

Misconduct

BRIDGET VAN DER ZIJPP

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we ask that no review appears before this time

paperback

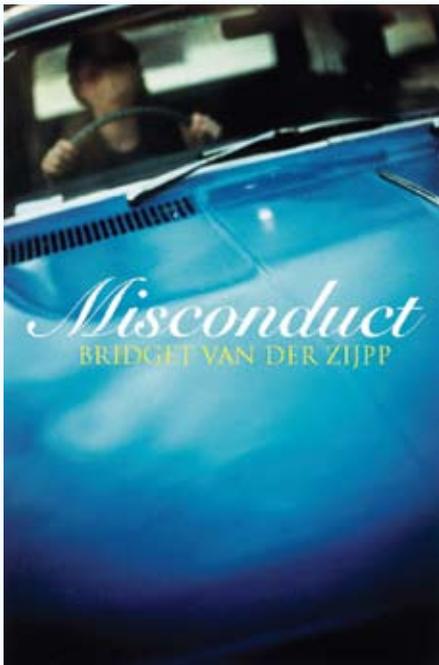
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\$30

Fiction

Misconduct

is a moving novel about the possibility of redemption, the sweet and sour taste of revenge and a woman's search for friendship and love.



Simone is struggling as her fortieth birthday looms. She's lost her job, her license, her boyfriend and probably her chance for a family. In fact she's in danger of losing the plot altogether.

In a sudden eruption of resentment, she steals her former lover's car, drives it behind an old abandoned factory, and torches it. Her best friend, worried about how dangerous she seems, offers Simone a way out – a house-sitting opportunity at a remote beach.

She began to be seduced by the idea of a lovely, distant solitude. And actually she had good incentive to leave.

With only the responsibility of somebody else's perpetually cheerful dog, Simone values her isolation – but her elderly neighbours have other ideas and begin to pull her into their eccentric lives.

Just as Simone begins to embrace the possibilities of her new life and find perspective, she finds the past is not easy to leave behind.

Bridget van der Zijpp (pronounced 'z-eye-p' and rhymes with 'type') was born in Ruawai, Northland. After a career in commercial radio in Auckland, she moved to Wellington and began writing fiction. A full bio and a brief discussion of the book's theme follows.

Van der Zijpp's gentle humour and the authenticity of her cast of fringe dwellers completely seduced me.

FIONA FARRELL

Bridget is available for interview and comment. We also have a limited number of giveaway copies - first in, first served!

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Publisher: Fergus Barrowman



Bridget van der Zijpp

I grew up in the small country town of Ruawai, on a farm. My father emigrated from Holland in the 1950's on an assisted passage. The flight took two weeks of continent-hopping, and on landing at Whenuapai Airport he got a job in the kitchen of the airbase. Later he went looking for somewhere to go farming and when he got to the wide flat plains of Ruawai I think he might've been overcome by a sense of familiarity. He married my mother, who was so thoroughly a New Zealander she could trace her relatives back to the missionaries.

My sister and I both went to the local country school. As soon as I'd ticked off my UE at sixteen I caught a bus to the city where I did a number of waitress and receptionist jobs, working my way up to secretary. In my early 20's I decided to go to Auckland University and my father, who had an entrepreneurial nature and was adorably supportive, suggested that if I was going to spend three years on something it ought to be useful - so BCom it was.

After that I did a little traveling (initially disastrously trailing after my Australian diplomat boyfriend). I worked for a year in England, also spending a few months in the Netherlands, and backpacking around France on my own for a while, and then came back to find a job in media. Starting off on a radio station in Whangarei, I eventually became the Director of Marketing of the Radio Network, which at that time had 52 radio stations nationwide. After ten years of commercial radio I woke up one day and realized that I'd somehow ended up on a career projectory that meant I was spending my days promoting things I didn't personally have much heart for anymore. So I quit and worked part-time as a marketing consultant, and I began to do the only thing I'd ever really wanted to do, which was write novels.

The long-term relationship I was in with a musician ended and I moved from Auckland to Wellington and completed the MA in Creative Writing at the IIML at Victoria University.

I was living in a tiny sun-deprived flat facing out across Island Bay towards the tip of the South Island. While out walking my dog I often bumped into a woman with a similar dog, and after a while we became friends. Months later she suggested I come around to look at this big old house in Brooklyn with another single friend of hers, and I thought we were looking at a possible flatting situation. But within a couple of days the three of us had put in an offer, finding out each other's last names as we signed the sale and purchase agreement. While it had all the indicators of possible disaster, it's been a reasonably successful solution and two years later we're still all sharing that big old sunny six bedroom with two dogs, two cats, various part-time children, and the occasional male interest - living what we like to think of as thoroughly independent lives.

While completing *Misconduct* I also worked as a publicist/marketer in Wellington, only taking on projects that I thought were interesting and that I felt personally enthusiastic about. These included Douglas Wright's tour of Black Milk, Cuba St Carnival, and the Wellington International Jazz Festival. (And by the time this comes out anywhere I will have worked as a host for the Wellington International Arts Festival.) Last December I was appointed to the board of Arts Wellington (the Wellington Regional Arts and Cultural Development Board).

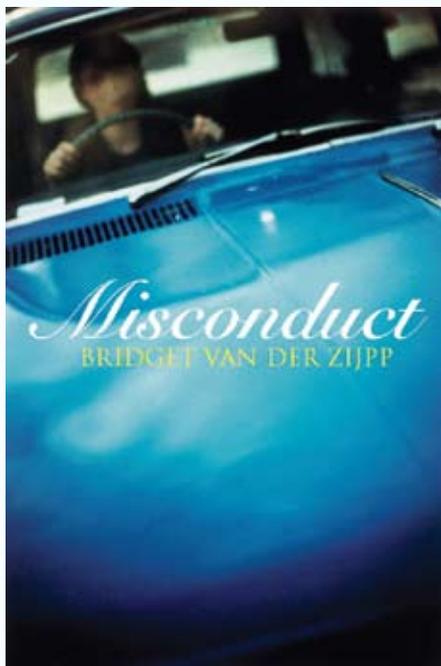
On the question of content...

While writing *Misconduct* people would often ask me what it was about. As a sort of short-hand I would say it was about a woman struggling to come to terms with the end of a relationship who does some quite extreme things to her ex-lover's possessions. Quite often if the inquirer was a man, he would then take a step back and ask nervously if it was autobiographical - evidently the male instinct jumps quite easily to the murderous bunny-boiler scenario.

Most often a woman would say ... oh, I've got a good story for you. At parties complete strangers would start telling me, in an but I'm-over-it-now fashion, quite mad things they or their friends had done. Generally there was certainly a greater degree of acceptance about the reasonability of that kind of practice from women, and more often than not the stories they told me involved doing something harmful to a car. People who'd done something with an imaginative twist were often quite proud.

I think the more deceitful the breakdown of the relationship, or the greater the sense of betrayal, the more likely people are to want to inflict their pain back onto the individual that caused it in the first place. Often if you hear of somebody doing something extreme at the end of the relationship you can go quite quickly to thinking they might be a bit committable, but if you are presented with the details of what led to their actions, then it's possible you might begin to think that there was some small justice in their anger. That's the idea I explored in *Misconduct*.

And what would happen if you did something uncomfortably mischievous or even malicious, when your hurt and anger was still white hot - would you regret it later? Was it forgivable?



To talk to Bridget and to arrange a review copy or photographs please contact Heather at
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