

The inexorability of fate

The Battle with the Angel

HERMAN TEIRLINCK

‘The Battle with the Angel’ tells of the life of a community, spread over several generations, but primarily between the world wars. The centuries-long prehistory of Welriekende, a country estate in Brussels’ imposing Sonian Forest, is recounted in chronicle style prior to the story. The dynamics of the book are generated by the trichotomy of castle-village-forest, but also by the mutual bickering of (powerful) families and their individual members. The most important families are the Jeroens and the Caloens, who often stand opposed, as representatives of nature and culture.

Monumental epic grandeur

GRAND PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

‘The Battle with the Angel’ is a vitalistic chronicle novel that begins in 1343 and ends in the 1940s; each event is described in detail and the topography of the work is also important as a hand-hold for the reader, which is reflected in the maps and family trees that Teirlinck later published to accompany his novel. The work bears witness to an unbridled creative force masterfully endeavouring to portray the contrast between primeval nature and decadence. Teirlinck never moralises or lectures, but is majestic and full of compassion for his characters.

The al fresco style and the inimitable language use of this magnum opus make it a pleasure to read.

NBD BIBLION



AUTHOR



Herman Teirlinck (1879-1967) was born in Brussels. Throughout his life, he was a multi-faceted artist and played a prominent role in Flemish cultural life. He worked as a civil servant and as a Dutch teacher, and as a teacher and art and literature advisor to the Belgian court of Albert I, Leopold III and Boudewijn I. He was also a poet, essayist and playwright, founder of literary magazines, drawer, painter, furniture designer, actor and director.

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PRIZES Grand Prize for Literature

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