

A raw account of a self-destructive
drug addiction

Shark

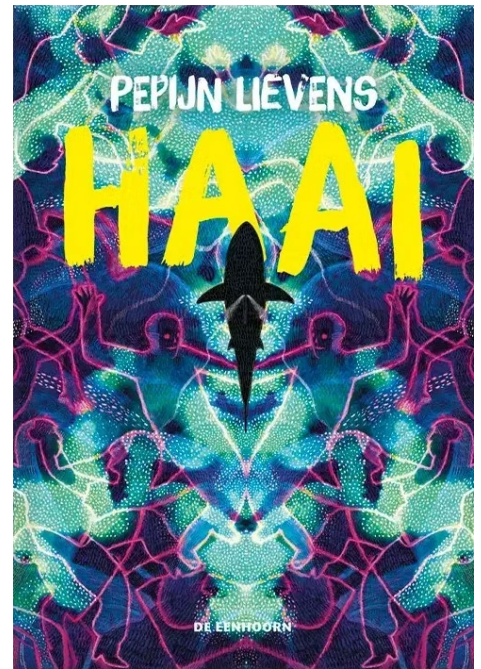
PEPIJN LIEVENS

Waking up alive. Knowing what day it is. Having friends. On his first day in the rehab facility that is supposed to help him overcome his addiction, 17-year-old Lee writes down these three advantages of a life without drugs. Through Lee's eyes, the reader has already witnessed how the boundaries of time blur when he is high, and how he makes sure that he is always high. That's how he keeps the emptiness at bay: no parents, no friends, no future. Until he loses the last thing he has left and enters rehab. There, he has to face his demons, ultimately finding a new reason to keep going – even without drugs.

A small masterpiece

IN DE BOEKENKAST ON 'VISITING KING LEAR'

In the hands of Pepijn Lievens, who draws on his own experience, what could easily have been a sentimental tearjerker becomes a raw and exceptionally convincing portrait of a teenager on the edge of the abyss. The reader is pulled right into his trips, his blackouts and the grotesque lengths he goes to just to get his hands on drugs, but amid all this chaos, memories of Lee's violent childhood also emerge. The cutting, sarcastic humour that Lee relies on at first softens as he kicks the habit and dares to let his feelings back in. All things considered, this is a hopeful story about starting over and the importance of having people who'll stand by your side – and it's also a real page-turner.



AUTHOR



Pepijn Lievens (b. 1972) writes plays and books for children and young people. He uses visual language that results in highly readable stories full of humour and imagination in which he is fearless in addressing the weightier subjects.

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AGE 15+

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