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Death In Venice: And Seven Other Stories



Synopsis

Eight complex stories illustrative of the author's belief that "a story must tell itself," highlighted by the high art style of the famous title novella.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The long novels of Thomas Mann can prove challenging, not unlike those of Henry James. Fortunately, this varied collection - *Death in Venice* and *Seven Other Stories* - offers an easier way to become acquainted with Mann's intellectual, psychologically complex literature. Thomas Mann's lengthy sentences and complex grammatical structures markedly complicate the task of translation. H. T. Lowe-Porter's translation is considered the most accessible version, although at the expense of subdividing many of Mann's sentences. (For comparison with an excellent literal version, look at Stanley Appelbaum's translation of *Death in Venice*, Dover Publications, 1995). *Death in Venice* and *Seven Other Stories* was first published by Vintage Books in 1954. My edition was printed by Vintage International in 1989; it has neither an introduction nor explanatory notes. *Death in Venice* (1911): While vacationing in Venice, the aging, highly respected author Gustave Ashenbach becomes mesmerized by a young boy staying at the seashore with his Polish aristocratic family. Although intellectually aware of his growing obsession, Ashenbach is unable to break away. This somber portrayal of a troubled man is a masterpiece of subtle nuances that illustrates Thomas Mann's ability to create layers of meaning. *Tonio Kroger* (1903) is perhaps more biographical as it explores a writer's internal conflict between his desire to be accepted, that is to fit in to a bourgeois

life, and his contradictory need to follow his artistic temperament wherever it might lead him. Mario and the Magician (1929) is more explicitly political, depicting in the guise of an unscrupulous hypnotist a Mussolini-like character. The ending of this intriguing account is a surprise.

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