

An enthralling family history about emigration and uprooting

Fire and Air

ERIK VLAMINCK

'Fire and Air' is a moving tale of a family forced to live far from its native ground, in a place that will never feel like home.

Gaston, a fanatic pigeon fancier, is one of the many Belgians who moved to Canada after World War II to build a new life. He marries Mina and they have a daughter, Elly. For a long time, Elly trusts in her father. In her eyes, it is Mother who is the one spoiling things for everyone. Until suddenly Gaston leaves and goes back to Flanders.

An immensely appealing novel, razor sharp in the psychological depiction of three generations of women. Humour and bitterness in the same breath.

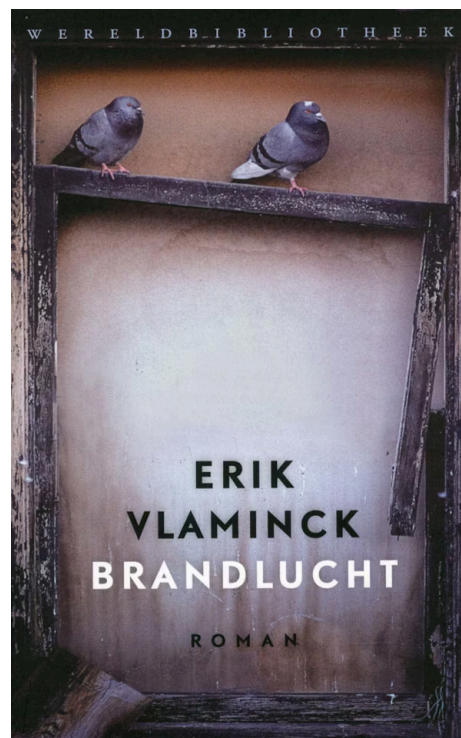
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As an adult, Elly seeks out her father in Belgium and it turns out that during the years he was in Canada he already had a family in his home country. She is bent on revenge and develops the habit of cutting herself. The madness takes hold of Elly to the point where she starts a fatal fire. In a dramatic turn of events, Elly and Mina lose their lives, which is where Linda, Elly's daughter, begins hers.

With sensitivity and humour Vlaminc shows the effect the uprooting of a family can have. It is the story of many emigrants all over the world. With virtuoso skill, Vlaminc interweaves the voices of Elly, Linda, Mina and Gaston, each painted with a different palette. It produces a highly-colourful portrait of a broken family.

A delightful read from beginning to end. With enviable flair the author switches from the 1960s to the 21st century and from Canada to Belgium and back.

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Erik Vlaminc (b. 1954) is a theatre-maker, columnist and author of a large oeuvre. In the tradition of Louis Paul Boon he writes with great psychological insight about family and ordinary people with striking life stories. His work is suffused with social engagement and always reflects an authentic working-class character. Many of his texts are based on (historical) fact or on his own experiences working in psychiatric care and in homeless shelters. Vlaminc's language is laconic, juicy, insightful and authentic. Photo © Chris van Houts

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