

Poetic yet humorous novel on goodness and compassion

Thirty Days

ANNELIES VERBEKE

Alphonse, born in Senegal but raised in Flanders and in love with Kat, has recently moved to the countryside. Far away from the busy city of Brussels and the uncertain existence of a musician, he is happy with his one-man handyman business. Alphonse is good with his hands and even better with his heart. He travels throughout the Westhoek region and French Flanders brightening up not just interiors but also their inhabitants. He varnishes parquet and listens to people's sorrows, he hangs wallpaper and whispers advice. He listens to stories about neighbours' quarrels, infidelity, commercial incompetence, ghostly appearances, eroticism, butterflies and much more.

A bold, busy, textured novel, drawing on many elements that often feature in American and British fiction, only Verbeke has succeeded at a far higher level.

THE IRISH TIMES

The big question in Alphonse's life is how to handle his gift. Is he just a listening ear or should he intervene? Alphonse has a deep longing to fit into the world, but keeps asking himself, 'Do I actually belong?' Meanwhile, you can see it coming: Alphonse himself is about to get embroiled in the problems from which he attempts to extricate others.

'Thirty Days' is a novel about goodness and compassion. The book finds the perfect balance between sensitivity and humour, hopefulness and criticism, cheer and despair.

The ability to write morally without being moralistic is only granted to the very greatest and Verbeke can now count herself among their illustrious number. *****

KNACK



AUTHOR



Annelies Verbeke (b. 1976) made her fiction debut with the international bestseller 'Sleep' in 2003. Her work has been published in twenty countries and she has been awarded with several literary prizes. In addition to novels and stories, she also writes scripts, theatre texts and a graphic novel. Keywords: snappy, slightly absurdist, weirdoes and wistful nostalgia.

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