



January 2021  
250 pages

**Bénédicte Soymier**, a nurse with a passion for literature, shares the many books she reads on her blog "Au fil des livres". *Le Contre-amour* is her first novel.

## Bénédicte Soymier

### III-Enamoured

*Le Mal-épris*

**An X-ray of domestic violence - the uncompromising portrait of a man who hits women.**

Paul is bitter. Between his admin job at the post office, and his apartment in the city where he lives alone, his life feels constricted, like the clothes he wears. He curses the fate that brought him into this world ugly, into the wrong family. His parents drank away their benefits, his father hit his wife and children, and as the eldest, he took the brunt of it to protect his brother and sister.

When Mylène moves in upstairs, Paul feels a new lease of life and keeps track of her every move in his notebooks. He showers her with attention and ends up seducing her, but for one night only. When she turns him down, he snaps. Rage builds up inside and he threatens her. For the first time in his life, Paul hits someone, like his father.

Obsessed by this failure, and for lack of a better option, he asks one of his colleagues round for dinner. Angélique is vulnerable; a single mother with barely a penny to her name, carrying with her the memories of a painful adolescence. Paul picks apart her faults. Her dresses are too tight, too garish, her manner inappropriate, he wants her to be a whore but despises her for that very same reason. He hits her once, twice... He hates himself but always finds an excuse to justify his behaviour. And yet Angélique wants to believe that things will get better, that she can help him. She moves in with him and quits her job, finding herself under his thumb.