

Psychological novel that reads like a thriller

Under the Bridge

EVELIEN DE VLIIEGER

The intelligent and quirky Jowi is seventeen and recovering from a bout of depression. After the weekend he'll go back to school at last. But the Friday evening on which he celebrates his return with a few friends under the bridge ends with Jowi in a coma after a fall from that very bridge. Did he jump? Was it an accident? Or did someone push him? In an ingeniously structured story, the reader gradually finds out exactly what happened. The perspective changes between Jowi's on the evening of his fall and those of the others while he lies in a coma, including his mother, his girlfriend and the people who were with him under the bridge.

Evelien De Vlieger has a unique, authentic voice in Flemish literature.

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Evelien De Vlieger depicts Jowi and those around him with crystal clarity: the way their lives and the events that take place are profoundly interwoven, but also the desire for (physical) love that they all share. She thereby touches on subjects like relationships and sex in young people, but also transgressive behaviour, social criticism and mental health. Nevertheless there is humour, too, in this psychological novel that is almost a thriller, with Jowi deploying sarcasm of the highest order. 'Under the Bridge' is an intense reading experience and a demonstration of De Vlieger's extraordinary voice.

'Under the Bridge' has the presence of a thriller and a strong structure, but also lifelike characters and astute sentences.****

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AUTHOR



Evelien De Vlieger (b. 1969) is a writer and translator. She creates fictional worlds that feel familiar but are always unpredictable, that captivate without being melodramatic. She writes quirky stories set in the here and now, with plenty of subtle humour. Her oeuvre ranges from nonfiction and picture books to stories for beginning readers and YA novels. *Photo © Iris Beeckman*

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