

A beautiful story about a father, as told by his children

# Next Year in Berchem

LEO PLEYSIER

In 1989 Leo Pleysier started writing a series of books in which various family members talk about their lives and the ways in which they deal with their own memories. In *Next Year in Berchem* the father is the central character, but he only looms in the stories told by his children at a New Year's gathering in one of their homes. He was a cattle dealer and a smuggler, living in a world which his children were never able to fathom. He is mysterious and frightening; a giant shadow looming behind all the stories, each time in a different way. Each voice fills in the memories differently, and each person's own memories become part of a collective memory which changes as each year comes and goes.

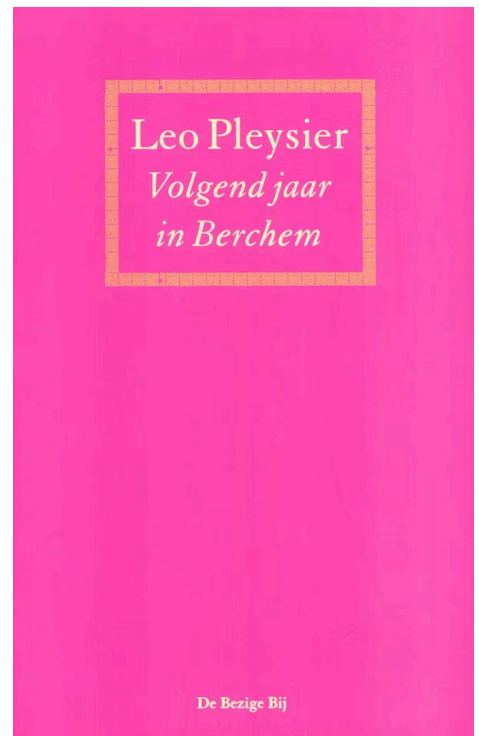
**The evocative power of language, together with Pleysier's masterful arrangement of words and sentences, combine to make this a literary jewel.**

DE TELEGRAAF

*Next Year in Berchem* is about the pain and loneliness bound up with this paradoxical love for the father. The problematic nature of this love is never actually put into words and all the accounts circumnavigate the real facts. Pleysier is a master at giving voice to that great and painful silence of the generations. He does this without using any great emphasis, so that the reader feels he is a guest in the house, and, like the narrator, looks forward to being invited to Berchem again next year.

**Small, often humiliating sketches merge into a harsh portrayal of Our Father.**

ELSEVIER



## AUTHOR



**Leo Pleysier** (b. 1945) made his debut in 1971 with 'Mirliton', a collection of stories which was met with immediate praise, but it was with 'White Is Always Nice' that he found his passport to a broader public. It set the tone for a further two novels with a female voice: 'The Cupboard' and 'The Yellow River is Freezed over'. Pleysier's primary merit is his capacity to recast the language of everyday people in literary language. Photo © Michiel Hendryckx

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