

《A Heart of Stone (精)》

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作者：Renate Dorrestein

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内容概要

Publisher Comments:

Renate Dorrestein is that rare storyteller who dazzles critics and captivates readers. Provocative, stylish, and emotionally resonant, *A Heart of Stone* (her first book to be translated into English) is certain to cause a sensation on the international scene and Viking is proud to introduce her to the American public.

This beautifully woven masterpiece, spare yet richly told, plumbs the undercurrents of family life and tragedy in a startling and wise story of love, fate, and survival. Ellen Van Bommel lives with her parents, who run an American news-clipping service, and her three siblings in an old Dutch house in a suburb of Amsterdam. Ellen's idyllic childhood is suffused with Americana, both the frivolous fringes like potato chips and Coca-Cola as well as milestones like Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon, until family disaster strikes on her twelfth birthday. From that moment on her world begins to unravel. Years later, Ellen plunges us into the past as she leafs through a faded photo album and confronts the literal and figurative ghosts of her childhood. Seamlessly alternating the past and present, taut with Hitchcockian tension and warmed by a redemptive love story, *A Heart of Stone* tells a darkly humorous, yet ultimately compassionate tale.

Growing up with her adored siblings in a rambling house in Holland - out of which her parents run an American news-clipping service - clever, precocious Ellen has an idyllic childhood suffused with Americana, both the frivolous fringes like potato chips and Coca-Cola and the milestones like Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon. Yet her seemingly carefree life is shattered when family disaster strikes on her twelfth birthday.

Twenty-five years later, Ellen returns home and plunges us into the past as she leafs through a faded photo album and confronts the literal and figurative ghosts of her childhood. Seamlessly alternating the past and present, taut with Hitchcockian tension, full of laughter, and warmed by a redemptive love story, *A Heart of Stone* is a wise and memorable novel that serves as a fitting introduction of this masterful novelist from the Netherlands to an American audience.

From Publishers Weekly

Dorrestein's first novel to be translated into English is a riveting psychological thriller that rates comparison with Shirley Jackson's classic, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*. Like Jackson, Dorrestein excels at describing how an eccentric family in this case, the van Bommels of The Hague is tormented and finally destroyed by the growing madness of one of its members. Frits van Bommel and his wife, Margje, have four children and a large house, in which they also run a news-clipping service. Their existence seems idyllic, until a fifth child, Ida, is born, and Margje begins acting strangely. She talks back to a divine figure, who urges her to attack her children. Ida suffers from mysterious, recurrent injuries, and the children's father refuses to see the obvious. Narrator Ellen, the third child, is a sharp, book-smart 13-year-old, who realizes something is wrong, but can do nothing but fly into hysterical rages. Twenty-five years later, Ellen finds herself back in her childhood home, alone, separated from her husband and expecting a baby. Huddled in the basement, she pages through a family picture album and forces herself to think back on the inexorable, mad decline of the household and the day when "life blew up in our faces like a time bomb." Dorrestein's exquisitely calibrated narrative becomes mesmerizing as Ellen struggles to comprehend how one day her whole family could just be wiped out and how she could have survived. (Jan.) Forecast: Several years ago, another unorthodox Dutch thriller was made into the well-received film *The Vanishing*; *A Heart of Stone* is a natural for Hollywood's attention, too. In any case, the book, a BOMC alternate, should win Dorrestein who will embark on a six-city author tour here name recognition in the English-speaking world.

Book Dimension

《A Heart of Stone (精)》

Height (mm) 209

Width (mm) 149

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