

An unconventional, progressive voice

Death of a Nun

MARIA ROSSEELS

Sabine, who is confined to a wheelchair, is praying for a miracle. In exchange for a cure, she promises God to serve as a nun for the rest of her life. Her sole condition is that she gets to spend one more year with her lover Joris. Sabine is cured, but does not keep her promise: she marries Joris. When her husband and child die, she is racked with guilt. As penance, she enters the convent where her sister also serves. But then her sister dies too, and Sabine experiences a religious crisis. While travelling around the Far East, a Chinese priest excommunicated by Rome teaches her to put aside her spiritual pride. Faith becomes hope, which in turn becomes love.

Her importance to literature should not be underestimated

DE MORGEN

'Death of a Nun' is a classic example of the Catholic social novel, one of the first to meet the growing need for writing that questioned the institution of the church. Rosseels' novel helped create a climate of spiritual freedom, which enabled subsequent writers to challenge the influence of the church on everyday life in Flanders. In 1975 'Death of a Nun' was adapted for the big screen.

A grand dame with guts

HET VOLK



AUTHOR



Maria Rosseels (1916-2005) was an author and journalist. In the 1950s and 1960s, she published several controversial, emancipatory novels which centred on strong, intellectual women. 'Death of a Nun' (1961) became a bestseller. She was the first woman to receive the Flemish State Prize for a Writer's Oeuvre in 1983.

ORIGINAL TITLE Dood van een non (1961, De Clauwaert. Republished in 2002 by Houtekiet, 332 pp.)

PRIZES Literature Prize of the Province of Antwerp, Flemish Readers' Prize, Flemish State Prize for a Writer's Oeuvre

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TRANSLATION GRANTS Marieke Roels - marieke@flandersliterature.be, Yannick Geens - yannick@flandersliterature.be