



The Burning Secret and other stories

Stefan Zweig , John Fowles (Introduction) , Jill Sutcliffe (Translator)

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The Burning Secret and other stories Details

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Author : Stefan Zweig , John Fowles (Introduction) , Jill Sutcliffe (Translator)

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From Reader Review The Burning Secret and other stories for online ebook

Alex says

The Jewish boy and his attractive mother were staying at health spa luxurious resort
She quickly has been put *on notice* by the baron - seducer, womanizer, love affair's hunter figure
In order to approach the woman he befriends her son - just to advance the purpose of his *sport*
The youngster is excited and accepts the baron's friendship with the vigor.

Then baron skillfully exploits devotion of young soul and gradually succeeds to charm the Jewish lady
But soon the boy begins suspecting baron's ploy
He realizes that the baron used his trust and friendship simply as decoy
In being abandoned, hurt by sudden friend's betrayal, boy's naive childhood ends and he was able to foresee
to which direction mother's love affair's heading

Intuitively young boy feels that her infatuation with the baron is really a dangerous mistake
To stop his mother from her falling into baron's hands, the son decides to do whatever it will take
Being suddenly matured, acting smart and wise,
He wins the battle, saving mother while depriving the seducer of his clever, shrewd and cunning effort's
prize.

1. Memorable 5
2. Social Relevance 1
3. Informative 5
4. Originality 5
5. Thought Provoking 5
6. Expressiveness 5
7. Entertaining 5
8. Visualization 4
9. Sparks Emotion 5
10. Life Changing (Pivotal, crucial, determining, defining, momentous, fateful, consequential, climacteric, transformational) 2

5,1,5,5,5,5,5,4,5,4 =====>> 44/10 = 4.4

<http://www.goodreads.com/poll/show/51...>

Cheng-Hsi says

brilliant fabrication

Paul Jellinek says

My grandmother was from Vienna and Stefan Zweig was one of her favorite writers, which is prompted me to start reading him years ago. In terms of quality, this collection of about half a dozen stories and novellas is a mixed bag, probably reflecting his evolution as a writer over the years (the earliest in this volume were written before World War I, the latest during World War II). Zweig's style is clear and to the point (something in which he prided himself) but some of the earlier stories really do feel dated in a way that even some of the better 19th century writers don't, and in some there's a heavy overlay of neurotic angst that eventually got on my nerves. For those who don't have the patience to wade through the whole collection, I would recommend just reading his final novella (the first in this volume), "The Royal Game," which is truly outstanding.

Spike Gomes says

I found this book in a library garbage bin back in the 90s and only now am I getting around to reading it. Honestly, I would have savored it more at a younger age, not being so jaded as I am with literature now. What struck me at first was the editor's forward. I had never heard of Zweig before cracking this book open, and lo and behold I discover that he was apparently a literary giant in German literature of the 1900s through his suicide in 1942, on par with Hesse, Mann and other continental greats. He's fallen into deep obscurity in the English speaking world, out of print for ages at the time that this edition was published in the late 80s, and still only available through fairly small run reprints on Amazon today.

He's had more influence on movie-makers than writers, it seems. It's not overly surprising. His books are richly detailed with physical description and action. Overly so, to arch-modernist's tastes. If anything, I would venture that Zweig is a writer who bridges the gap between the stylistics of 19th century literature and 20th century psychological modernism. He approaches the uncomfortable ideas of female sexuality, self-aware childhood immaturity and male obsession with a precise manner and forthright honesty, but in the loquacious yet lucid prose that was already dated as he was writing it. His stories are well plotted, and true to life, but are written in such a manner that you always see where he's taking you, and what exactly you're supposed to feel in response to the nicely tied up end. There is much nuance... but very very little ambiguity. Only one of his stories "Letter From an Unknown Woman" ends with a sense of open-endedness.

Mind you, I'm not being heavily critical about these things. Goodness knows that we could do with more clarity in prose, and less ambiguity in meaning and narrative in this day and age. I'm just explaining why he's so obscure in the English and American Lit world. He offers a look at the other branch of a bifurcating path of modernism. One that offers perhaps a critical outlook on the excesses of passion, but offers forgiveness instead of condemnation for human failure, written in a style that is easy and approachable.

No, if I offer a criticism, it is because he spends so much time investigating an excess of emotion and obsession that it becomes rather one note, even in a collection of diverse stories. That and I do enjoy a little open-endedness. Leave the reader some ambiguity in the end. Still, and interesting read.

Xioma says

Liked it. Probably would have enjoyed more when I was younger. Nice stories, very human. Easy to read, and short enough. Very simple yet with certain magic that I really liked.

Richard Derus says

Rating: 4* of five

The Book Report: Wet, drippy little Edgar, his bored, would-be glam mama Mathilde, and the louche horndog Count Otto meet in an Austrian mountain resort. Otto takes a fancy to Mathilde, since she's a visibly bored Jewess of a certain age. He decides he'll lay siege to her virtue via befriending little larva Edgar, who mistakes his overtures for real friendship because it's never occurred to him that adults lie, cheat, and steal in pursuit of sex. After revolting Count Otto thinks he's about to achieve the leg-over, he drops Edgar, and his troubles begin. Hell hath no fury, apparently, like a barely pubescent boy disappointed in love. What this nasty little child dreams up to do to the perfidious, selfish adults is really quite impressive! In the end, his life is completely changed, and one rather trembles at the path his future will take... *cue Horst Wessel*....

My Review: Peopled with deeply dislikable characters, and set in an anonymous vacation destination with no sense of permanence, it's a little hard to invest in the dramatis personae for a goodly stretch of time. I don't think I ever really did all the way. I don't care at all about anyone here, in that if each of them had fallen off an Alp I would've pursed my lips, tutted, and gone about my day.

But the story is a very involving one, paradoxically, because the nature of love comes in for a pretty thorough and fairly damning examination, one that would have seemed very risky for Jewish Zweig to conduct so openly in 1913, the year it was published. The love of mother for son, of son for mother, and mother for sex is explicitly explored. The love of any one of these people for anything is revealed in all its ugliness as deeply selfish and terribly destructive, as my cynical heart believes love always to be. (Want to screw up a friendship? Fall in love with your friend! *bang* goes any hope of remaining on good terms...but I digress.)

A movie version of this novella, starring Faye Dunaway, appeared about 25 years ago. It wasn't very good. I am amazed at that, since Zweig's writing is so clear and simple that I'd think it was a shoo-in to have excellent dialogue come out of the characters' mouths. C'est la vie, as conventionally Francophile Mathilde would say...doubtless in a heavy Viennese accent.

So, okay, the point is: Recommended to Zweigers, cynics, and those with pubescent boys at home. Romantics, leave on shelf. "Life is Beautiful" and "La Traviata" fans, turn your backs upon. Multi-eyed, part-alien cyborgs, read and learn...this is what humans are *really* like, and it's not a terribly pretty picture.

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