

The Fifteen Wonders of Daniel Green

Erica Boyce

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Daniel Green is part of a secret society dedicated to making crop circles for clients who were screened with care. If he completes his fifteenth circle, he'll become leader of his own regional group. But as he works on his latest project, he discovers that his client, Sam Barts, is dying. A circle is always risky business, but the risk has never been greater than when family and friends hear that Sam is dying and start converging on Barts's farm. In Erica Boyce's *The Fifteen Wonders of Daniel Green*, more than the secret of the crop circle threatens to come tumbling out as the myths people built to hold themselves together gradually fall apart.

This novel showcases the beauty that people find in rural communities without dismissing their complications or the allure of what's outside of them. Boyce's prose is lovely, its charm balanced with truth and never relying on easy sentimentality. There's a deep love of the land, with its "air thick with the scent of cow manure," yet the farm is still most beautiful "before the fog has lifted and you start remembering all the ways it has betrayed you."

Daniel, along with Sam's wife, Molly, and daughter, Nessa, helms the novel. The three trade narrative duties. Boyce is intimate and demanding in her characterizations but has a light hand when it comes to backstory, where snapshots make for deceptively easy reading. The novel shines in its clear and empathetic depiction of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Boyce forsakes binaries in favor of circles and their power to cycle, center, and interlock. People are the central wonder, the closed loops of their lives intersecting each other in a pattern of care that gives as much as it takes.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (May/June 2019)

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