

A life disrupted by feelings of guilt

His Name Is David

JAN VANTOORTELBOOM

Flanders, 1914. David, a young Belgian schoolteacher, stands before the firing squad, sentenced to death for desertion. Days earlier, he was teaching his fellow soldiers in the trenches to read and write, dreaming of a forbidden love back in Elverdinge, the Flemish village where he had worked as a teacher—and where, despite family tragedy, squalid surroundings, the rigid mindsets of the villagers and the malign influence of the Catholic Church, David had tried to create something beautiful. But when he befriended a sensitive young pupil, Marcus Verschoppen, disaster followed.

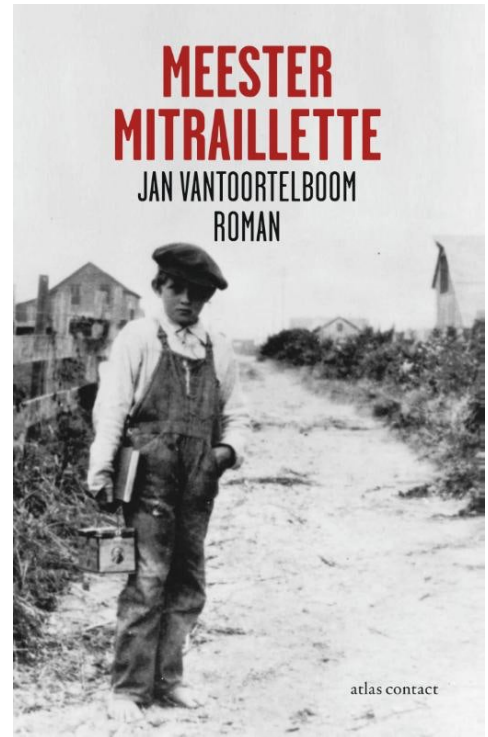
A book to be unashamedly excited about

NRC HANDELSBLAD

In 'His Name Is David' we follow David through two episodes of his life: as a boy of ten and in his early twenties in the First World War. But this is more than a war novel. It is an intimate portrait of a passionate teacher who wishes to inspire those around him to pursue their dreams and not simply resign themselves to the future that is most obvious. At the same time, David himself didn't have an uneventful past: vice and violence cling to his name every bit as much as goodness and dedication. In 'His Name Is David', Jan Vantoortelboom shows how feelings of guilt can disrupt a life.

Like a late summer's day: initially lovely and light, but with a blood-red, deeply melancholy sunset at the end

HUMO



AUTHOR



Jan Vantoortelboom (b. 1975), who lives in the Netherlands, made his debut in 2011 with the award-winning novel 'The Sunken Boy'. This was followed in 2014 by 'Meester Mitraillette', which was published in English in 2016 as 'His Name Is David'. His work is characterised by the rich imagination that flows through his intuitive writing.

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