



## The Elusive Moth

*Ingrid Winterbach , Iris Gouws (Translator)*

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In hopes of winning her father's approval, Karolina Ferreira, an entomologist, goes to a small Free State town to research the survival strategies of a rare moth species. Tormented by memories of her family and plagued by erotic dreams, Karolina spends her nights playing snooker, drinking whisky, and dancing herself into a state of euphoria with the mysterious Kolyn.

As political, spiritual, and sexual tensions in the small town rise, a murder will take place, lovers will meet in the cemetery, and friendships will fall apart,—all building to an eruption of violence.

Originally published in Afrikaans in 1994, *The Elusive Moth* won Ingrid Winterbach the prestigious M-Net Book Prize and the Old Mutual Literary Prize. Finally available to English readers, this novel reinforces Winterbach's reputation as one of South Africa's greatest contemporary writers.

## The Elusive Moth Details

Date : Published July 22nd 2014 by Open Letter Books (first published January 1st 2005)

ISBN : 9781934824771

Author : Ingrid Winterbach , Iris Gouws (Translator)

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## **From Reader Review The Elusive Moth for online ebook**

### **Aaron Mcquiston says**

"The Elusive Moth," written in Afrikaans by Ingrid Winterbach, is a small, dusty story about an entomologist, Karolina, whom goes out during the day to do research and by night drinking, dancing, playing snooker, and inadvertently watching the politics of the town. She does this with more observation than action so most of this novel seems a little distant from the action. I enjoyed it, but I was not blown away by the characters or the writing. I feel like it is a good solid book, but not my favorite.

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### **Joseph Schreiber says**

For my review please see:

<https://roughghosts.wordpress.com/201...>

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### **Krys says**

While this isn't my normal type of read the book wasn't horrible by any means. Just not my cup of tea. In most parts it held my attention while in others it was kind of slow. I won this in a GoodReads First Reads giveaway.

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### **Beth says**

Winterbach's narrative is like a series of images which encapsulate the essence of Henri Cartier-Bresson's decisive moment. Each scene is depicted with tension, balance and spontaneity, capturing a moment in time. The essence of this moment is revealed, yet its full meaning remains elusive.

I was not surprised to learn that the author is a visual artist. Her work is hyper-visual and full of symbolism. Her descriptions of art are captivating, especially as they mirror the surrounding events. There is so much to this novel, I will be dissecting it for weeks to come. Well done!

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### **Bill says**

This is a pretty good novel, originally written in Afrikaans. In it, the main character is a female entomologist who goes to a small town in South Africa to study a rare moth which is only found in the area. Hence the title of the book.

When she isn't out on the veld studying insects, she spends a lot of her time in the local hotel. There, she

drinks in the ladies bar, dances, and plays snooker. She enters into a sexual relationship with one of the men, and interacts with other people living in the town. Two characters die. One of the male characters seems to be able to predict the future to some extent.

So not a lot happens, actually. This certainly is not a novel filled with non-stop action. Far from it. However I still found the novel to be compelling somehow, and enjoyed reading it. The only negative is that there is some repetition. For example, one character is described as being "as sleek as an otter" at least half a dozen times. Which is five times too many.

And this is the 200th book I have read this year!

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## **Tara says**

Review to follow.

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## **Ferris says**

This novel was elusive in and of itself. Set in South Africa, in transition post-apartheid, an entomologist and a homeopath meet up to gather different knowledge, the survival strategy of an elusive moth species and homeopathic remedy ingredients. Meanwhile, the plot is like a fever dream of violence, sensuality, mysticism, art & science. Man v. Nature. Dream v. Reality. Love v. Hate. Is my opinion of the book eluding you? Well, welcome to the club! I think I thought it a profound story overflowing with symbolism & metaphor. In a couple of months, when I have mulled this book over and over, I will get back to you.

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## **Oriana says**

*I am doing some updating for allllll the books I was too lazy / busy to review in 2014. In case that matters to anyone.*

This was a spare and soft book about an entomologist in Africa. I grabbed it because I love Three Percent, but I can admit that my knowledge of Africa is limited (to put it kindly). Under the seemingly placid surface of the plot (single lady studying bugs in the Veldt, living at a hotel, meeting people and having sex with some of them), there was a lot of taut racial and political drama nodded at, but I felt like I never quite understood who was who and why they hated each other and which double-cross or takedown I should have seen coming.

Truthfully, three months on, I remember the book only in snippets: new friends having a picnic in the wild; the oppressive heat; a slow seduction; the snooker room in the hotel where all the intrigues and drunken bickering took place; a man killed on the side of the road; a great conflagration. Which sound dramatic in a list like that, but the book moved sloooooowly through them all.

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## **Chad Post says**

DISCLAIMER: I am the publisher of the book and thus spent approximately two years reading and editing and working on it. So take my review with a grain of salt, or the understanding that I am deeply invested in this text and know it quite well. Also, I would really appreciate it if you would purchase this book, since it would benefit Open Letter directly.

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## **Tessa says**

This book did not stand out against other South African literature I've read. Additionally, I spent a lot of my time reading the book wondering where things were going to go. There was a lot of repetitive action and not a lot of plot development. This was translated from Afrikaans and it might be my first book in that category so I stuck with it.

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## **Dan says**

I don't know how a literary style can be the very definition of torpid but still somehow brilliant, but this is it. Probably because it is infused with an underlying sensuality. The combination is a perfect fit to the setting and plot.

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