

# The Fire of Leuven

# Wounded City

GEROLF VAN DE PERRE & JOHANNA SPAEY

On 19 August 1914, in a matter of hours, the university city of Leuven transformed from the Belgian military headquarters into a city occupied by German soldiers. Soon after that, Leuven was reduced to ashes.

In 'Wounded City', artist Gerolf Van de Perre and writer Johanna Spaey portray these dramatic early days of World War I in powerful, poetic images and words. Four characters tell their story: a king, an enemy, a soldier and a woman. The king is burdened by his role, as he now realises that the tragedy of a long, 'great' war is inevitable. One crazy night, a group of German soldiers set fire to the university library, resulting in international condemnation. Meanwhile, in a field hospital, a Belgian soldier wrestles with his memories of the fighting and the injuries he suffered.

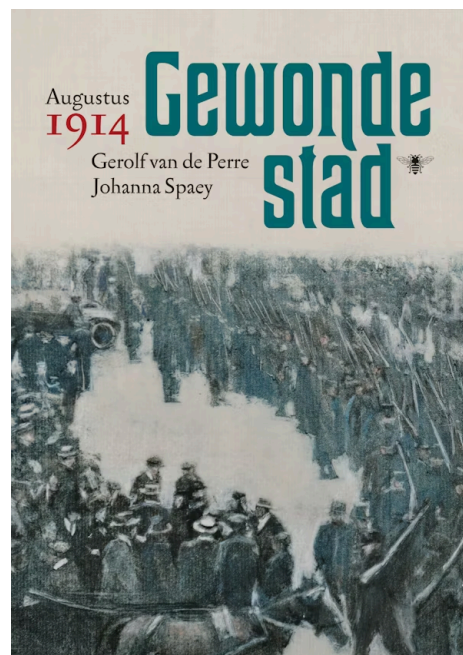
**Unique in the stream of books published to mark the centenary of World War One**

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The book ends with the story of an innkeeper, who starts a new watering hole in the ruins of her old bar. Gradually, realisation dawns that the war and occupation could last longer than was expected at the beginning of August. 'Wounded City' is a universal tale of wounded soldiers, traumatised civilians and the destruction of historical and cultural heritage.

**Spaey writes cleverly, with beautiful dialogues, memorable characters and a good plot**

KNACK



## AUTHORS



**Gerolf Van de Perre** (b. 1965) is a painter by trade. He spent many years in China, which inspired his graphic novels with their radically varying cityscapes, such as 'Stone Dust', 'Household Help' and 'The Emperor's Tomb'. Van de Perre has also created a graphic version of the only novel Rainer Maria Rilke ever wrote. Photo © Gerolf Van de Perre **Johanna Spaey** (b. 1966) has written three novels on World War I. Her debut, 'Death of a Soldier', immediately won the Dutch Gouden Strop and the Flemish Hercules Poirot Prize.

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