

Kaddish for a dead stepson

All Is Safe Here

ANNELEEN VAN OFFEL

Lydia, a Belgian doctor, hurries over to Israel after receiving an alarming email from her stepson Immanuel. Her ex-husband took him to the Promised Land ten years ago, in the hope of finding a home there. Since then, Lydia has neither seen nor spoken to the boy.

When she arrives in Israel it's too late: Immanuel has passed away. Confronted with the loss, Lydia tries to piece together the life of her stepson, now a grown man. Through conversations with his girlfriend, his father and random passers-by she reconstructs the life of a young man in the army, who got caught up in a reality that was greater than himself.

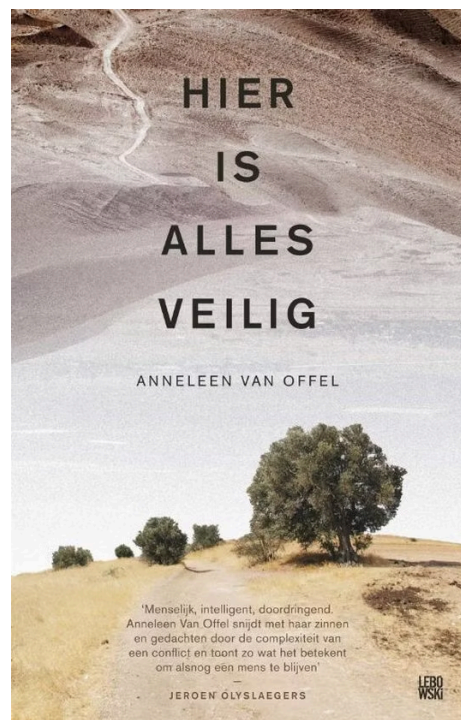
This thoughtful debut betrays an unmistakable compositional talent.

DE MORGEN

Anneleen Van Offel has produced a beautifully written debut about loss and (step) motherhood. With immense compassion, she draws psychological portraits that cannot be viewed independently from identity politics and the wider political situation in Israel. The author visited the country repeatedly for her book and spoke to dozens of Israelis, including (former) soldiers and their families. The result is a touching and intelligent story about people trying to find their place in a divided country. Van Offel gives us warm portraits and incisive facts without finger-pointing, yet never hesitates to explore personal and historical questions of guilt.

A raw, physical account of grief and goodbyes****

HUMO



AUTHOR



Anneleen Van Offel (b. 1991) is an author who bases her work on research, a journey or an encounter. Her style is investigative and innovative, and she exhibits great empathy and thoroughness in examining her subjects. Van Offel studied vocal arts at the Antwerp Royal Conservatory. She has written columns for a Flemish newspaper, and short stories and poetry for several literary journals. She is the programmer and moderator for various literary events. *Photo © Damon De Backer*

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