

Impressive modern classic about guilt, shame and responsibility

Falling

ANNE PROVOOST

Lucas is spending the summer with his mother in his grandfather's house as he does every year. This year, however, everything is different: his grandfather died at Christmas and gradually tongues are beginning to wag about his war years. Vulnerable and insecure, Lucas feels threatened, until he finds decisiveness, confidence and friendship in Benoît, becoming entangled in his carefully woven xenophobic web. Meanwhile he becomes reacquainted with Caitlin, who lives at the nearby convent. She too has outspoken opinions on the present and the past. The sultry summer comes to an end when Lucas has to rescue Caitlin from a burning car and is simultaneously proclaimed a hero and a traitor.

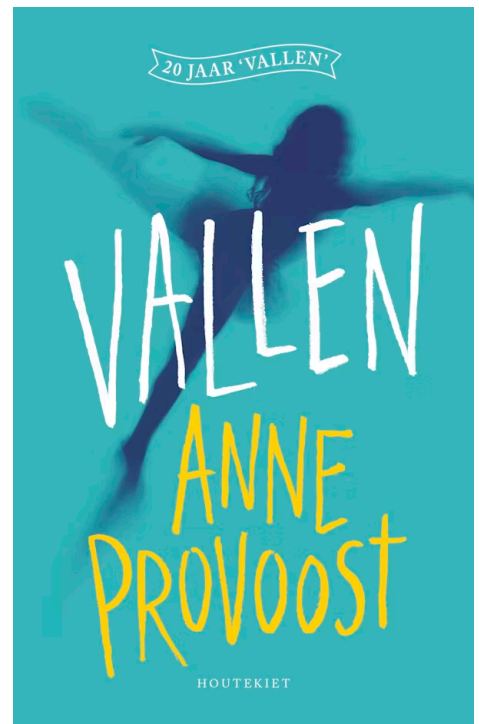
So complex that terms such as convincing, sophisticated, layered and hair-raising don't do it justice.

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In a sober style and with atmospheric, detailed descriptions and convincing dialogue, Anne Provoost creates an extraordinarily oppressive feel to her novel. Slowly and precisely she builds up the story, sketching Lucas's narrative with well-chosen strokes. More than twenty years after publication, 'Falling' still features on secondary school reading lists, proof that this impressive novel, in which everything slowly but surely gets out of hand, remains burningly topical.

From the beginning 'Falling' exhibits the traits of a classic tale of destiny; slowly but surely it moves towards a terrifying close.

WOUTERTJE PIETERSE PRIZE JURY



AUTHOR



Anne Provoost's (b. 1964) many-layered stories reveal themselves very gradually to the reader, creating a web of intense writing that gets under the reader's skin. *Photo © Sophie Kandaouroff*

ORIGINAL TITLE: Vallen (1994, Querido, 264 pp. Latest edition by Houtekiet, 2014)

AGE 15+

PRIZES Gouden Uil, Woutertje Pieterse Prize, Boekenleeuw, Zilveren Griffel, Interprovincial Prize for Youth Literature, Lavki Prize

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