FICTION

Comfort knows no bounds

Solace

MOYA DE FEYTER

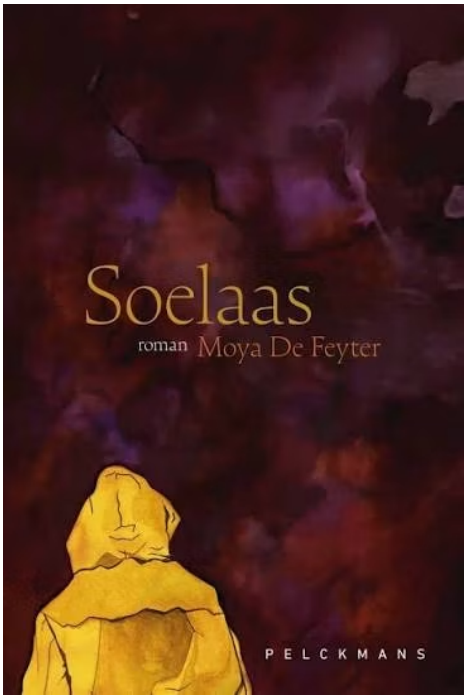
Eleven years after his art history teacher, Ilara, suddenly disappeared from school, she shows up unexpectedly at Willem's door. Silent and distraught, she moves in with him without explaining what happened. Willem, who writes eulogies and lives like a recluse in a damp apartment, tries to break through her silence. He becomes completely absorbed in his task of providing comfort.

Ilara's return brings back memories of the passion with which she was able to move her students. Convinced of art's social impact, she had inspired her class to undertake a large-scale art project. Back then, one particular student had caught her eye: the quiet Robin. Her independent spirit and exceptional drawing talent had fascinated Ilara. They'd connected, and Robin had begun seeking out her teacher more and more outside of school hours.

But as their mutual bond grew, Ilara found herself venturing further and further onto thin ice. Years later, it turns out that Robin's need for care may have been less innocent than Ilara wanted to believe at the time. In 'Solace', Willems alternates between accounts of the present and Ilara's memories. Gradually, a novel about complex forms of love, boundaries, art and care unfolds.

> A subtle novel about the meaning of art in a hostile world, the relationship between teachers and students, and people's lifelong search for themselves.****
>
> HET NIEUWSBLAD

> A compelling, non-moralistic, empathetic exploration of non-traditional ways of loving ***
>
> DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR

Moya De Feyter (b. 1993) writes poetry and prose. She likes to explore the boundaries between genres and art forms and regularly performs her work on stage. De Feyter is the founder of the Klimaatdichters [Climate Poets], a movement of poets who use poetry to protest against and mourn the consequences of global warming. Moya De Feyter was the recipient of the 2021 J.C. Bloem Poetry Prize and the 2022 PrixFintro Prize for Dutch-language literature. © Marla Morella

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