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# Chris Rippen

## *Nothing happens here*

Original title: *Hier gebeurt niets*

NOVEL

**First literary novel by prize-winning thriller author**

**Deeply personal novel about a man at a turning point in his life**

## About the author

Chris Rippen (Haarlem, 1940) has made a name for himself as a thriller writer with novels such as *Baltische connecties* (1999) and *Eeuwige stranden* (2005). Both were nominated for De Gouden Strop (The Golden Noose). In 1991, he won this award for the best Dutch crime novel with *Playback*.



## About the book

As he gives a speech at a reception, Wolter Greve loses control over his words. For a short while, he has no sense of time or place. He flees the building before the doctor arrives and, for one night and one day, he wanders around Haarlem, scene of his strict, religious upbringing. Disoriented and vulnerable, Wolter looks on as remnants of his childhood blend with the contours of his current life.

Chris Rippen, *Hier gebeurt niets*  
ISBN 978 90 445 16869  
Paperback, 256 pages

## Bibliography

*Playback* – 1991 (Thriller)  
*Baltische connecties* (*Baltic connections*) – 1999 (Thriller)  
*Een enkel woord* (*A single word*) – 2002 (Thriller)  
*Nachtboot* (*Night boat*) – 2003 (Thriller)  
*Eeuwige stranden* (*Eternal beaches*) – 2005 (Thriller)  
*Misdaad in Triplo* (*Crime in Triplo*) – 2005 (Thriller)

## Prizes and awards

Golden Noose 1992 for *Playback*

Nominated Golden Noose 2000

Nominated Golden Noose 2005

## Rights

The early work of Chris Rippen is published in Germany with Econ Verlag.

## The press about Chris Rippen's work

‘Subdued and almost static suspense builds up slowly as the novel unfolds.’ – From the report of the jury for De Gouden Strop on *Baltische connecties*

‘A gripping, mature, and well-written thriller.’ – *Algemeen Dagblad* on *Playback*

‘Excellent psychological thriller.’ – *NRC Handelsblad* on *Eeuwige stranden*

## Excerpt from the book

Is there anyone at home at number 9? A light appears to be on downstairs but this could be the reflection of a streetlamp. Upstairs, it is dark, yet in the neighbouring houses, the lights are on everywhere and, here and there, a television screen plunges a room into a different colour.

There were seven of them in the house, including his grandmother, who only spent a few years with them before going to a nursing home. It was a normal-sized house for before the war, but he has outgrown it now.

It must have been overcrowded. Especially when everyone was home, with all the rooms occupied, even the attic. Strangely enough, his most vivid image is of a virtually empty house. His parents are home and so is he. The silence is leaden. If he thinks about this dispassionately, he knows it is nonsense.

He gets out and walks to the corner of the street from where he can see the other houses and right up to the gate leading to the back gardens. Once again he looks at Number 9. This is where he lived for 19 years. An eternity. He tries to feel some connection with this house, but perhaps late on a wet January night is not the right moment. And there is nothing to suggest he ever lived here. On his way to school, he used to pass a house with the plaque LORENTZ LIVED AND WORKED IN THIS HOUSE. At least the inscription provided some solid evidence although, at the time, he had no idea who Lorentz was.

A door closes. A man with a small dog comes through the gate of Number 5. He crosses the street to the only tree, waits until the dog has finished, then heads straight for Wolter.

“Good evening. Can I help you?”

“No, thank you,” Wolter replies. “I’m just looking around.” Although he doesn’t really want to give an explanation, he still thinks he should. “I used to live here.” And you live in Warmerdam’s house, he thinks. Do you like it?

“Really?” the other man says, stony-faced. He looks from Wolter to the car. Is he trying to memorize the license number?

If there had been a plaque, Wolter could have pointed to it to prove he was telling the truth. Maybe an inscription saying, THIS IS WHERE IT HAPPENED. Straight out of Winnie the Pooh. Or NOTHING HAPPENED HERE. He has to smile in spite of himself. He nods to the man with the dog and walks to his car. NOTHING HAPPENED HERE WHATSOEVER. This is where Pooh spent time hoping it would happen, but it didn’t. He feels the need to laugh. Years of idleness, bleakness, gnashing of teeth. Standing next to the car, he looks up at the colossal church. God was my witness all those years. The god, that is, of the Catholics, the visible god. And He saw that it was not good. The illuminated hands of the tower clock point to twenty past eleven. Wasn’t there something he should be doing? Ah yes. Heleen. He had to return Heleen’s call before a particular time.