

A Machiavellian in love

# The Harvest of the Plums

DIMITRI VERHULST

Mattis, a self-declared ‘champion of solitude’, spends his empty days in a dilapidated house beside a lake, far from civilization. All his relationships have failed, he has survived an appalling childhood and hates his mother. He drinks and smokes too much, grumbles to himself, and looks upon life with derision and self-contempt. Ultimately he has to admit that he doesn’t excel even at solitude. He decides to give up his reclusive existence and sell the house.

**A gem of a novel. Quirky though, certainly.**

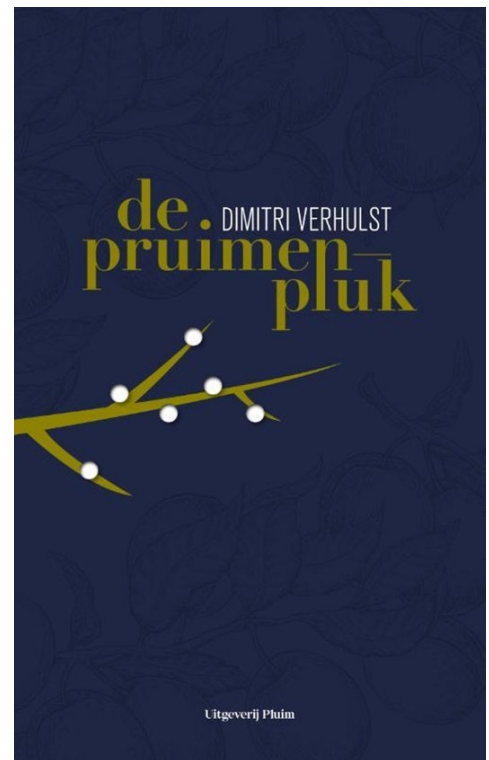
CUTTING EDGE

When Elma strides into his life, naked, wading across the lake, he has second thoughts. Elma is mysterious, she comes and goes unannounced. Their love does not come naturally, even if it is mutual, since Elma is still mourning the death of her husband Erik. Mattis, unable to stand the thought that she was once happy with Erik, tries to erase the memory of him. ‘I had to commit a crime of passion, by murdering a dead man.’ When he eventually persuades Elma to throw out her husband’s things, he starts to feel the fear of commitment that he found so intolerable in her.

‘The Harvest of the Plums’ is a novel permeated with both humour and a masterly evocation of melancholy. The cynicism and sarcasm, the utterly unique way with words, the magnificent phrasing and unending series of witticisms make this a vintage Verhulst.

**Each and every one of the sentences is a treat.**

DE MORGEN



## AUTHOR



**Dimitri Verhulst** (b. 1972) is one of the most successful contemporary writers in the Dutch language. His breakthrough came in 2006 with the novel *The Misfortunates*. It won several awards, was made into a movie and is now in its sixty-first reprint. He is renowned for his pitch-black worldview, his tragicomedies, his juicy language, his engagement and his intimate portraits. He produces a steady stream of literary work and has been translated into 25 languages.

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**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Marijke Nagtegaal - marijke@beerights.com, Uta Matten - uta@beerights.com

**TRANSLATION GRANTS** Elise Vanoosthuysse - elise@flandersliterature.be, Marieke Roels - marieke@flandersliterature.be