

Fritz Mertens

I wanted to love and learned to hate

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Fritz Mertens
***Ich wollte Liebe
und lernte hassen***

Ein Lebensbericht

Diogenes

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Praise

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»This devastating true story shows what can happen when parents and guardians do not take their responsibilities seriously.« – Reinhart Lempp / (Fritz Mertens' court-appointed expert)

»A report as literature, literature as a report. A documentation of the other side of life, which we should all read, because none of us are safe from ourselves.« – ORF, Vienna

»The language conveys emotions so acutely that it is almost staggering.« – Plärner, Nuremberg

»We ourselves cannot take the credit if, throughout our lifetime, we do not commit a crime, if we do not become guilty of killing someone.« – Reinhart Lempp / (Fritz Mertens' court-appointed expert)

This account of human and societal failure is a tour de force of psychological cruelty, failed attempts at living life and an unbelievable escalation.

Fritz Mertens brutally murdered two people. As part of the process of determining his penalty, he is told to write down his life story. The resulting account is a document of collective failure: of a childhood characterised by illness and abuse, by the search for understanding and consistent disappointment. This is a book about the sensitive terrain of children's minds, which we must navigate with the greatest of caution.

»This book was only written because my psychiatrist asked me to write down the story of my life. He had to write an expert opinion on my behalf, because I have killed two people.«

Fritz Mertens

Fritz Mertens (1963–2008) is the pseudonym of a German author who, after committing a capital offense as a teenager, composed a report about the crime. After being released from prison, he completed his apprenticeship as an electrician and did his master craftsman's diploma. In 1998, he opened a community youth centre together with his wife. He died of a stroke at the age of 44.