

Murder and cannibalism as acts of love

The Virgin Marino

YVES PETRY

For 'The Virgin Marino' Petry was inspired by a notorious murder case in Germany in which a man was castrated, killed and eaten by his friend at his own request. Petry does not reconstruct the case; instead his novel seeks a possible explanation for what might possess someone to do such a thing.

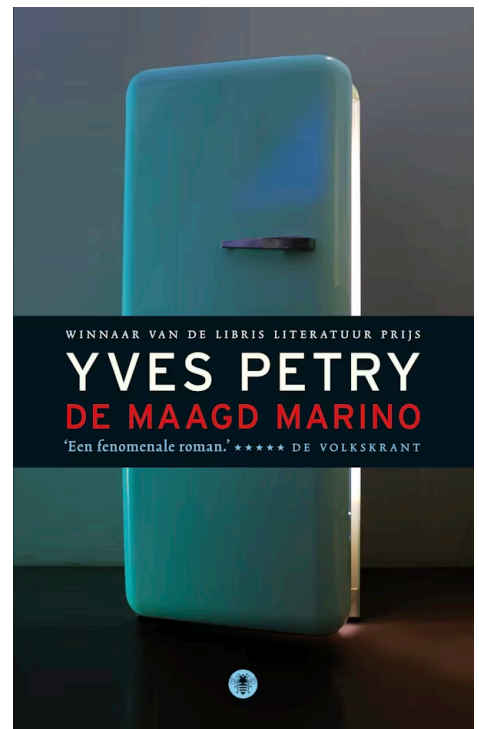
The whole novel operates at the highest level, in terms of both thoughts and language

SÜDWESTRUNDFUNK

The culprit, Marino, is a technology nerd who has a paralyzing bond with his mother. Bruno, the man who makes the request, is a literature lecturer who gave up his job out of contempt for the academic world. The two fail to establish contact with others and regard carrying out their cannibalistic plan as a unique opportunity to intensify their relationship. The story starts with Marino's sentencing. While he is in prison, the dead Bruno dictates this account to him, enabling the author to put the motives of the victim into words, with hindsight. Petry's power lies in a combination of extremely precise, carefully considered formulations and astounding stylistic elegance. His prose is given a special flavour by its ironic undertone and regularly embellished by dashes of misanthropy and gallows humour, all interlaced with spiritual seriousness, melancholy and even tenderness.

Challengingly intellectual, poetic and unexpectedly humorous: a beautiful book

KNACK



AUTHOR



Yves Petry (b. 1967) studied mathematics and philosophy. He was awarded the BNG Literature Prize for 'The Straggler' (De achterblijver, 2006), a novel about artificial intelligence and human emotions. His disconcerting novel 'The Virgin Marino' attracted a large readership. 'Love So to Speak', a lucid book about a writer in a love triangle, about love and resentment, is his sixth novel. Photo © Stephan Vanfleteren

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PRIZES Libris Literature Prize, Inktap

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