GRAPHIC NOVELS

A hopeful and humorous vision of the future

The Year the Rain Didn't Stop

JUDITH VANISTENDAEL

In 2071, after yet another devastating flood in Brussels, Beth has been forced to flee to Norway with her grandson Tommie and her elderly mother Rosa. Art is no longer valued, so Beth, an artist, has retrained as a shoemaker, in response to a labour market shortage. Her new job takes her to the Lofoten Islands. The reception by the Norwegian system is correct but far from friendly. Tommie is terrified of water and the workshop is close to the sea; Rosa grumbles about the unfamiliar food; and Beth is waiting desperately for a sign of life from Tommie's parents. But soon they manage to build a small community. Beth receives much-needed help in the shoe workshop from an Egyptian refugee, on whom Tommie's delightful schoolmaster instantly develops a crush, while Rosa falls in love with a towering Norwegian whose woolly hat seems fused to his head.

> One of the strongest and most sensitive voices in world of the Belgian graphic novel
>
> STRIPWEB

In Judith Vanistendael's hands, what could have been a dystopia becomes something moving, humorous and luminous. In lively colours (despite the endless Norwegian rain) she creates a vision of the future that is far from rose-tinted yet brimming with hope. Solidarity and humanity triumph over strict rules and difficult circumstances, aided by tasty food, secret art and being in love. The beautiful and expressive characters drawn in graphite, Japanese watercolour and Chinese ink win your heart immediately. Once again, Vanistendael proves her mastery as both a storyteller and a visual artist.

> Delicate, intimate and extremely beautiful. A worthy addition to the canon of graphic gems
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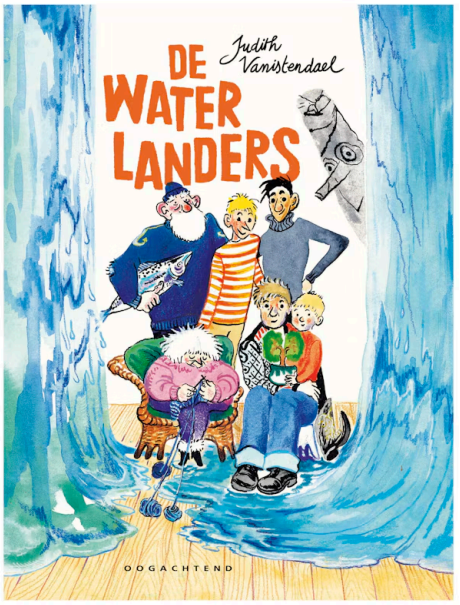
> THE GUARDIAN ON 'WHEN DAVID LOST HIS VOICE'



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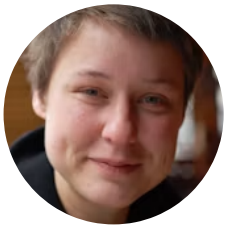

Judith Vanistendael (b. 1974) is both a graphic novelist and a children's book illustrator. Her work in both genres is lauded and widely translated. Her deeply human stories and her elegant style with its judicious use of watercolour and pencil have earned her a solid reputation. She has been nominated for three Eisner Awards as well as the Grand Prix in Angoulême and was the recipient of the Jenny Smelik-IBBY Prize and the Willy Vandersteen prize. In 2022, she won the Bronzen Adhemar for her body of work.

ORIGINAL TITLE De waterlanders (2026, Oogachtend, 272 pp.)

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