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“Without changing the story in any radical way, Hildebrandt has managed to show us two women and their respective struggles with their limited freedom within a violent patriarchal society. She lifts the ‘Nibelungenlied’ (‘the song of the Nibelungs’, an epic poem written around 1200 in Middle High German) from its historical context to make it into a charmingly drawn, and intelligently told graphic novel.”

Knack Focus

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# Hild

Veerle Hildebrandt

Princess Kriemhild grows up in Burgundy, under her father and brother’s rule. Her life and choices are determined by the kingdom’s wish. After her father dies, it’s her eldest brother Gunther’s turn on the throne. Not long after, prince Siegfried van Santen arrives in Burgundy. The new king and his brothers are mightily impressed by the famous tales of this hero’s deeds, which frustrates Hagen – the king’s most important diplomate and the Crown’s advisor – to no end. He senses his own grip on the king slipping away. King Gunther is determined to marry the relentless queen Brunhild in the far away country of Ysland, he calls for Siegfried’s help. As his reward, he is given Kriemhild’s hand in marriage.

*Veerle Hildebrandt (b. 1981) studied graphic design and graphic storytelling. She lives in Mechelen with her family, where she works as a freelance graphic designer and illustrator. She also runs a second-hand clothes shop. In 2016, she received the Yieha Young Talent Award from the digital platform of Ballon Media and Standaard Uitgeverij. In 2018, her debut ‘Black Paradise’ was published at Ballon Media. ‘Hild’ is her second graphic novel and was inspired in part by her own German roots.*



**Prizes:**

Willy Vandersteen for  
 best comic of 2023

HILD

Burg Wetz, Burgundy

4.

B: Where has that child gone, now!?

It's the same story every time, and it's me who has to chase them down!

Oops, It's Bertha, the dragon!

Shhht, or she'll find us!

B: My ears work perfectly, prince Gunther! Come on, out with you. The master-at-arms is looking for you, it's time for your lesson!

G: If you're looking for Kriemhild, she's down there.

B: Hello princess! Get out of there quick, you've got an important visitor...

5.

...And it seems I'll have to scrub some horse-dung off you first!

K: Gunther! You filthy traitor!

B: Kriemhild, stop cursing, that's not befitting a princess!

K: Gernaud and Giselher, you're just as bad, you cowards!!

COWARD

Why am I always the one who has to welcome boring visitors, and not my brothers?

B: Because you'll be bestowed in marriage, and they won't!

6.

K: Aaargh cold!

B: It was nice and warm half an hour ago.

Be still!

K: I'll get rid of it! I'll never make any girl marry anyone.

And they'll be allowed to go horse-riding every day, just like the boys!

B: And you'll be fighting on the battlefield, too?

K: No, because I'll abolish war too!

U: Life isn't pony-camp, Kriemhild!

K: Mother!

B: Queen Ute!

U: Is she finally ready, Bertha? A bit quicker in the future, please.  
And Kriemhild, stop chatting with the servants.

7.

It's important that they know their place. Just like you, I might add!

K: Yes, mother.

U: You've been born as a princess of Burgundy, and that comes with certain responsibilities.

K: Like becoming queen and to rule the country!

U: You can forget about that. Women of our standing aren't in charge, they marry men who are, and birth sons who will be after them.

K: I still don't think it's fair, mother!

U: Unfortunately it doesn't matter what you think. I don't make the rules.

K: And why not, actually?

KD: Ah, finally! The two apples of my eye!

K: Hello, father.

KD: Kriemhild! You're becoming a proper young lady!

Have I said too much, Dietmar?

D: Not a word, Dankwart.

D: Dietrich, my boy!  
Say hello to the princess.

Dj: Yes, father.

K: Pleased to meet you, milord.

Dj: Likewise, milady.

9.

KD: Right! Now this is behind us, we can get to the Riesling and interesting conversation.

D: You are a lucky man, my friend! Three sons and a daughter...The future of Burgundy is taken care of! And with the famous diplomat Hagen van Tronje at your side, your empire's safety is fully secured!

U: Don't linger, get back to your rooms, Kriemhild!

mH: Come with me, prince Dietrich. Today's lessons are not finished yet.

Dj: Yes, master Hildebrand!

H: Well, are you impressed this time, Princess Kriemhild?  
Prince Dietrich van Bern is a very good match!

K: Hagen! He's nice, but I'm not getting married anyway.  
I prefer to become ruler of Burgundy myself, Gunther won't want to anyway!

H: Those are interesting plans, princess.

K: Maybe I'll get married so I won't have to do everything by myself.  
You can stay on as my advisor, in any case!

H: I'm relieved to hear it, princess Kriemhild.]

12.

10 YEARS LATER

G: Why did father have to die already?  
I'm not ready to be king!

G: If you try not to change anything, everything will hopefully stay just as it was.

G: And Hagen will take care of the rest, as always. That's the safest way!

K: Some heirs you are! I'll remind you, it is Gunther who is being crowned king of Burgundy, not Hagen!

13.

H: This is the last will and testament of Dankwart, king of Burgundy: my faithful wife Ute shall spend the rest of her days in Weltz, and will be provided for by our sons...

U: The good man!

H: ...Who shall all receive their share of the inheritance.

My daughter Kriemhild will remain in their care and shall receive her due when she marries a man of her stature.

K: Why do I have to wait? I want my share now! I want to travel and –

G: You have to marry for the future of Burgundy!

G: You can ask your husband for the money after!

H: Kriemhild knows very well...

K: Of course I know all this, but that doesn't make it right. It's MY inheritance and I'll do with it what I want!

Why should I have to wait for some strange man?

14.

U: Kriemhild, your impudent behaviour is extremely inappropriate and won't change a thing!

G: You have to marry in order to strengthen the kingdom, a mighty husband will mean an ally to Burgundy...

G: A woman who has money is inappropriate. What would you even do with it? Buy clothes?

H: Money is a man's business, Kriemhild! And until you marry, Burgundy needs every last penny for its defence.

It isn't to be wasted on the whim of an unmarried princess!



KRIEMHILD!

Waar zit dat kind nu weer!?



Altijd hetzelfde!  
En ik moet ze dan weer  
gaan zoeken!

Oei,  
't is Bertha,  
de draak!

Ssss!  
Straks vindt ze  
ons nog!



Ik heb goede oren, prins  
Gunther! Hup, naar buiten, de  
wapenmeester zoekt jullie  
voor de les!

Als je Kriemhild  
zoekt, die zit  
hierbeneden.



Dag Prinses! Komt  
u daar maar eens  
gauw uit, u heeft  
hoog bezoek...

... en ik zal duidelijk  
eerst nog wat  
paardenmest van u  
moeten schrobben!



**GUNTHER!**  
JIJ VUILE  
VERRADER!



Kriemhild, stop  
met schelden! Dat  
hoort niet voor  
een prinses!

Gernaud en  
Giselher,  
jullie zijn al  
even laf!!



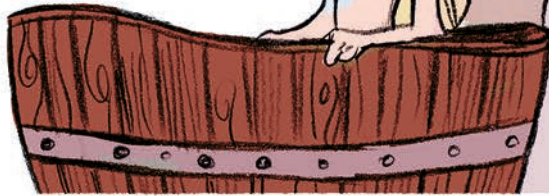
**LAF AARD!!!**

Waarom moet IK altijd  
saaië bezoekers  
verwelkomen en mijn  
broers niet?!



Omdat u ooit  
uitgehuwelijkt  
zult worden en  
zij niet!

WAAAAH!  
KOUDE!



Een half uur geleden  
was het anders nog  
lekker warm.

Zit stil!



Ik ga dat  
afschaffen! Van mij  
zullen alle meisjes  
nooit moeten  
trouwen.

En ze zullen alle  
dagen mogen  
paardrijden, net  
zoals de  
jongens!



En gaat u dan  
ook vechten op  
het slagveld?

Nee, want ik  
schaf ook de  
oorlog af!

Het leven is  
geen ponykamp,  
Kriemhild!

Moeder!



Koningin Ute!

Is ze eindelijk klaar,  
Bertha? In 't vervolg  
mag het wel wat  
vlotter!

En Kriemhild,  
stop ermee met  
de bedienden  
te kletsen.









Goed! Nu dit achter de rug is, kunnen we aan de Riesling beginnen en de interessante dingen bespreken.

Blijf daar niet zo staan. Terug naar je kamers, Kriemhild!

U bent een gelukkig man, mijn beste! Drie zonen en een dochter... voor de toekomst van Bourgondië is gezorgd! En met de beroemde diplomaat Hagen van Tronje aan uw zijde is uw rijk al helemaal veilig!

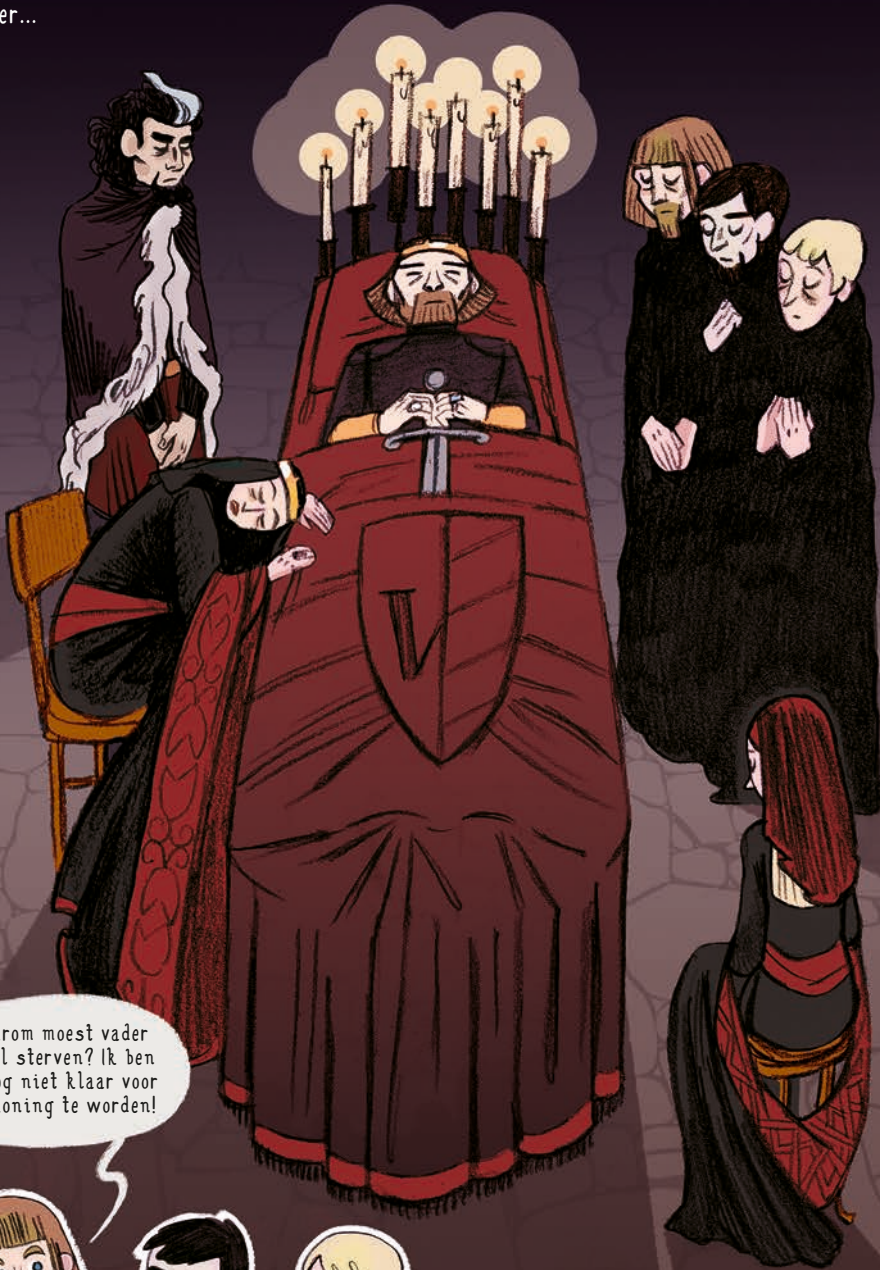
Komt u maar met mij mee, prins Dietrich. De lessen voor vandaag zijn nog niet gedaan.

Ja, meester Hildebrand!





10 jaar later...



Waarom moest vader nu al sterven? Ik ben er nog niet klaar voor om koning te worden!



Probeer vooral niets te veranderen, dan blijft hopelijk alles zoals het was.

En de rest zal Hagen wel regelen, zoals altijd. Dat is het veiligste!

Mooie erfgenamen zijn jullie! Gunther is wel de nieuwe koning van Bourgondië, niet Hagen!



Dit is het testament van Dankwart, koning van Bourgondië: 'Mijn trouwe echtgenote Ute zal tot aan het einde van haar dagen in Weltz mogen blijven en worden verzorgd door onze zonen...'

Die goede man!

'Deze ontvangen elk hun deel van de erfenis.'

'Mijn dochter Kriemhild blijft onder hun voogdij en zal haar deel van de erfenis ontvangen zodra ze getrouwd is met een man van haar stand.'

Waarom moet ik tot dan wachten? Ik wil mijn erfenis nu! Ik wil reizen en -





Kriemhild! Jow  
verwaand gedrag is  
heel erg ongepast en  
verandert niets!

Jij moet trouwen om het  
rijk te versterken. Een  
machtige echtgenoot zal ook  
Bourgondië bijstaan...

Een vrouw met geld hoort  
trouwens niet! Wat moet  
je ermee? Kleren kopen?

Geld is een mannenzaak,  
Kriemhild! En tot u trouwt  
heeft Bourgondië toch  
elke cent nodig voor zijn  
verdediging.

Niet om een ongehuwde  
prinses de middelen te geven  
om haar zin te doen!