

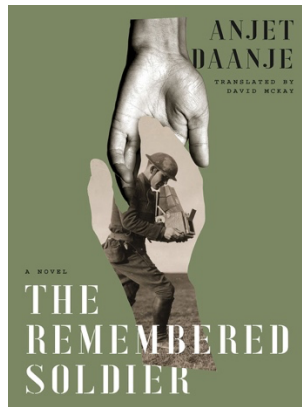


THE REMEMBERED SOLDIER

By Anjet Daanje

Translated from the Dutch by David McKay

A Reading Group Guide



1. The novel opens in a psychiatric hospital. How does Daanje describe the relationship between the doctors and the patients in the facility? How do the women who are brought to see Noon Merckem change your impression of his situation?
2. How does the first meeting between Julianne and Noon / Amand affect each in turn? What are their impressions of one another? How do they interact?
3. Consider Amand's impressions of the outside world after his departure from the asylum. How do his perceptions begin to shift? How does he behave in public, and what are your impressions of his interactions with space, place, and other people?
4. Once home, Amand begins to establish a new identity. What difficulties does this process present for him and Julianne? Consider his relationships with Gus and Rose, Julianne's friends, and Julianne herself.
5. The specter of World War I hangs over Amand and Julianne, but also the community around them. How does this shared trauma make itself felt? How are its impacts different for each of them?

6. How do the revelations of Julianne and Amand's history before the war change our understanding of their relationship? To what extent do class and family history still affect their lives? Are we to believe Julianne's telling of their shared past?
7. Julianne and Amand tell each other various stories about the past. How is this like and unlike the way we all tell stories about our lives? What questions does Amand's situation raise about how our own memories work, and about the role of memory in identity?
8. Discuss the gradual development of Julianne and Amand's sexual relationship. Does it subvert your expectations of gender? Uphold them? Why or why not?
9. How does Daanje use photography as a symbolic force in the novel? How do Julianne and Amand use the photography studio, and what are its emotional effects on each of them? Consider their interactions with other widows, as well as their later trip to the battlefield.
10. How does the family's proposed move to the house on Groote Markt affect their lives together? What does it mean for Julianne and Amand as a couple? How does the process reflect each of their internal dilemmas?
11. As the novel goes on, Amand becomes increasingly unsettled in his identity. How does Daanje describe his sense of disidentification? What happens during his episodes, and how do they come to alter our sense of his past life and his war experiences?
12. What role do Amand's dreams play in the plot? How do the stories he and Julianne tell influence his dreams, and how do his dreams seem to challenge or resist those stories? What does Daanje seem to suggest about the limits of storytelling and self-creation?
13. Consider Amand / Louis's return to Germany to seek out Käthe. How does this journey reflect the political and social tensions of the interwar period? What are the differences between life in Belgium and Germany? Should either he or Käthe have made different choices in the aftermath of the war? Why or why not?
14. Do you consider *The Remembered Soldier* a love story? A war story? Why or why not? Reflect on the novel's questions about the nature of identity, memory, and loss. Is Amand Coppens an invention, and what might this mean?

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