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Robert Haasnoot

The Roomy Bed

Original title: *Het ruime bed*

NOVEL

Novel about disorientation and
deviousness in love.



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About the author

Robert Haasnoot (1961) made his debut in 1997 with the novel *The Power of the Forest* and won the Prix des Ambassadeurs in 2000 with his second novel *Sea of Delusion*. In 2002 *Stone Child* appeared and in 2005 he published *The Scribe*, which was longlisted for the Libris Literature Prize. Haasnoot based *Slow Waltz* (2008) on the life of the charismatic Rotterdam businessman and politician, Lodewijk Pincoffs. His novels have been translated into German and Spanish.

About the book

Two events change Paul's life radically: the death of his father and the ensuing sorrow confront him with his youth and his relationship with his father; his marriage coming to grief forces him to take measures.

In an attempt to avoid having to choose between Maanke, with whom he is in love, and his wife, Paul suggests an open marriage. Although this appears to be the ideal solution, it actually works as a boomerang: Maanke breaks off their relationship and his wife finds happiness with another man.

As he returns from a short stay in the United States, his mind is made up. However, since his arrival at Schiphol, he has been confronted with some puzzling incidents. Has he lost contact with reality? Or is something else going on?

Robert Haasnoot, *Het ruime bed*
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Bibliography

De kracht van het woud (The Power of the Forest) (1997, novel)
Waanzee (Sea of Delusion) (2000, novel)
Steenkind (Stone Child) (2002, novel)
De heugling (The Scribe) (2005, novel)
Langzame wals (Slow Waltz) (2008, novel)
Het ruime bed (The Roomy Bed) (2012, novel)

Prizes and awards

2000 – Prix des Ambassadeurs for *Waanzee*

Rights

Rights of Robert Haasnoot's novels have been sold to Germany (Berlin Verlag) and Spain (Lengua de Trapo)

Option for the film rights of *Steenkind* sold to director Dagmar Seume.

Option for the film rights of *Waanzee* sold to Guapo Producties.

The press

On *Slow Waltz*:

‘There are few authors who choose their words so carefully as Robert Haasnoot does. [...] A whole world lurks behind each word. Haasnoot's strength lies in the fact that he does not explain too much, but allows his words merely to suggest that world.’ – *Elsevier*

‘He weaves three storylines into a fascinating novel [...] Haasnoot is also able to tell his story in fine, melodious sentences, that are almost old-fashioned in their beauty. A fascinating book.’ – *GPD-Bladen*

On *Sea of Delusion*:

‘Robert Haasnoot, a marvellous stylist, tells his story in a language that is as simple as it is poetic ...’ – *Der Spiegel*

‘... Haasnoot manages to make his characters understandable from the viewpoint of their own confined thoughts. The history of the amazing journey of the "North Star" is a study of the regression of Homo sapiens. Sea of Delusion is the Dutch equivalent of William Golding's Lord of the Flies ...’ – *Die Welt*

Excerpt from the book

The Airbus is less than an hour away from Amsterdam. Mahler's *Chorus Mysticus* is jangling in his headphones as his heart starts to feel it is being squeezed and his chest swells up with pain. Paul Honsaat gasps for breath. He wants to raise his shoulders and pull himself out of the pain, but he has hardly any strength in his chest and left arm. There is no escape. He is trapped in the cabin of the aeroplane, surrounded by fellow passengers who are listlessly watching the landing at Schiphol.

He needs to keep the panic under control. Wait until the pain ebbs away, which hopefully will happen, just like last time. With difficulty he gets the headphones off his head. In his mind, he gives orders to his uncooperative body and curses it – *That's enough, damn you!* – but it is the cursing of someone who knows he is on the losing side; his left fist, clenched on his knee, is powerless. Breathing slowly in and out, he tries to create space his chest.

Should he warn a stewardess, just in case? If it turns out to be serious, they can have an ambulance waiting at Schiphol and deliver him to hospital within ten minutes. Once landed, he will be virtually safe.

Stay calm. The day before yesterday, in a restaurant in Grand Central Station, it turned out well too. The same pain. A waitress noticed there was something wrong. She came and stood anxiously at his table, but he waved her away. Terrified, he listened to the bustle around him. He heard everything: the babble, the scraping and ticking of cutlery, the hum of the air conditioning.

He decided not to resist – then. His body had turned against him. It would quickly have to decide between life and death. In a strange way he suddenly felt safe in the bustle. If it had to be like this, if this meant the end of the journey, then Grand Central Station was a good place to depart from life for good. But he thought about his children, seven and ten years old, and about how someone else would take his place in the family in no time. The sad upshot of his life was that he had failed. He asked himself whether he would get to see his father who had preceded him last month. And whether he would accost him about his failures. Paul would prefer death to mean disappearing into a complete nothingness. The prospect of eternal life filled him with gloom.