

Logbook of a downfall

Reports from the Void

DIMITRI VERHULST

Dimitri Verhulst's (fictional) work often draws more or less explicitly on his youth and his personal experiences. 'Reports from the Void. Undated diaries' is not a novel but an ego document: a collection of excerpts from letters and diary-style notes.

Right from page one we realise that the author is not in a good place. We only find out why at the end. Until then, Verhulst gives us a bleak glimpse of his path to self-destruction. Excessive amounts of alcohol, cigarettes and cocaine combined with too little sleep and morose thoughts.

Another jewel in Verhulst's crown as a great ironist and a masterful raconteur

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The fact that it has come to this has everything to do with a false accusation of rape by the ex with whom he lived in Sweden. Verhulst is at risk of being extradited to face trial in Sweden. The fear of being seen as a rapist by both the press and the public totally destabilises his life and feeds his addiction. But there's light at the end of the tunnel, when the author sings the praises of all-consuming love and seeks out the peace and quiet of the French countryside with his girlfriend Tutut and her dog.

In 'Reports from the Void' the dark recesses of the mind are chronicled with both stylistic bravura and humour. A book in the tradition of Charles Bukowski, Bohumil Hrabal and Jeroen Brouwers.

The raw directness and vulnerable sensitivity create an extraordinary reading experience.

HUMO



AUTHOR



Dimitri Verhulst (b. 1972) is one of the most successful contemporary writers in the Dutch language. He produces a steady stream of literary work which has been translated into 25 languages. He is renowned for his pitch-black worldview, his tragicomedies, juicy language, social engagement and intimate portraits. Verhulst's style can only be described as 'Verhulstian': raw, archaic and with an eye for the grotesque. His texts are suffused with alliteration, rhyme and word play. Many of his characters inhabit the fringes of society and it is these people he wants to give a voice. He draws extensively on his own life, including his childhood, for his novels. Photo © Ringel Goslinga

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