

Poetic portrait of an outcast

Over Sea

MARLEEN NELEN

The sea is the unpredictable protagonist in this intriguing YA novel, set in an isolated village on the English coast at the beginning of the 19th century. It shapes the life of everyone in this small-minded fishing community, full of hidden undercurrents. Acker is a dreamer and a loner, who is unable to follow in the footsteps of his fishermen father and brother, as he gets seasick. Surrounded by gossiping fishwives, he deals with the housekeeping, the nets and the fish. He feels at home with lone and Louiza, two other outcasts. When Klaus, a mysterious stranger, turns up, Acker finds an ally to help him with his dream of flying.

Passion, brotherhood and betrayal make this book roar like the sea.

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Tides, wild storm winds and crippling fog, the changing of the seasons and the fire in lighthouse keeper Auden's tower set the pace of the villagers' lives and their fishing – and also of this cleverly constructed novel. Nelen depicts wonderful and believable characters with her strong sense of atmosphere and observation. In her poetic style, which leaves a lot unsaid, she evokes a dreamlike, misty atmosphere, filled with vague longing, masterfully succeeding in creating an exciting story set against a fascinating historical background.

A cleverly constructed, atmospheric coming-of-age story, full of believable characters and striking observations written in a taut, poetic style

JURY ZOUTE ZOEN



AUTHOR



Marleen Nelen (b. 1971) started out as a writer for adults but found her voice as a YA writer. Her style is poetic and image-packed, her observations sharp and her characters and settings true to life. She is also a photographer and visual art often inspires her. Photo © Kurt Van der Elst

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