

A kaleidoscopic portrait of the Jewish condition

# Fatherland

JOSEPH PEARCE

'Fatherland' features surly, stubborn protagonists, men with distinguishing bristly eyebrows that link them across borders and generations. Starting with a Jewish man requesting euthanasia in Belgium in 2008, Pearce traces the history of a Jewish family back to Poland at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

An American truck driver in 1956 struggles with post-Holocaust survivor guilt. A Jewish soldier in the German army in 1916 realizes that in this war the Jews will have to pay a price for their difference. Each chapter presents timeless conflicts between father and son. Do we stay or go, integrate or retain our own identity, cling to faith or enter the big, wide world? And how do we respond to persecution?

**Its contemplative style yields many exceptional, perceptive images. 'Fatherland' is suffused with a genuine commitment.**

DE MORGEN

Pearce is extremely familiar with the history of the Jewish people. At the same time, he wants to get across that they have undergone a fundamental evolution, culminating in a contemporary, modern worldview. He captures the moods of the Jewish soul with great subtlety. A mixture of self-pity and self-mockery, of resignation and perseverance, of subordination and entrepreneurial spirit.

**Pearce asks relevant and nuanced questions about the Jewish identity.**

HET NIEUWSBLAD




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## AUTHOR

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**Joseph Pearce** (b. 1951) was fourteen when his father revealed that they were not of British but of Jewish origin. His family history became a source of inspiration for his first novel, 'Land of Promise' (1999). In France the translation was selected as one of the 'ten best books of the moment'. Many of his other novels have a similar autobiographical slant, while his later works tackle themes such as teaching and the literary world in a comic or satirical way. *Photo © Koen Broos*

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