

A settling of accounts with the father and the patriarchal world

The Accursed Fathers

MONIKA VAN PAEMEL

Central to 'The Accursed Fathers' is the life story of Pamela. Rejected by her mother who had been hoping for a boy, browbeaten by her father whom she refuses to hate, the heroine of the story is the eternal victim of a hereditary curse.

Through her central character, Monika van Paemel exposes the subjugation of women. The key themes of the book are threat and destruction, wars great and small, and oppression and exploitation by the 'gentlemen' who disguise themselves as fathers. Opposed to all they represent is the powerlessness (or is it unwillingness?) of the daughters, until their resistance is broken by love.

A literary achievement of the first order

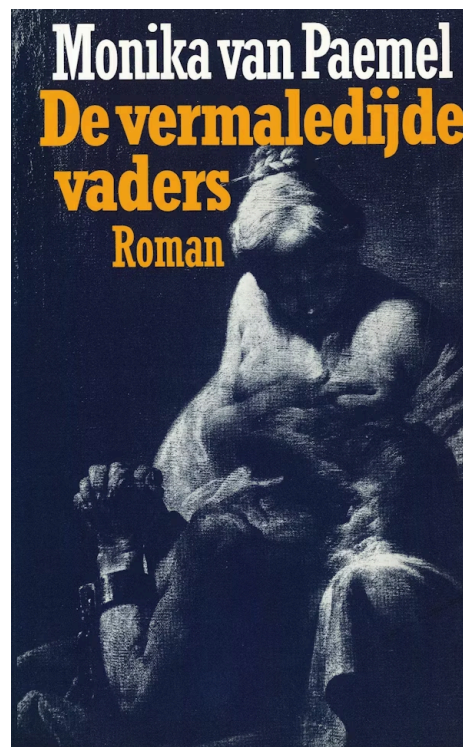
SÄCHSISCHE ZEITUNG

Monika van Paemel was inspired by the colourful history of her own illustrious forefathers, which makes the book not only a fascinating family chronicle with unforgettable characters, but a penetrating recreation of both rural and city life in twentieth century Flanders.

Published in 1985, well after the feminist wave had passed its peak, the novel is nourished by the unforgettable passion of womanhood, evoking its universal mystery with the power of an incantation.

The epic comprehensiveness is a great virtue

VRIJ NEDERLAND



AUTHOR



Monika van Paemel (b. 1945) took to her writer's desk after years of illness. Her first, immediately recognisable books turned out to be preparatory sketches for her hefty, breakthrough novel with feminist overtones *The Accursed Fathers*. In 2004 she published the counterpart to her chef d'oeuvre, 'Celestine or The Heavenly Mothers' (*Celestien. De gebenedijde moeders*). Van Paemel now has a dozen epic novels to her name. *Photo © Chris van Houts*

ORIGINAL TITLE *De vermaledijde vaders* (1985, Meulenhoff, 417 pp.)

PRIZES Belgian State Prize for Narrative Prose

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