

An Antwerp policeman trying to survive the Second World War

WILL

JEROEN OLYSLAEGERS

Wilfried Wils is an auxiliary policeman in Antwerp at the start of the Second World War. The city is in the grip of violence and distrust. Wilfried does what he can for himself, avoiding paths that are too slippery. He receives attention and material support from a man who has sided with the German occupier, Nijdig Baardje ('Angry Beard'), but he also enjoys the confidence of his anti-Nazi colleague Lode, brother to Wilfried's love Yvette. Wilfried struggles to survive as the persecution of the Jews proceeds unabated. Years later he tells his story to one of his descendants.

Historical fiction at its best: provocative, uncomfortable and illuminating

THE TIMES

'WILL' is a bold, ambitious and multifaceted novel in which no one is spared. Olyslaegers challenges the widely accepted boundaries between good and evil and ingeniously makes the book resonate with our own time, with its heated political climate and its polarisation manifesting in religion, nationalism and populism.

Wilfried is the archetypal antihero. He is Everyman, hearing, seeing, saying nothing and hoping the storm will blow over. He is neither the best nor the worst of us. His minor wartime misdeeds go unpunished, but he cannot claim afterwards that he knew nothing.

A razor-sharp book about the cowardice we call neutrality *****

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Jeroen Olyslaegers (b. 1967)

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