



Sleepless Night

Margriet de Moor

David Doherty, Translator

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The questions of love, marriage, and mortality come to life in Margriet de Moor's poignant novel *Sleepless Night*.

Suffering from insomnia, a woman wakes in the middle of the night. With her loyal dog as her only witness, she settles into her nighttime routine: baking cakes and pacing the living room floor while she waits for the kitchen timer to wake her from her reverie. Since the untimely death of her husband over a decade ago, this has been her existence. But tonight is different. Come morning light, the woman's life will no longer be what it once was.

The story unfolds in the form of the internal monologue of the unnamed woman while the hours of the night pass. Clever foreshadowing and ingeniously placed clues create suspense as the woman reaches deep into herself and far into her past to try to reconcile it with the trajectory of her life. Revolving around her husband's death and the abrupt end to her marriage as it had barely begun, her monologue delivers insightful ruminations on marriage, love, love lost, and the unsolved mysteries lurking underneath the surface of everyday lives.

The story is quiet and intimate. A simple scene of two future lovers who have recently met ice-skating in silence, side by side on a frozen canal, creates tension without any words being spoken. The intimacy of the narration works in favor of the story as well as against it, making some deep points but obscuring others.

David Doherty's insightful translation from the Dutch is respectful to the tone of the original and maintains the mode of the Netherlands in the midst of its icy North Sea winter. *Sleepless Night* is a meditative novel where the seemingly mundane reveals itself to be the harbinger of profound insights.

ERIKA HARLITZ KERN (May/June 2019)

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