

Life and love in a deprived neighbourhood

Jam Street

FEMKE VINDEVOGEL

Following the death of her father, an alcoholic family doctor who had fallen on hard times, Marie is forced to move to a deprived neighbourhood: the notorious Jam Street. Once settled in her new home, Marie meets a variety of colourful locals. Her noisy neighbour Pa Slicklock turns out to be a rough diamond. Her other neighbour, a sex addict, can be heard groaning through the thin walls... And Anna is like a grandmother to her. When Marie bumps into her old schoolfriend Samantha it brings back some painful memories. Because of Sam's doing, she was expelled from her old village school. Years later Sam hits a raw nerve in Marie and a complicated love develops between them.

The poetic style and humorous tone make this a book that's light yet incredibly satisfying. ****

ZIZO MAGAZINE

While Marie tries to find herself, her place in the neighbourhood and her purpose in life, she also tries to come to terms with her past. Not only is she upset about her father's death, but the loss of her mother, who took her own life years ago, continues to haunt her as well. The fear of disappointing her mother, a constant during her childhood, still informs her daily life all these years later.

'Jam Street' is a poetic story about a culture clash in a deprived neighbourhood in Flanders, and it is also an ode to the beauty of the banal. Vindevoegel documents it all with dry wit and vivid metaphors, free from trite sentimentality or pseudo-romantic notions about living in poverty. The novel describes the brutal and raw reality of life in the margins, yet it is soft and tender at the same time.

'Jam Street' is chockful of beautiful observations and stylistic gems.

HAARLEMS DAGBLAD



AUTHOR



Femke Vindevoegel (b. 1978) is a writer, illustrator and music teacher. She has published poems and short stories in various literary magazines and anthologies. Her debut novel *Jam Street* came out in 2019 and was nominated for the Bronzen Uil, a prize awarded annually for the best debut novel written in Dutch. It is currently being adapted into an opera, with Vindevoegel herself reworking the text into a libretto. Vindevoegel is not afraid to make her characters both highly original and colourful. Photo © Annaleen Louwes

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