour and openness, about all kinds of things. Including sickness and death. The boy really loves his grandpa, and he gains more understanding for his wishes. But all he really wants is for him to stay alive, and he can see that his parents are finding it very difficult too. The predicaments and the grief are dealt with in a careful way, without the book ever becoming too weighty.

Jacques Vriens (b.1946) is one of the most popular children's writers in the Netherlands. He was the headmaster of a primary school for almost twenty years and has always worked hard to make children excited about books. In 2013, he became the first Dutch

Children's Book Ambassador. He has won two Zilveren Griffels, for *Zondag-morgen* (1979) and *Tinus-in-de-war* (1991), and his book *Achtste-groepers huilen niet* (1999), which has been translated into Danish, German and Norwegian, was made into a film in 2012.

12+

Title **Heaven Can Wait**  
 Author **Gideon Samson**

Pages **128** / **24.156 words**  
 Publisher **Leopold**  
 Rights sold **Germany (Coppengrath)**  
**and Denmark (Turbine Forlaget)**  
 Rights manager **Sophie Mulder** /  
**sophie.mulder@wpgmedia.nl**

About daring to be  
 vulnerable instead  
 of creating a safe  
 emotional distance.



Belle (12), from Gideon Samson's *De hemel kan wachten* (*Heaven Can Wait*, 2017), comes across as a nasty piece of work. But when you read her bitter-sweet story, you realize that there's a good reason for that.

Belle's in hospital and she's angry: with her illness, her weepy mother, her selfish father, her hypocritical friends – with everyone who feels sorry for her. With her bitchy and bitter (and sometimes funny) remarks, she creates a safe emotional distance from the people who care about her. As Belle writes down her memories from the time when 'everything was still normal' and has touching conversations with her grandad about her parents' divorce and the meaning of life and death, she increasingly shows her true face. Belle isn't a bitch. Belle is vulnerable, just as vulnerable as you and me. And that is exactly why you take her into your heart.

Gideon Samson (b. 1985) has impressed both readers and critics with his empathy, his psychologically powerful dialogues and his ingenious compositions. He won his first Griffel for *Ziek* (2009), which was reprinted with the title of *De hemel kan wachten*

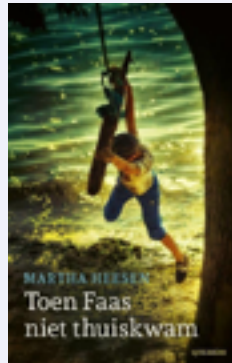
in 2017, and another for the taboo-breaking YA novel *Zwarte Zwaan* (2012).



Title **When Faas Didn't Come Home**  
 Author **Martha Heesen**

Pages **96 / 22.786**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **German (Sauerländer), French (Thierry Magnier), Korean (Changbi)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / lvan.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

About the importance of communicating and not becoming estranged.



Anyone who deviates from the norm is often misunderstood by those around them. Faas is just like his mum: creative, sensitive, a dreamer with a big imagination. Petrus and his dad are more practical. They don't understand much about the two artistic types, and yet the family still forms a tight unit.

This balance disappears, though, when the boys' mum passes away. Faas loses his kindred spirit and his dad loses the mediator between himself and his elusive son. Petrus tries to keep the family together, a responsibility that is too big for a thirteen-year-old boy. Heesen skilfully paints a picture of a dysfunctional family, whose members are at risk of losing one another because of a lack of understanding. Her affectionate depiction of the two brothers shows that one is not better than the other, but that it is important for them to keep communicating so that they don't become estranged.

The sophisticated psychological portraits of Martha Heesen (b. 1948) often revolve around flawed family ties. She has won many awards for her writing, including the Theo Thijssen Prize for her oeuvre in 2015.

Title **Visiting Years**  
 Author **Joke van Leeuwen**

Pages **156 / 37.729 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **Danish (Modtryk), German (Sauerländer), French (L'école des loisirs), Japanese (Suzuki)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / lvan.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

About the resilience of people in uncertain times.



When reading *Bezoekjaren* (*Visiting Years*, 1999), you realize just how important the rule of law is. Zima grows up in a large family in Casablanca during the dictatorial reign of King Hassan II. One day, her eldest brother, Amrar, does not come home. He has spoken out against the authorities and is being detained without a fair trial.

Van Leeuwen corresponded for years with a political prisoner in Morocco. After his release and at the request of his sister, she wrote an account of his story. By telling it from the perspective of his younger sister, she gives this gripping YA novel the same sense of lightness and wonder that is so present in Van Leeuwen's books for younger children. This is a story about the resilience of people in times when everything is uncertain and about the damage done to a family under the yoke of dictatorship.

Writer and illustrator Joke van Leeuwen (b. 1952) has created an oeuvre dominated by misfits who are puzzled by human goings-on. She has won practically every prize for children's books in the Netherlands and Flanders and has been awarded with three prizes

for her oeuvre: Theo Thijssen Prijs (2000), Gouden Ganzenveer (2010) and Constantijn Huygens Prijs (2012).



12+

Title **Moshe and Reizele**  
 Author **Karlijn Stoffels**

Pages **158 / 36.889 words**  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **Danish (Gyldendal),  
 German (Beltz & Gelberg), Japanese  
 (Michitani), Spanish (Ediciones SM)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije /  
 l.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

A tribute to  
 Dr Janusz  
 Korczak and his  
 deep respect for  
 children.



Karlijn Stoffels' novel is set during the Holocaust. After the death of his parents, the rebellious Moshe ends up in the Jewish orphanage run by Dr Janusz Korczak. As the Germans invade Poland, a bitter-sweet love story develops between the orphanage children Moshe and Reizele. At the same time, the book is a tribute to the real Dr Korczak and his deep respect for children. A famous statement of Korczak's was that 'every child has a right to be what he/she is'.

The ironic tone in which Moshe looks back at the events fifty years later ensures that the story never becomes sentimental. But the way in which Stoffels describes how Korczak and his children were transported to the camps grabs the reader by the throat. 'They followed him, calmly and courageously [...]. He made it easy for the Nazis to transport hundreds of children to their deaths without any panic. He made it easier for the children.'

Powerful emotions fill the novels of Karlijn Stoffels (b. 1947), who made such a strong debut in 1997 with *Moshe en Reizele*. This book won the award for the best YA novel of the year and

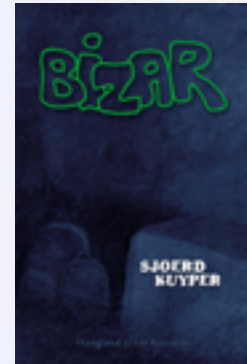
was followed by more books and more prizes.

12+

Title **Bizar**  
 Author **Sjoerd Kuyper**

Pages **320 / 80.000 words**  
 Publisher **Hoogland & van Klaveren**  
 Rights sold –  
 Rights manager **Elaine Michon /  
 elaine@elami-agency.com**

A story about the  
 philosophical  
 question of how  
 imagination and  
 reality relate to  
 each other.



'By reading, you get to find out what other people think and feel,' writes Sjoerd Kuyper in his YA novel *Bizar* (2019).

But the self-confident Sallie Mo (13), a keen reader, has been told by the psychiatrist she visited after the death of her beloved Grandpa David to start living outside of her books. And if she finds that difficult, then she should just start writing herself. 'Look at the world as it is [...]' and write down what you think of it,' is his advice. Sallie Mo does as he suggests. What else is there to do when you're on holiday on an island with your mum? And so a diary story unfolds, based around the philosophical question of how imagination and reality relate to each other. At the same time, an exciting holiday adventure develops, driven by Sallie Mo's planned conquest of Dylan, her secret love. The denouement is unexpectedly heartrending. But Kuyper is Kuyper: he leaves neither his protagonists nor his readers without consolation.

Sjoerd Kuyper (b. 1952) is one of the most highly acclaimed authors in the Netherlands. In 2012, he received the Theo Thijssen Prize for his oeuvre, which consists of children's books, poems, film scripts and songs. Whatever he writes comes straight

from his heart and is motivated by his love for life.

Title **The Junior Cancer Championship**  
 Author **Edward van de Vendel**

Pages **216** / **43.750** words  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **German (Carlsen)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / L.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

A book that fosters understanding for anyone who has to deal with cancer up close.



Having cancer when you're fifteen – what does that do to your life, your family, your friendships? This book is the Dutch answer to John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, made perhaps even more poignant because Edward van de Vendel based his YA novel on the true story of a cancer patient, Roy Looman.

As Max, the protagonist, observes, cancer dismantles your life and puts it back together all wrong. From the moment of his diagnosis, Max assumes a fighting stance. What comes next is the gripping account of his treatment and the months that follow. Defeat, powerlessness, fear – Van de Vendel does not shy away from anything, but keeps the tone light. Max's intimate story is honest and vulnerable, but at times also very funny.

This is a book that fosters understanding for anyone who has to deal with this disease up close.

No other Dutch children's author has produced such a large number of works of such consistently high quality as Edward van de Vendel (b. 1964). He has won countless awards for his writing, which includes fiction, non-

fiction, poetry and picture books for readers from 3 to 15+.

Title **Latino King**  
 Author **Bibi Dumon Tak**

Pages **198** / **49.424** words  
 Publisher **Querido**  
 Rights sold **Danish (Turbine), German (Bloomoon), Norwegian (Cappellen Dam)**  
 Rights manager **Luciënne van der Leije / L.van.der.leije@singeluitgeverijen.nl**

Is a young drug smuggler entitled to a second chance?



In the media, the world of drugs is generally portrayed as a very shady place ruled by heartless drug barons. You rarely read about the small-time criminals who do all the legwork.

For this book, Bibi Dumon Tak dived into the story of Castel, a young drug smuggler who gets caught with one and a half kilos of cocaine and ends up in the most notorious jail in the Dominican Republic. Dumon Tak writes about his experiences in a way that is pure and raw: the fights with his fellow prisoners, the sadistic guards and the boundless faith of 'Mama Tigre', Castel's mother, who does everything she can to get her son free. The writer does not make Castel into a victim. But by giving him a voice, she shows that even bad boys are entitled to a second chance – and that the authorities give up on you far too easily when you find yourself on the wrong side of the law.

In her highly acclaimed non-fiction, where the leading roles are often played by animals, Bibi Dumon Tak (b. 1964) uses journalistic, literary and poetic techniques to describe the

real world. In 2018, she won the Theo Thijssen Prize for her oeuvre.

Title **This Is Not a Diary**  
 Author **Erna Sassen**

Pages **144** / 27.182 words  
 Publisher **Leopold**  
 Rights sold **Germany (Freies Geistesleben), Denmark (Turbine Forlaget)**  
 Rights manager **Sophie Mulder / sophie.mulder@wpgmedia.nl**

Insight into the fury and grief of a difficult, traumatized 16-year-old.



In *Dit is geen dagboek* (*This Is Not a Diary*, 2010), Erna Sassen offers unsurpassed insight into the fury and grief of a difficult, traumatized 16-year-old.

When Bou finally suffers an emotional collapse, years after his mother's suicide, he ends up in a depression. He's furious with his mother for abandoning him, struggles with serious anxiety and does nothing for days on end. The notebook (according to Bou, it's definitely not a diary) that his father gives him and the classical music of Pergolesi ultimately help him to process his grief and to get his life back on track. The book has a particularly touching role for his sister. By simply being there, Pluis offers consolation and understanding. Sassen's characteristic light-footed style and tragicomic tone prevent her book from becoming weighed down by the heavy theme. Everyday language and striking images cleverly combine to make this an unforgettable and moving self-portrait.

Erna Sassen (b. 1961) is known for her humour and honesty and for the clever psychological portrayal of her characters. She has received praise for her novels *Dit is geen dagboek* (2010), the stylistically excellent *Er is geen vorm waarin ik pas* (2016) and her most

recent title for children, *Een indiaan als jij en ik* (2018).

Title **Pear Trees Blossom White**  
 Author **Gerbrand Bakker**

Pages **144** / 40.000 words  
 Publisher **Cossee**  
 Rights sold **Germany (Suhrkamp), Spain / Catalonia (Rayo Verde), France (Grasset)**  
 Rights manager **Eva Cossee / cossee@cossee.com**

This book calmly shows how, from one day to the next, life can become hopeless.



A family is turned upside down when their mother leaves. Then the youngest son, Gerson, loses his eyesight in an accident, and the balance is disturbed even more. The father feels guilty – he was driving the car and failed to give way. Meanwhile the twins, Kees and Klaas, try to support their little brother, but they too are victims of a situation in which nothing can be taken for granted any longer. In this dark and shaky world, Gerson worries about his life and his sexuality.

Without any over-dramatization, the events head almost casually towards a tragic conclusion. Bakker shifts the perspective between Gerson and his brothers. The twins speak as one, further underlining Gerson's isolated position. This book calmly shows how, from one day to the next, life can become hopeless. This cool inevitability is what makes the story so heartrending.

Seven years before Gerbrand Bakker (b. 1962) published his internationally successful novel *Boven is het stil* (translated into English as *The Twin* by David Colmer, which won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2010), he wrote his only

YA novel, *Perenbomen bloeien wit*, which also features the themes, such as nature, family relationships and homosexuality, and the tranquil atmosphere that would later make him famous.

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Foreign publishers wishing to publish translations of Dutch literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs.

In the case of high-quality illustrated children's books, additional financial support is possible.

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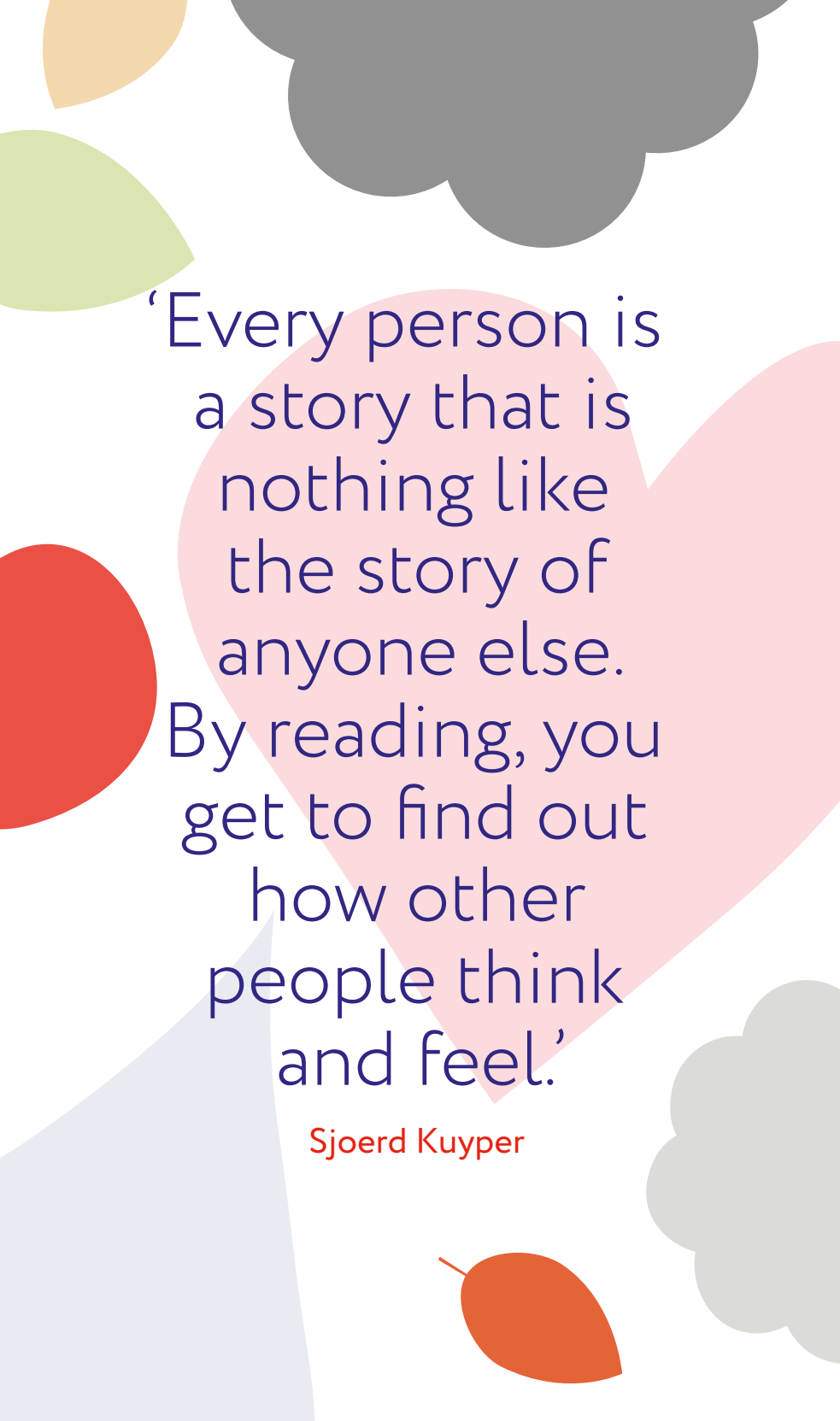
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‘Every person is  
a story that is  
nothing like  
the story of  
anyone else.  
By reading, you  
get to find out  
how other  
people think  
and feel.’

Sjoerd Kuyper