This book recounts the little-known history of Cornelis Chastelein, a high-ranking official of the Dutch East India Company and the 150-200 slaves he purchased from slave markets around South-East Asia, to work his landed estates in the Batavian (Jakarta) hinterlands. It traces the making and unravelling of his dream to create a self-sustaining Christian community of freed slaves in the midst of a Muslim stronghold. To this end, on his death on 28 June 1714, he freed most of his slaves, and bequeathed those who had embraced Christianity, his 1244-hectare Depok estate in 'collective ownership.'

The book isolates behaviours and events that influenced these Depokkers' lives after Chastelein's death, such as endogamy, religion, war, revolution and diaspora. Its main characters are the missionaries bent on Depokkers' Dutchification, the Japanese invaders who demand obedience to their 'Asia for the Asians' thinking, and the Indonesian Pemuda (freedom fighters), who insist Depokkers throw their weight behind the Independence movement.

Enslavement made Depokkers inbetweeners. In the Netherlands, they were considered Indonesian, and the Dutch to whom they thought they belonged painfully excluded them. Following the transfer of sovereignty, the Republic of Indonesia confiscated the rice fields of those that stayed and labelled them Belanda Depok (black Hollanders). The history of the Depokkers is a tale of survival in the face of adversity that takes in the dying embers of the Netherlands East Indies and the birth of Indonesia.

Nonja Peters works internationally, with universities, heritage organisations and local communities, in order to bridge the gap between academia and general audiences. Her work sits in such contemporary topics as urban studies, ethnicity and identity studies, race relations, globalisation and migration. Her current research focus is the long-term impact of the incursion of the Dutch into the Indian Ocean Region, on the sense of place, identity and belonging of Indigenous Peoples in South Africa and Namibia, Indonesia and Western Australia. Her publications include the book *Verlander: Forgotten Children of the VOC*, and she has exhibited work in South Africa, Namibia, the Netherlands, Australia and Indonesia.

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The Christian Slaves of Depok

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A Colonial Tale Unravels

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