

# The Boss of Everything

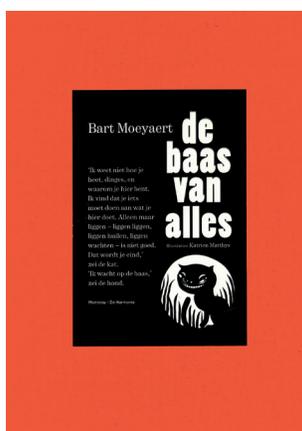
Animal story with a shadow side

*'I won't be surprised if The Boss of Everything is a prize winner.'*

Dutch magazine *Boek Magazine*

*'The effect created by Katrien Matthys' robust and expressionistic illustrations in the dark is superb.'*

Flemish newspaper *De Standaard*



**author**

Bart Moeyaert

**illustrator**

Katrien Matthys

**original title**

De baas van alles

**rights**

Manteau

**about**

day and night, poetry and philosophy, loyalty and freedom

**age**

for all ages

**copies sold**

more than 3.000 sold in 5 months

**book details**

hardcover, 32 pp.

**rights sold**

French (Editions du Rouergue)

**translation**

sample translation available

**info**

[www.bartmoeyaert.com](http://www.bartmoeyaert.com)

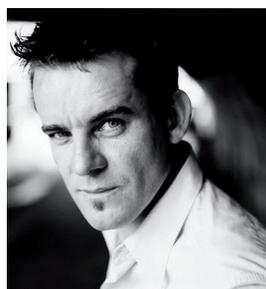
In **The Boss of Everything**, Bart Moeyaert looks for an answer to the question 'Who is the boss of everything?' in the space of fourteen short stories. The contrast between the two main characters – a cat and a dog – sets the scene for an extraordinarily rich book, in terms of both language and image. The entire work plays with distinctions and similarities: what makes day and night so different, and where do they coincide?

The cat comes to life as night falls and sets about its predictable nocturnal rituals. But what happens when it discovers a dog tied to a tree one night? The difference between the two animals is evident from the outset: 'A day without the boss and I know something's missing,' said the dog. 'A day without the boss and you won't catch me hissing,' said the cat. What motivates the waiting dog is beyond the cat's comprehension as an autonomous nocturnal creature. In its search for understanding the cat meets other forest dwellers, including a fox, an owl, a moth and a swarm of fireflies, and all of them have the chance to say or show what motivates them. While the cat is not much the wiser by the end of the story, the reader/story-teller is a number of philosophical ideas better off. The boss of everything – we can presume – is the light.

The illustrations on the fold-out pages present the contrast between night and day by alternating backgrounds of dark and light. Illustrator Katrien Matthys' surrealistic images follow Moeyaert's associative train of thought and create the space for unusual animal figures. Alongside an enchanting interplay of shadow and light, Matthys portrays the emotions and fears of the animals in a playful, sometimes grotesque manner, in which the darker side of the night is also embraced. The symbiosis between text and illustration makes *The Boss of Everything* a particularly rich and varied book.

**Bart Moeyaert** (1964) is one of Flemish literature's biggest and best ambassadors.

To quote journalist Annemie Leysen: 'an extraordinary story-teller whose unique and



© Diego Franssens



distinctive literary style cannot be labelled, yet can fascinate readers of every age.'

**Katrien Matthys**

(1979) was given the opportunity to illustrate Bart Moeyaert's *The Boss of Everything* as part of her

final project in illustration studies at Saint Luke's College in Ghent. Her illustrations give body to the evocative text via intriguing silhouettes.

**Flemish Literature Fund**

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**Rights**

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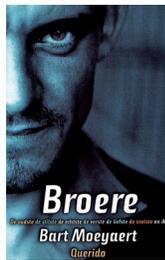
# Bart Moeyaert

Master in the sparest of prose

## On the author

*'Bart Moeyaert is a master in the use of literary boundaries and stylistic features. His strength can be found in his timely insertion of caesuras and his faith in the effectiveness of images, pauses, suggestions, half sentences and blank spaces.'*

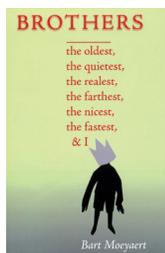
Die Zeit



## On Brothers

*'Conveyed in the sparest of prose, the day-to-day drama and adventures present the sweet, pungent, and poignant tale of life in a large family.'*

School Library Journal



## On It's love we don't understand

*'This book is an excellent acquisition for libraries with advanced readers interested in pushing the literary envelope.'*

Voice of Youth Advocate



**Bart Moeyaert** (1964) is the youngest of seven brothers. His early years in Bruges, the city of his birth, were particularly happy and provided an abundance of material for his much praised autobiographical collection *Brothers*. The jury report for the 2001 Woutertje Pieterse Prize describes the merits of Moeyaert's work in well-chosen terms: It is the author's pen that makes what happens so extraordinary: dry, with a pleasantly mild sense of irony and often magnificently evocative sentences; poignant, but without the slightest hint of sentiment or baroque excess. Heart-warming, innovative, scintillating!

Critics are much inclined to praise Moeyaert's highly poetic and evocative undertone, which reinforces the intensity of the reading experience and gives his work a particularly filmic character. Moeyaert uses a minimum of words to create passages with enormous expressiveness and eloquence, in which much remains hidden between the lines. The writer is at his best when he is extending boundaries and does not limit himself to (youth) novel writing.

Moeyaert made his literary debut at the age of 19 with *Duet met valse noten* (*Off-key Duet* 1983). The novel was proclaimed best book of 1984 by the Flemish Children and Youth Jury, has been translated into German, Catalanian and Japanese, and acquired a second life as a theatre piece and musical.

After his art school studies and teacher training in languages and history in Brussels, Moeyaert moved to Antwerp and devoted himself to writing on a full-time basis from 1995, the beginning of a long and successful writing career. Books such as *Kiss me, Bare Hands, It's love we don't understand, De Schepping* (*The Creation*) and *Dani Bennoni* have enjoyed enormous critical acclaim and have been showered with literary prizes. The number of Book Lions and Book Cubs – prestigious awards in Flanders – his work has attracted has now reached double figures. In addition, Moeyaert won the German Youth Literature Prize in 1998 for *Bare Hands*, which was later awarded the Tri-Annual Flemish Culture Prize for Youth Literature.

In 2001, Moeyaert was awarded the Golden Owl – one of the most important prizes for literature in Flanders and The Netherlands – for *Luna van de boom* (*Luna from the Tree*). Exactly one year later, he was one of the finalists selected for the Hans Christian Andersen Award for his entire output, which has also been nominated on no less than four occasions for the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Award.

Bart Moeyaert is without doubt one of Flanders' most celebrated authors, both at home and abroad, and a much acclaimed ambassador for Flemish literature.

## Foreign publishers

**Brazil** Cosac & Naify, Ediouro

**Denmark** Fremad

**France** Autrement, Ed. du Rouergue, Seuil

**Germany** Beltz & Gelberg, Hanser, Peter Hammer Verlag, Ravensburger

**Greece** Patakis

**Italy** Edizione e/o, Fabbri, Salani

**Japan** Holp Shuppan, Kumon Publishing

**Korea** BIR, JoongAng, Marubol Publishing, Woongjin

**Norway** Aschehoug, Bonnier/Carlssen

**Poland** Hokus-Pokus

**Slovenia** Mladinska Knjiga

**Spain** Ed. Barbara Fiori, Columna, Edelvelles

**Sweden** Bonnier Carlsen, Rabén & Sjögren

**Thailand** Image Publishing

**USA** Front Street

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