

A soldier takes a stand against the devil

Someone's Sweetheart

BART MOEYAERT & KORNEEL
DETAILLEUR

'Someone's Sweetheart' is a fairytale in verse form, about a Russian soldier who is given two weeks annual leave from the battlefield in World War I. On his way home, a 'red' persuades him to swap his violin, one of his scarce possessions, for a book that predicts him a lucky future. The 'red' turns out to be one of the guises of Lucifer and 'Someone's Sweetheart' therefore the age-old story of an ordinary mortal taking a stand against the devil.

Moeyaert plays the full range of his style register with a steady hand

HUMO

With his linguistic invention and ready narrative voice, Moeyaert leaves his mark on this latest version of Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz' 'The Runaway Soldier and the Devil', on which Igor Stravinsky's famous theatrical work 'The Soldier's Tale' is based. In the penetrating, moving text, he continually plays with foreboding omens. The sinister atmosphere is enhanced by Korneel Detailleur's impressive grey illustrations. The pictures that place the soldier in a majestic setting, emphasising his smallness and loneliness, are particularly impressive. Time and again, the unfortunate soldier tries to escape the devil's power, but time and again he is defeated. The last scene in the book hits like a sledgehammer.

Moeyaert is able to interpret the most complex of things in the simplest of words. Detailleur illustrates with the same nuance, humour and simplicity.

CUTTING EDGE



AUTHORS



Bart Moeyaert's (b. 1964) books often deal with complex existential subjects, in an insightful and accessible way. In 2019 he won the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, the world's most prestigious award for children's literature. *Photo © Diego Franssens* **Korneel Detailleur** (b. 1986) has a style that is ethereal, slightly absurdist and a little dark. In his illustrations he likes to leave plenty of room for the story. *Photo © Alexander Popelier*

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