

Blistering portrait of a friendship
thrown off course

How It Happened

HERMAN VAN DE WIJDEVEN

One rainy summer's day at the beginning of a new school year, eleven-year old Bent wants to make a racket, break things and punch the new boy in the face. But behind all his anger lies fear and sadness. Jumping back and forth in time Herman van de Wijdeven peels away layer upon layer of the story, until we know what happened exactly on that fateful afternoon two days ago.

At times, his fine prose for young readers evokes pleasant memories of the masterful Aidan Chambers.

DE VOLKSKRANT

Bent and Joeri are inseparable. Bent is no hero, but during the seemingly endless summer they play a new exciting game in which they challenge each other, and in the process they discover that they can double their daring: together they can be much more audacious than alone. But then there is the new boy at school, Finn, who changes everything. Bent feels cast aside, and his resentment grows by the day, until Joeri appears to have carried out the ultimate unforgiveable act.

In his pithy debut, Van de Wijdeven sketches a beautiful portrait of a friendship between boys that is being pushed off course. The sultry atmosphere and Van de Wijdeven's impressive and assured writing style make *How It Happened* a book that continues to resonate for a long time.

Van de Wijdeven's writing beautifully captures the senses, in the tradition of Bart Moeyaert. An unusually atmospheric and touching book about jealousy, friendship and betrayal

TROUW



AUTHOR



Herman van de Wijdeven (b. 1961) is a Dutch author living in Flanders. He studied drama and has worked as an actor with various Dutch and Flemish theatre companies. He started his writing career as a playwright and wrote his first children's book in 2013. His style has been compared to the work of internationally lauded authors such as Bart Moeyaert, Aidan Chambers and Niccolò Ammaniti. Photo © Claudia Kamergorodski

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