

A hilarious modern picaresque novel about voluntary marginality

Blockmeat

JAN VAN LOY

The main character in 'Blockmeat' and his pal Celis attempt to organise a 'better' food distribution for the homeless. But thanks to the liberal amounts of wine involved, this inevitably gets completely out of hand. They throw themselves into a free existence and take advantage of every opportunity. When this freebooter existence is ended by an incident, the narrator chooses for a mainstream existence, with a wife and a regular job. During an ultimate confrontation with Celis, both seem to have doubts about their different choices.

Detached and playful; mischievous, ironic, ambiguous and not seldom hilarious

DE MORGEN

'Blockmeat' is another word for butcher's scraps: the fatty trimmings Celis incorporates into his meals. That is precisely how he sees himself and the narrator: as the scraps of society. The narrator is not so categorical in his rejection of mainstream life. As long as he has freedom of choice, his freedom is guaranteed. With its laconic tone and adventurous episodic plot, 'Blockmeat' reads like a polished picaresque novel. At the same time it poses pertinent questions regarding the seemingly obvious choices people have to make between sticking to their principles and selling out, between freedom and self-denial.

A moving, hilarious, burlesque novel, ingeniously structured, stylistically strong and written with great flair and craftsmanship.

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Jan Van Loy (b. 1964) writes short stories and novels. His debut novel 'Blockmeat' won him the Debut Prize and widespread recognition as an exceptionally fluent writer with a unique slant on life. A natural storyteller with his own distinctive subject matter, Van Loy is an authentic voice in contemporary Flemish literature. The escape from reality and 'the (American) dream' are recurring themes in his oeuvre, and he shows his readers just how banal these can be. His style has been described as filmic. Photo © Stephan Vanfleteren

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PRIZES Debut Prize

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