

A strong young woman in a medieval world

With a Sword in My Hand

PAT VAN BEIRS & JEAN-CLAUDE VAN RIJCKEGHEM

This novel is based on the life of Marguerite van Male (1348–1405), the daughter of the Count of Flanders. The young aristocrat beautifully and convincingly portrayed in this book is a girl of flesh and blood, a gangly redhead with the fox-like face of her father. A wayward, boyish, wild and eccentric child, constantly at odds with her authoritarian father, she cannot be forced to do anything and refuses to be corseted – literally and figuratively – by anyone.

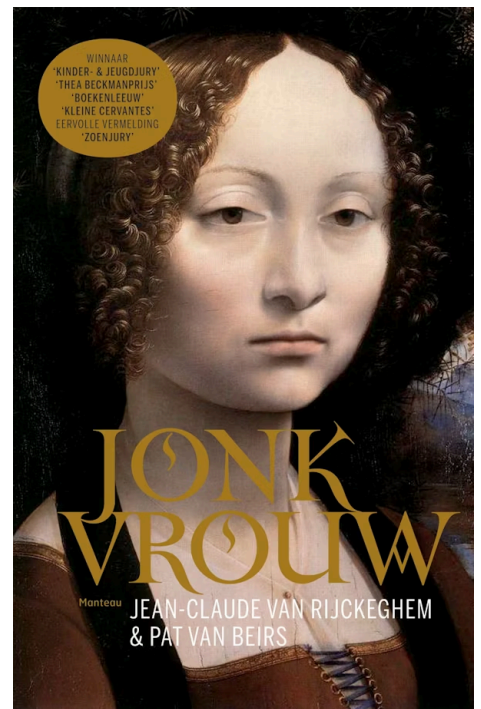
Funny and dazzling. A real success.

FEMMES D'AUJOURD'HUI

Marguerite relates in a sober, enthusiastic and lively style how everything has gone against her from the day she was born, because she was not the son her parents had dreamed of but rather 'one of God's little jokes'. She tells her story with pluck and without too much sentiment: about her hatred for her father, her beloved mother's insanity, her mischievous escapades with the castle's armour-bearers, her first lessons with the sword, and the boredom of embroidery. The historical background provided by the Hundred Years' War and the gloomy atmosphere of the Middle Ages, its suffocating religion and superstition, the plague, the grimy colours and smells are subtly present throughout.

The caustic dialogue, the sharp humour and the astute descriptions make this an entertaining and very interesting reading experience.

DE MORGEN



AUTHORS



Pat Van Beirs (b. 1954) and **Jean-Claude Van Rijckeghem** (b. 1963) form a successful writing duo that created acclaimed and prize-winning historical novels. *Photo © Koen Broos*

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