

FICTION

An essential love story

# Madame Verona Comes Down the Hill

DIMITRI VERHULST

Many years ago, Madame Verona and her husband, both musicians, moved to a house on a hill outside the village of Oucwègne. When he fell ill, he built up a large stock of firewood for her, and then hung himself from a tree. She wants to have a cello made from the wood of this tree, but the instrument is only delivered to her twenty years later.

**A slow, constant, melancholic book.  
Brilliant.**

LEEWARDER COURANT

The village gradually becomes deserted, and there are only a few inhabitants left. The few bachelors left hope to gain the newly widowed woman's favour and wait patiently for a sign that she is ready to move on, a sign that will never come. One cold day, she goes down the path to the village, knowing she will never have the strength to climb the hill again.

Verhulst portrays this worn-out village with an extraordinary sensitivity to simplicity and authenticity. The exceptional care he devotes to style, as a master of the craft, shows some very appealing geniality and intimism. This classical earnestness of style with its felicitous formulations nevertheless overlays a mocking irony that enables all the emotions evoked to be accommodated in a cleverly ambiguous tension. The novel is a modest proof of literary mastery.

**Often preposterous, sometimes poignant  
and, above all, consistently charming**

THE INDEPENDENT



## AUTHOR



**Dimitri Verhulst** (b. 1972) is one of the most successful contemporary writers in the Dutch language. His breakthrough came in 2006 with the novel *The Misfortunates*. It won several awards, was made into a movie and is now in its sixty-first reprint. He is renowned for his pitch-black worldview, his tragicomedies, his juicy language, his engagement and his intimate portraits. He produces a steady stream of literary work and has been translated into 25 languages.

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