

Bar talk of the highest order

The Barflies

BEN GIJSEMANS

As so often, Carl sits down at the bar in the venue owned by his mate Peter. Their friendship is characterised by good-humoured discussions, with Carl regularly out-debating Peter, and this evening proves to be no exception. While Carl uses pretentious metaphors to stress the importance of the quest for truth and knowledge, the woman sitting a few stools down from them is growing increasingly annoyed. Once upon a time she was just like him, and she knows where that journey leads: he'll end up a depressed barfly. The two become embroiled in a philosophical discussion about belief, disbelief, science, truth and God, while Peter acts as a peacekeeper.

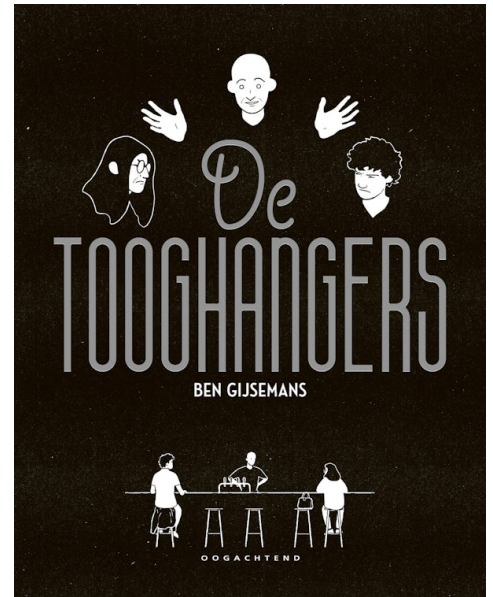
Minimalist with strong dialogue. Simply extremely powerful

DE STRIPKEVER

Ben Gijsemans' minimalist linework in 'The Churchgoers' is almost taken to extremes in 'The Barflies': we are given little more than talking heads and the bar with the three characters. It makes it even more impressive that Gijsemans manages to convey the subtle emotions and nuances in the facial expressions in such a way that you never feel as if you're seeing repeats. At the same time, he proves himself to be a master of dialogue, which is pushed to the forefront here. Carl's complacency contrasts sharply with the nihilism that has taken hold of his opponent. 'The Barflies' is a remarkable book about conviction, faith and self-image, and ultimately also about persuasion.

A unique book that provides an equally unique reading experience

9E KUNST



AUTHOR



Ben Gijsemans (b. 1989) studied audiovisual arts and comics in Ghent and Brussels. The first chapter of his debut *Hubert* was his thesis. It was very well received at home and abroad. Gijsemans' drawings are incredibly detailed, and more often than not depict loners who feel out of place among other people. *Photo © Ben Gijsemans*

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