

Inevitable tragedy in a love triangle

A Tender Destruction

HUGO CLAUS

'A Tender Destruction' is a novel about love written in a light style. André Maertens, watching the news on television, suddenly hears that Bernard, an old friend of his, has died. This takes him back in time. He remembers ASUR, the Dutch artist community in Paris after the war, where he spent most of his time at Madame Jeannot's café. André and Bernard competed for Sabine's affections; she was a young woman from an aristocratic family, who made a living as a model in pornographic films. André's feelings were a mixture of aversion and fascination. But the love story ended in inevitable tragedy. Bernard apparently ended up in prison, after having raped and wounded Sabine. André was ordered by Sabine's father to leave the country.

Claus reveals his mastery by producing a sentimental story about a total failure.

DE MORGEN

As a tribute to his dead friend, André organizes an exhibition about ASUR. After the opening, he gets drunk with another friend from his Paris days. This is when he learns that Sabine has a son called Andres who is thirty years old. In 'A Tender Destruction' Claus uses a number of tried and trusted themes. However, he tells the tale of this tragic love affair masterfully, without ever becoming depressing.

Masterful examples of the art of description

TZUM



Hugo Claus
Een zachte vernieling



AUTHOR



Hugo Claus (1929-2008) is Flanders' most famous and most important writer of modern literature. He is internationally acclaimed for his plays, novels and poetry. In his Faulknerian novels, he mixes expertly crafted stories of post-war Flanders with poignant character portraits and telltale allusions to mythology. Photo © Stephan Vanfleteren

ORIGINAL TITLE Een zachte vernieling (1988, De Bezige Bij, 190 pp.)

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