

BOTTLED GOODS

BY SOPHIE VAN LLEWYN

QUESTIONS

- 'Bottled Goods' is written as a novella-in-flash. This is a series of short flash fictions. Do you think that the story works well in this format? What advantages does this format bring to the writer? What challenges does it create?

- From one flash to another, the novella shifts between styles, with Alina telling her story sometimes in first person, sometimes in third person and occasionally in other formats, such as tables, lists and diary entries. As a reader, how did this impact on your enjoyment of the narrative? Is this something you would consider for your own writing? Where else have you seen this style and are there any particular genres that you think it might work well for?

- 'Liviu will want to make love and she cannot put him off'. Examine the prose style used by the author in the book, particularly the passages in third person. It is often quite factual and contains little interior monologue. What impact do you think this has on the reader? Do we still understand Alina's emotions? Would you ever consider using less interior monologue in your writing?

- The book contains elements of magical realism. Often associated with writing from Latin America, this is where the narrative weaves magic or supernatural events into a realist setting. Why do think the magical realism elements of Bottled Goods were added to the story, and in what way? What impact do you think they had on telling of the horror of Alina's situation?

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WRITING EXERCISES

A) Take a small piece of writing that you have completed before, perhaps a chapter or a few chapters, and re-write it into a series of flash fictions. In her video, Sophie Van Llewyn explains how in each '...something needs to happen. There has to be a sense of movement.'

OR

B) Write a short story of around 1,000 words which contains some element of magic realism.

NOTES
