

Two musicians under an authoritarian regime

# The Pale Baron

CHIARA LAMMENS & ANNA  
VERCAMMEN

In the underwater state, the pale baron is the leader. He has a strong dislike of poets; they imply all kinds of things between the lines, which makes the baron feel extremely uncomfortable. One day the baron fires all the poets into space. Fortunately, Felix and Felka are not poets but singers. Yet their names too find their way onto the list of 'inferiors' that the dictatorial baron wants to remove from his land. Felka, who fled to the underwater state from another oppressive country, doesn't want to flee a second time and be forced to start again somewhere else. She persuades Felix to leave while they still can, but she herself ends up on the ejector seat. Although the book does not have a happy ending, it does convey a hopeful message: despite sounding strange and different, Felix is welcome in another society where he can share Felka's story.

**Beautiful, intense and moving**

DE BOEKENKAST

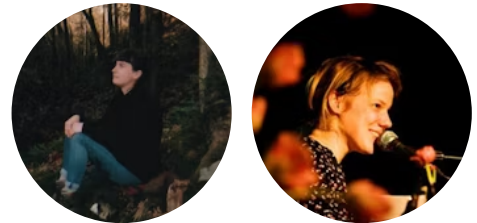
With absurd details and exaggerations, in a refreshing and highly original way, Anna Vercammen touches on social challenges such as climate change, migration, dictatorial leaders and political repression. The colourful illustrations by Chiara Lammens are packed with suggestive details, intermingle reality and fantasy, and invite readers to supplement the story and interpret it in their own way. Full-page landscapes with tiny human figures or objects are interspersed with small pencil drawings that depict the characters and their emotions. Vercammen and Lammens do not avoid emotions, and they tell a painful story with humour, about how we treat, or are in danger of treating, each other nowadays.

**Every one of the full-page colour illustrations is a picture you'd happily hang on the wall.**

PLUIZUIT



## AUTHORS



**Chiara Lammens** (b. 1990) is an illustrator and art teacher who draws and paints with nature as her source of inspiration. In meticulously painted scenes she depicts a world that is in certain ways similar to our own, often landscapes in extraordinary colour combinations. **Anna Vercammen** (b. 1982) is an actress, musician and writer. She has worked with different Flemish theatre companies. With Joeri Cnapelincx she forms De Anale Fase, a Dutch-language band that brings absurd, humorous and fantastic songs. 'When The Queen Disappeared' has toured as a musical play throughout Flanders and abroad, with Sabien Clement making live drawings. *Photo © Andy Nijdrop*

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