

Between slapstick and tragedy

Frozen Rooms

JAN DE LEEUW

As fifteen-year-old Jonas is eradicating all traces of his mother's restless night, he discovers that she has committed suicide. At first he barely reacts at all, deciding to concentrate on the events of the day. He dumps the body in the cold-storage chamber of the family butcher's shop, as he wants to hide her death from the outside world and especially from his younger sister and their mentally ill father. He has no trouble taking over his mother's job, answering readers' letters about problems in their love lives.

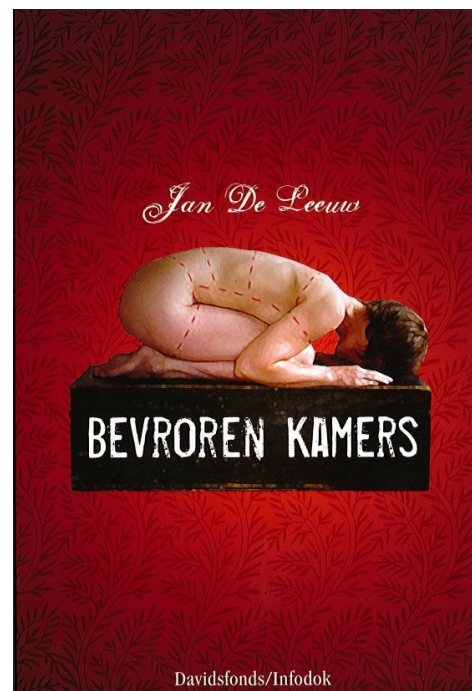
John Irving for kids

SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

With great verve, Jan De Leeuw succeeds in creating a sense of alienation, a concept that lies at the root of this cross-over novel. He pairs metafiction with seriousness and slapstick with sadness, all with flair. Jonas, like all of De Leeuw's central figures, is a searching, wandering soul. A character of flesh and blood, a young person beset by doubts and uncertainties – not an unusual technique for a young adult novel, except that De Leeuw gives meaning to his identity crisis, both through the book's content and through its tragicomical style.

The reader experiences the chaos of feelings now from afar, then as if they are in the centre of it: grief, caring, love, despair – the whole panorama impresses with its light tone.

DEUTSCHER JUGENDLITERATURPREIS JURY



AUTHOR



Jan De Leeuw (b. 1968) has developed a voice like no other in Dutch-language YA literature. Always different, and always an intense reading experience, his books get under the reader's skin and make a lasting impression. His layered stories experiment with style, form and narrative perspective. His work has twice been nominated for the prestigious Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis.

ORIGINAL TITLE Bevroren kamers (2009, Davidsfonds, 112 pp.)

AGE 13+

PRIZES Nominated for the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis

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