

FICTION

A moving novel of longing and deprivation

The Unexpected Answer

PATRICIA DE MARTELAERE

In 'The Unexpected Answer', the author gives the floor to six different women. All six are enthralled by the poet Godfried H. Four have a relationship with the married Godfried, a man who likes blue silk shirts, eats cheese crusts and snores.

Rare enthusiasm and concentration encourage to leaf back – eager to follow the story yet unwilling to miss a thing

DE VOLKSKRANT

Esther (who is painting a portrait of him), the scientist Clara, Sybille (who is in therapy with Godfried's psychiatrist wife), and Marina (his former student), are perpetually torn between their desires and their determination to turn their back on him. None of them can call the man her own, and as a result he is no longer the man his wife Anna can call her own.

'The Unexpected Answer' is a sultry book, full of insatiable passion that explodes in the penultimate chapter 'The Love Letter', an amalgam of letter fragments written by the collective of women circling Godfried H., and ultimately a single woman who appears in different guises.

A bizarre deep sea of vortices, speedboats and rapids, full of colour, sounds, clear water, and pure poison.

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Patricia De Martelaere (1957-2009) was a philosophy professor and literary author. Her debut novel 'Night Book of an Insomniac' (Nachtboek van een slapeloze, 1988) won the prize for the year's best debut. De Martelaere is one of the most interesting essayists in the Dutch language. The language in her brilliant philosophical writings and intriguing stories and novels is always crystal clear. Paradox was her preferred form.

ORIGINAL TITLE Het onverwachte antwoord (2004, Meulenhoff, 285 pp.)

PRIZES Gouden Uil Reader's Prize, shortlisted for the AKO Literature Prize, shortlisted for the Libris Literature Prize

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