

The cultural divide experienced by migrants

The Man Who Didn't Want to be Buried

RACHIDA LAMRABET

Moncif tells his story hiding under a table in the mortuary waiting for the guard to leave the building. His wife left him because he had distanced himself from Muslim culture and now that his brother has died in a car accident he has descended into deep despair. To his parents' dismay, Moncif's Western sister-in-law wants his brother to be cremated, going against Muslim tradition. Because he believes he has chosen the wrong path, he decides to remove his brother's body from the mortuary at night.

Lamrabet peels off skin after skin of the onion and does so in a magnificently compelling style ****

DE VOLKSKRANT

In Rachida Lamrabet's story the central concern is with identity and integrity. The parents insist that their children's 'apostasy' only makes them more vulnerable. Moncif has his own ideas about adjustment to Western life, but nevertheless reaches an irritable compromise between willingness to please, pride and resistance. Many of the characters' personal choices elicit social and generational conflicts that deeply disturb traditional family life.

Rachida Lamrabet once more astonishes her readers with an unusual, penetrating and nuanced examination of the lives of people who are culturally uprooted.

She skilfully shows how good intentions and fine initiatives come to grief in the great violence of humankind.

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AUTHOR



Rachida Lamrabet (b. 1970) writes fiction and stage plays. Her work is strongly inspired by the themes of migration and identity. For her first novel, *Woman Country*, she received a debut award, and her story collection *A Child of God* won the BNG New Literature Prize. Both books have been translated into German. In *The Man Who Didn't Want to Be Buried*, she portrays the cultural divide experienced by migrants. Tell someone is a captivating chronicle of a Moroccan soldier fighting alongside the French during World War I. She has won the Flemish Culture Award for Literature 2019. Photo © Koen Broos

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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Marijke Nagtegaal - m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl

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