

Running from your demons

The Second Kiss

CONZ

'The Second Kiss': the title seems to indicate a beautiful love story, but it's not that simple. Although this graphic novel begins as a classic boy-meets-girl story – teenage boy Ringo hooks the pretty Hanne at a party – the tone quickly becomes less cheery. Hanne gets fed up with Ringo's adolescent behaviour and their relationship hits the rocks. She emigrates to Australia and it remains quiet for a very long time. Ten years later, she sends an invitation to Ringo and he goes to see her: on his way to his childhood sweetheart, but also fleeing his personal demons.

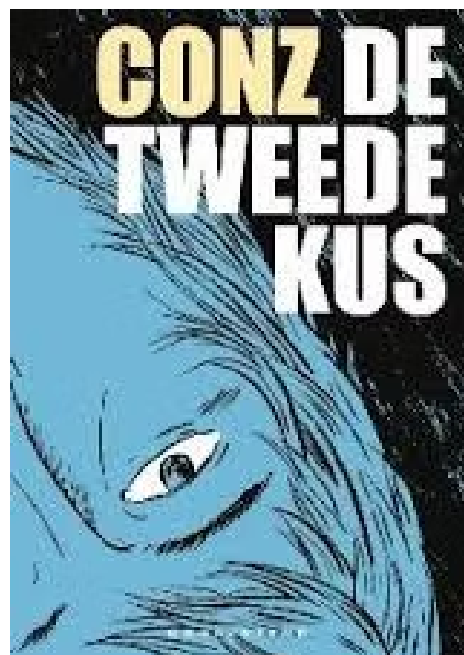
A fine piece of work by a young author with a lot of daring

DE STANDAARD

Why does Hanne ask her ex to come and visit her on the other side of the world after so many years? What ghosts of the past make it difficult for Ringo to find his place in life? The jigsaw pieces fall slowly and surprisingly into place in this strongly constructed book. Hidden in 'The Second Kiss' is a cleverly successful scenario full of flashbacks and flashforwards. Conz chose a visual narration with a limited amount of text, but a great richness of imagery. His dark, expressive pages perfectly fit this loaded story about characters whose past keeps catching up with them.

A human story without corniness, with an overdose of emotions and identifiability

DE MORGEN



AUTHOR



Even when he was still a little boy, **Conz** (b. 1977), pseudonym of Constantijn Van Cauwenberge, already knew he wanted to become a comic book artist. He made his debut in 2004 with the semi-autobiographical book 'When I Still Ruled the World', which won the prize for the best debut at the Turnhout comics festival. He went on to create the ambitious trilogy *The Second Kiss*, which was translated into French in 2011 as 'Quelque part les étoiles'. He has also illustrated a wordless comic book for preschoolers, 'What Can You See in the Sea?'. Conz teaches at the Academy of Visual Arts in Mechelen and travels around Belgium giving workshops.

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