

A boy growing up on a farm, under the spell of a restless longing for the unknown

The People Healer

KOEN PEETERS

Halfway through the 20th century, a boy named Remi spends his childhood days on a farm in the Belgian Westhoek, near the French border. Uncle Marcel whispers strange, fiercely moving stories about the war, a daemon and a black soldier into his ears.

The tales of that Congolese soldier never loosen their grip on Remi. His susceptibility to mesmeric ceremonies means that, against all expectations, he does not take over from his father on the family farm, but joins the Jesuits out of a desire to heal the wounded. Later, he travels to the Congo to learn about the language, rites and healing texts there. On his return from Africa, he becomes a professor of anthropology.

For Koen, his former student, Remi's life story acts as a springboard, as Koen follows in his old teacher's footsteps through the Westhoek to the Congo.

In a style that's crystal clear, Peeters performs nothing short of literary magic

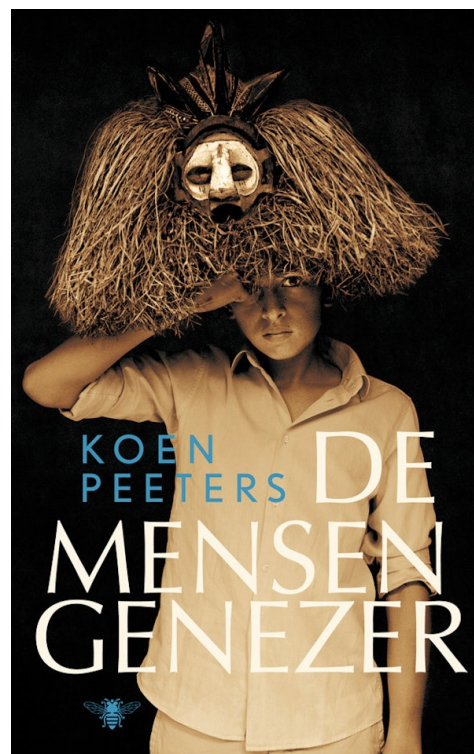
DE VOLKSKRANT

'The People Healer' is a novel about the invisible forces that guide people's lives, and about the immutability of those forces. The First World War, Belgian colonialism in the Congo, and the present day are all woven into the fabric of the story.

The storylines Koen Peeters sketches, starting in the Westhoek, eventually converge in a quest to fulfil a longing that every person feels, no matter where they are in the world: to discover oneself and to give meaning to one's own life.

A stunning novel... a story that transcends countries, eras and cultures

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AUTHOR



Koen Peeters (b. 1959) is the author of a discreet but increasingly impressive oeuvre to which he has added more than 10 books since his debut in 1988 with 'Conversations with K'. Great European Novel was shortlisted for the Libris Literature Prize and was translated in several languages. A Thousand Hills, about Rwanda and its genocide, won him the prestigious E. du Perron Prize. The people healer, about a professor of anthropology won both the ECI Literature Prize and the ECI Readers' Prize. A room in Ostend is a fascinating seaside resort seen through the eyes of writers and painters. *Photo © Koen Broos*

ORIGINAL TITLE De mensengenezers (2017, De Bezige Bij, 320 pp.)

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PRIZES ECI Literature Prize, ECI Readers' Prize, Confituur Bookstores' Prize

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