



## READING GROUP GUIDE

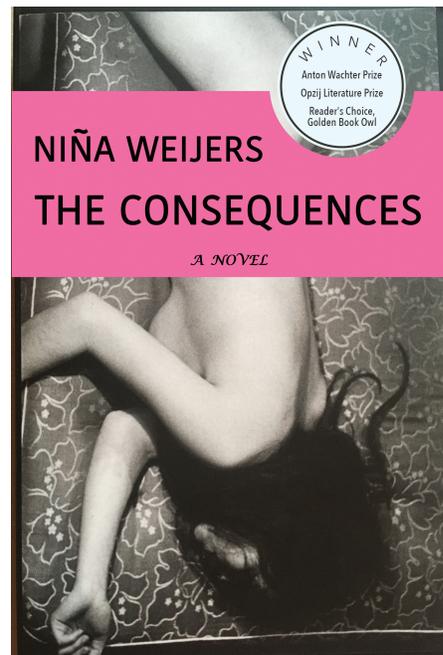
**The Consequences**  
By Niña Weijers  
Translated by Hester Velmans

### Introduction

Dutch author Niña Weijers took the world of European literature by storm in 2014 with her debut novel *The Consequences*, which has sold over 30,000 copies in Holland and garnered critical praise for its maturity and ambition.

Using deft and captivating prose, Weijers tells the story of Minnie Panis, a young and talented conceptual artist, as she navigates love affairs, her unexpected success in the art world, and her relationship with an emotionally distant mother. Beginning with Minnie's near-death experience falling through the ice during her ultimate artwork, Weijers takes readers on a rollercoaster ride as Minnie uncovers the truth behind her premature birth. The doctor who saves her life, twice, enters Minnie into his clinic, whose motto *All the fish has to do is get lost in the water* helps her arrive at the border of life's ebb, where meaningful art and revelations occur.

An intimate, often humorous exploration of the intertwining cycles of death, rebirth and coincidence, *The Consequences* is a Bildungsroman that echoes far beyond the last page.



**Reader's Choice Award,  
Golden Book Owl**

**Anton Wachter Prize,  
Best Debut Novel**

**Opzij Feminist  
Literature Prize**

**Lucy B. & C.W.  
van der Hoogt Prize**

**Shortlisted for the 2014  
Libris Prize**



## PRAISE

In this novel, tingling with ambition and fascinating ideas, the life and art of the main character revolve around loss, existence and disappearance. A determined tone characterizes this crazy book.

- *NRC Handelsblad* - 5 stars

The novel grates and creaks, and is loaded with questions, leaps and side paths, but that is one of its charms. Up to the last disturbing sentence the writer holds the reader in her manipulative grip.

- *De Groene Amsterdammer*

Niña Weijers' remarkable, inventive novel depicts a contemporary conceptual artist at the height of her fame whose blasé art project has unintended consequences. Weijers invokes Kurt Vonnegut in the course of the narrative, and this novel shares Vonnegut's sense of how things can be simultaneously real and absurd. Movies and books notoriously fail to capture the social and spiritual atmosphere of the contemporary art world, but Weijers nails it. Her book is beautifully written, surprising and often profound.

- Chris Kraus

An impressive novel on the art of creative living or the creative and destructive vital force of being an artist.

- Maarten Asscher

*The Consequences* attempts something that is not easy, and succeeds. A person thinks exhaustively about herself yet does not become boring. She writes about what she's doing and you want to know all about it because it's so vividly told. The temptation not to exist, to disappear from the world you're walking around in, the art you come upon and live with - when you write it down it sounds like heavy going; when you read it, it's light. So read it.

- Cees Nooteboom



## READING GROUP QUESTIONS

1. *The Consequences* opens with Minnie falling silently through ice on the river. How are water and ice used as metaphors throughout the book? Discuss specific instances where they provide a shock or break from the progression of the narrative.
2. How is femininity defined, elaborated, and ultimately imploded by the end of the book? How does Minnie's sense of her own sexuality stand in contrast to her mother's?
3. How do Minnie's artworks reflect the circumstances surrounding her birth? How do they foreshadow her near-death and rebirth? Discuss some specific examples of artworks that seem most connected to these existential themes.
4. Dr. Johnstone puts a great deal of faith in the philosophies and rituals of ancient civilizations and their importance to his own work, which may seem odd for a man of science. How does he incorporate them into his therapies? What effect did they have on Minnie throughout her life? Discuss implicit as well as explicit examples.
5. How does Minnie think about and feel about her body? How is her body described, and what does that reinforce or contradict in your understanding of her character?
6. Did the discussions of contemporary artists add to your understanding of Minnie's art and how she approaches it? How? Take your favorite examples and discuss the commonalities between those varying art practices and that of Minnie's. Where is Minnie's originality?
7. What are some of the ways in which the public misunderstands the concepts behind Minnie's art? What or who do you think is ultimately responsible for such misunderstandings between artists and the public?



8. Why does the author include details about the deaths of other artists in her discussion about the impact of their artwork? In what ways are the events of an artist's life and biography important to an understanding of the work they create? Is this specific to certain kinds of art?

9. Discuss the clinic's Zen motto, *All the fish needs is to get lost in the water*. How does it or doesn't it address the complications of life in the modern world? How does it relate to Minnie's life in particular?

10. Discuss the episode where it is revealed that Minnie, as a child, had a thing for wallets. What does she do with them and why? How does this prefigure her life and her fate? How does the awkward scene of Minnie encountering her mother "repurposing" a credit card fit into larger themes of Minnie's thoughts on money, fame, love, and fortune?

11. To which character or characters do you relate to most in the book? What do you think that says about you?

12. Discuss the last episode of the book. What do the luggages and line of people have to do with other references to passages between states of being that are ongoing themes in the book?

13. How does the personal journey that Minnie takes through the book reflect on themes in contemporary art? In celebrity culture? In spirituality?

14. Did the book change the way you thought about any aspect of life? How? And what comparisons can you draw between Minnie's experiences and the way trauma changes a person? Despite her deadpan delivery and humor, was Minnie traumatized?

15. Discuss the way Minnie sees and observes reality and where it might be different from what is considered mainstream. What is Minnie's relationship to capitalism? To consumption? To consumerism?



**Niña Weijers** (b.1987) studied literary theory in Amsterdam and Dublin. She has published short stories, essays and articles in various literary magazines, such as *Das Magazin*, *De Gids* and *De Revisor*. In 2010 she won the writing competition Write Now!. She is a regular contributor to the weekly magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer*, and an editor of *De Gids*.

Her debut novel *The Consequences* (De consequenties) was published in May 2014. It won the Anton Wachter Prize 2014 for best first novel, the Opzij Feminist Literature Prize, the Lucy B. & C.W. van der Hoogt Prize, and was shortlisted for the Libris Prize and the Golden Boekenuil, the two most important Dutch and Flemish literary awards.



Foreign Language publications: English (Doppelhouse Press, 2017), French (Actes Sud, Fall 2016), German (Suhrkamp, August 2016) and Czech (Kniha Zlín, 2017).

**Hester Velmans** is an award-winning translator specializing in contemporary Dutch and French literature, and is the author of several popular children's books.



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