

A headlong pursuit through an ideological maelstrom

The Red Cow

HANS DEPELCHIN

After his parents disappear, Jeremy grows up in *Ptitami*, the hook-up hotel run by his grandparents. No desire is too extreme for its guests — and an unsettling number of high-profile visitors meet mysterious ends under its roof. It soon turns out that the hotel is a cover for the 'red cow gang', a shadowy organisation that brings the radical left and the radical right together. Their activities catch the attention of private detective Diane, who thinks that Jeremy may be the key to unmasking a dangerous underground network.

When Jeremy goes in search of answers about his origins and the truth about his parents, he is drawn into a world of extreme ideologies. His quest takes him into all the darkest recesses of the twentieth century. Diane – herself a product of the Lebensborn Programme – follows his trail all the way to Wannsee, Norway and Stromboli.

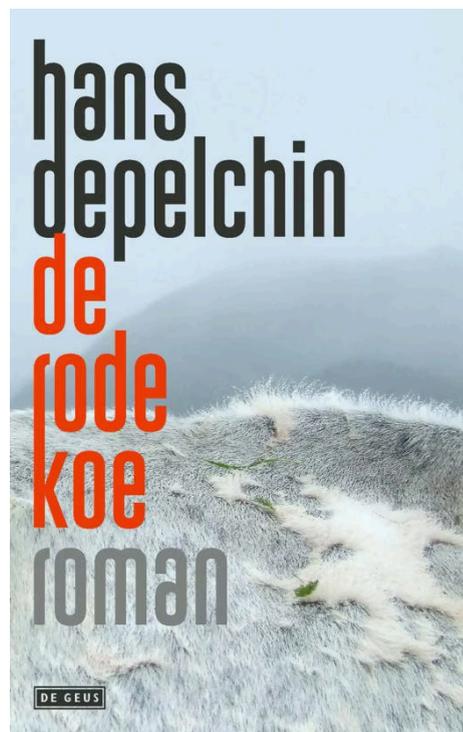
'The Red Cow' is the work of a ferocious talent. ... Exhilarating, courageous, triumphant.

DE STANDAARD

In 'The Red Cow', Depelchin addresses subjects as diverse as parenthood, idealism that flips over into extremism, look-alikes and decadence, shaping a mythical narrative. Through various storylines and registers, a network of images and motifs – from the Norse myths to 'Twin Peaks' and Hugo Claus – gradually comes together to form a tumultuous, grotesque whole. What appears at first to be a coming-of-age tale and a travel novel evolves into a descent into a universe where ideological extremes loop back on themselves.

Depelchin's distinctly visual imagination ensures that the book delivers a deeply memorable reading experience.

KUNSTTIJDSCHRIFT VLAANDEREN



AUTHOR



Hans Depelchin (b. 1991) is a writer, performer, presenter and teacher. He studied comparative modern literature (Ghent University) and drama and spoken word (Royal Conservatory of Antwerp). His debut novel 'Mollusc' explored "the endless search for liberation in a street on the verge of disappearing". In 2022 he published his first poetry collection, 'Tension Strap', an exploration of love's extraordinary elasticity. His novel 'The Red Cow' has been shortlisted for the 2026 Boon Prize. © Bas Bogaerts

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