

Violence and longing during a cold night of passion

The Edges

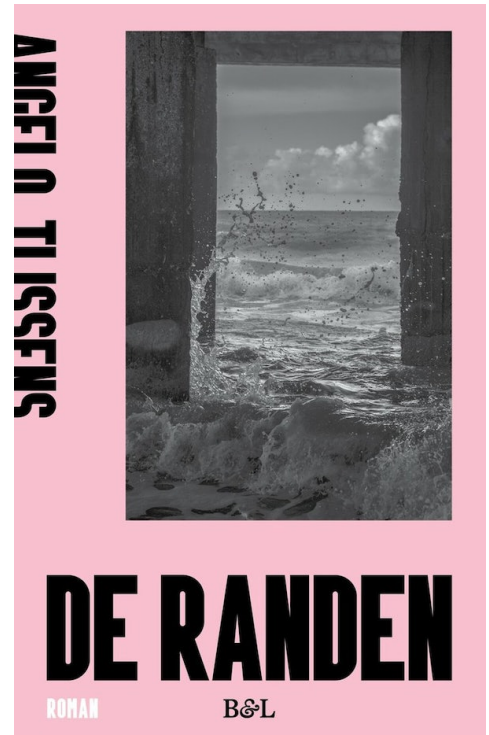
ANGELO TIJSENS

This raw, semi-autobiographical debut tells the story of the unnamed protagonist's childhood and a night with his former lover. When his mother dies, the main character, now an adult, returns to the seaside village in Flanders where he grew up. It's a place on the edge of the country, somewhere he didn't feel welcome as a child and adolescent growing up gay. Now that his mother has passed away, he's the one responsible for dealing with her estate, even though she gave him precious little maternal care. Via flashbacks, he takes the reader back to the quiet fear of his teenage bedroom and other violent episodes from his childhood, including that time when he sat covered in blood in the driveway after physical abuse by his mother. Back in the village, he takes the opportunity to meet up with his boyhood love for the first time in many years. The man now lives in a bungalow in a dreary holiday park which is set to be demolished. After a passionate night together, in which past and present merge, he returns to his life in the city.

A powerful gem, written with great precision, lurching between love and violence

DE STANDAARD

'The Edges' takes the reader through an emotional landscape that's reminiscent of Ocean Vuong and Douglas Stuart. In cinematic scenes, Angelo Tijssens depicts the pain and longing of a life spent searching. Tijssens' language has a strong cadence and is understated and direct. With his carefully chosen sensory descriptions, he enables us to imagine what's often left unsaid. 'The Edges' is a deeply human debut that harnesses vulnerable emotions to reflect on growing up in an environment that's not fit for purpose, that's 'on the edge'.



AUTHOR



Angelo Tijssens (b. 1986) is a scriptwriter, theatre maker, actor and writer. He co-wrote the films *Girl* (Caméra d'Or, Cannes 2018) and *Close* (Grand Prix, Cannes 2022), amongst others. He also travels the world as a stage actor and theatre maker with the 'Ontroerend Goed' collective. His semi-autobiographical debut novel 'The Edges' harnesses vulnerable emotions to reflect on growing up in an environment that's not fit for purpose, that's 'on the edge'. The book is nominated for the Bronzen Uil 2023. *Photo © Willy Vandepierre*

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