

Frank, uncomfortably funny,
unexpectedly tender

The Misfortunates

DIMITRI VERHULST

In a forgotten village somewhere in Flanders, a boy lives with his father and three uncles in his grandmother's house. They're an ill-mannered and coarse bunch, unpredictable heavy drinkers. Wallowing at the bottom of the social ladder, their lives are a total mess.

The family seems happy to accept their isolated, bleak lot – although the father does feel that something's missing in his life. He decides to take time out to deal with his drinking, but when he gets back three months later, his old habits get the better of his good intentions. His son is the only one who manages to distance himself from this life, but not without a degree of emotional pain and melancholy.

This novel continually surprises and intrigues.

THE GUARDIAN

In this semiautobiographical novel Dimitri Verhulst draws the reader into a world without shame or manners, a world of alienation and social deprivation, and he succeeds astonishingly in maintaining a delicate equilibrium. While he succumbs to comic exaggeration in writing about inept people, he also maintains a subtle emotional counterbalance between alternating dependence and sympathy.

Outrageousness yields to eloquent recognition in this darkly intelligent novel.

IRISH TIMES



AUTHOR



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