

Vingt-quatre heures de la vie d'une femme

Stefan Zweig , Olivier Bournac (Translator) , Alzir Hella (Translator)

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Scandale dans une pension de famille « comme il faut », sur la Côte d'Azur du début du siècle : Mme Henriette, la femme d'un des clients, s'est enfuie avec un jeune homme qui pourtant n'avait passé là qu'une journée... Seul le narrateur tente de comprendre cette « créature sans moralité », avec l'aide inattendue d'une vieille dame anglaise très distinguée, qui lui expliquera quels feux mal éteints cette aventure a ranimés chez elle.

Ce récit d'une passion foudroyante, bref et aigu comme les affectionnait l'auteur d'*Amok* et du *Joueur d'échecs*, est une de ses plus incontestables réussites.

Vingt-quatre heures de la vie d'une femme Details

Date : Published May 1st 1992 by Le Livre de Poche (first published 1925)

ISBN: 9782253060222

Author: Stefan Zweig, Olivier Bournac (Translator), Alzir Hella (Translator)

Format: Mass Market Paperback 158 pages

Genre: Fiction, Classics, Short Stories, European Literature, German Literature

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From Reader Review Vingt-quatre heures de la vie d'une femme for online ebook

Luís C. says

How in so few pages, in so few words, to pass as many emotions to the reader?

I burned of curiosity at reading this book-novel. I've wanted to know the secret that reddened this old lady. The passion of a day and the disillusionment of many years.

Zweig has the gift of entering into the intimacy of the feelings of his heroes, in an intense and modest way at the same time, to keep his fellow reader in breath and it is simply sublime!

*nawaf says

Kübra Ya?mur says

Henüz Bilinmeyen Bir Kad?n?n Mektubu'ndan daha çok etkileyen bir kitab?n? okumad?m. Uzun bir yorum gelir, belki...

Maria Clara says

Mi segunda incursión en el mundo de Zweig, y puedo asegurar que este pequeño relato me ha gustado mucho más que La impaciencia del corazón. Pero, en fin, es un relato y un relato sólo araña una minúscula parte de nuestra alma, así que no puedo ponerle más estrellas.

Ghofran says

Ali AlShewail says

Mohammed Ali says

<u>- ????? ???? ????? ????? ??????? ?</u>

- ?????? ???? ???????? .

Heba says

Adam Dalva says

Insightful, quick novella that doesn't reach the heights of Zweig's masterful CHESS STORY but reminded me quite a bit of DEATH IN VENICE. The set-up in the first 15 pages is really fun (I love the way this generation of writers needs a first-person justification for a third person narrative, it's realism mingling with the-author-is-present) and the inner-frame that the title references has some excellent moments. There's a particularly good hand description that worth watching out for.

And I loved the cadence and repetition of this paragraph (spoilers), which is a great bit of morning-after writing: "How long this dreadful condition lasted I cannot say: such moments are outside the measured time of ordinary life. But suddenly another fear came over me, swift and terrible: the stranger whose name I did not know might wake up and speak to me. And I knew there was only one thing to do: I must get dressed and make my escape before he woke. I must not let him set eyes on me again, I must not speak to him again. I must save myself before it was too late, go away, away, away, back to some kind of life of my own, to my hotel, I must leave this pernicious place, leave this country, never meet him again, never look him in the eye, have no witnesses, no accusers, no one who knew."

Sadly, some steam comes out of the narrative after this wonderful sequence, as the action trends expected, but it's short enough that it doesn't overstay its welcome. This edition (Pushkin) has something funky going on with the spacing between words in certain lines that drove me a bit nuts, but the translation is good. Makes for a fun rainy day, this one.

????? ?????? says

Kalliope says

Zweig again displays his magic in his ability to grasp, resolutely and devoutly, the reader's attention -- quickly. And again he chooses public spaces where, paradoxically, the most private corners of a person's soul can be encountered: hotels, trains, ships, and casinos. Places of transit with an element of chance.

Peripatetic that he was, these places offered him endless portrait galleries from where he could pick his types. And incisive examiner that he was, his surgical observations exposed the crevices of the human hearts not visible on the disclosed canvases.

And in those crevices he always detects the passions, that forceful and elusive substance that exerts its will over any--always ineffectual--shield.

Seductively.

One also recognizes his amiable and profound impartiality in the way he could mold a story to show how very predictable the unpredictable is.

It all can happen in a short and measured slice of a person's life.

Magdalen says

Τσβ?ιχ απλ? εγγ?ηση. ?σο περισσ?τερα ?ργα του διαβ?ζω τ?σο περισσ?τερο τον λατρε?ω. Η γραφ? του ?κρως απολαυστικ?, συγκλονιστικ? ?ως και γιατ? ?χι; ερωτε?σιμη. Τα λ?για για να τον περιγρ?ψω λιγοστε?ουν απλ? διαβ?στε τον.

Sue says

I wanted to read something completely different after finishing A Lesson Before Dying and decided choose this ebook release from NetGalley. I have read several of Zweig's works previously. Perhaps the juxtaposition with Gaines' more realistic prose accentuated what seemed overly mannered in this novella. Maybe it would have felt that way even without the comparison. I will never know of course, but my reaction to this story was definitely muted. I had difficulty engaging with the characters or situations.

My reading history with Zweig's novellas has been largely positive with only one or two that I thought missed the mark. I fear that this story may join that small group, whether due to the vagaries of reading timing or not I guess I will never know. If you enjoy reading Zweig, and I know many of you, I suggest giving this story a chance. Just do not make the mistake I did of reading it so immediately after such a realistic piece of fiction as Gaines' work.

3.5*

A copy of this book was provided by Pushkin Press through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

David Gustafson says

Beware, Stefan Zweig is a beguiling seducer who is always one move ahead of you, the reader, the vulnerable object of his desires.

Zweig sets his short novella, "Twenty Four Hours in the Life of a Woman" in a Monte Carlo hotel and it only takes him six paragraphs to set the stage with an overture to the main plot, a young wife inexplicably leaves her husband and children for a twenty-year-old she has known for a day or so. The husband is mortally crushed and humiliated. This is but the prelude.

The wife's action becomes the obsessive conversation piece among a group of bourgeoise guests who take sides against the narrator offering possible explanations for the wife's inexplicable behavior.

Now that Zweig has deftly etched into glass his main characters, he begins the main movement of his story which revolves around an elderly, aristocratic guest who recognizes the narrator's compassionate objectivity and seeks him out to confess a regrettable story involving a younger man that took place in the course of a day and has haunted her for a lifetime.

There is an important twist, the confessor was a wealthy young widow whose life at the time had become rather meaningless, not an adulterous wife.

Her story also takes place in Monte Carlo years ago where she ended up trying to save a compulsive gambler from destroying himself, bringing her into dangerous flirtation with the ruin of her respectable identity that has somehow survived what she considers to be her meaningless existence.

Once you finish "Twenty Four Hours in the Life of a Woman" and begin to shake away the cosmic dust Zweig has sprinkled across your mind with his effortless prose, you realize this Viennese seducer has layered an unforgettable lesson in classic story-telling into your psyche that you have seldom experienced before.

Gaurav says

It's my first encounter with *Steven Zweig* and after reading a few pages a query I posed to myself in contemplation that why I waited so long to read this author, such was the impact of Zweig. The author had precision of a sculptor to craft sentences with just enough verbosity but with deep observations to put forth the deep secrets, of human beings, which are buried well below the layers of bygone times.

I guess there are other people like me who easily gets bored from things if they stick for long: P and always looks for something, to read, with which the bond could be disassembled just before it starts becoming a languor to you, then this is for you, it's roughly 90 odd pages with a short size however it's narrative a burst of deep emotions having tales within in a tale. The prose is intoxicating wherein you feel that although it begins on a very innocuous note but as you move on, you realize that it goes into deep abyss of human emotions, and by the time you end the book, the human emotions are totally exposed to naked eye to reiterate imperfect human existence. The experience of reading of Zweig is truly amazing for it's like a short sojourn wherein reader initially starts to feel sympathizing towards the protagonist, as if one is spellbound by someone whom you meet first time in your life but the persona of that person is so charismatic that you feel like pull along by some hidden force, as you move along with book, you really start feeling the emotions of the protagonist as your own, as if the protagonist is someone who has been brought up by the author from the deep reminiscences of your past and you know her well but somehow it got stacked down by the pile of memories.

The book revolves around morality of our society towards women, for there are two intriguing issues in the book: Could a woman have really done this with a perfect stranger, or was the situation a ruse? And, should she be encountered again, should she be treated with contempt, as an outcast from society? As our society has traditionally been patriarch and always maintained a different eye, at times disdainful, for women, the question here is whether a woman, who has done an act perhaps on her will, could be accepted in the society or she should be devoid of any sort of respect (I won't say we should sympathize with anyone since, I feel, that refutes the very meaning of a authentic existence) and be declared an outcast to our 'civilized' society. The married couples furiously maintain that she should be treated with utter contempt. The narrator finds himself pushed into a position of defence.

This accusation rather annoyed me, and when the German lady added her mite by remarking instructively that there were real women on the one hand and 'natural-born tarts' on the other, and in her opinion Madame Henriette must have been one of the latter, I lost patience entirely and became aggressive myself. Such a denial of the obvious fact that at certain times in her life a woman is delivered up to mysterious powers beyond her own will and judgment, I said, merely concealed fear of our own instincts, of the demonic element in our nature, and many people seemed to take pleasure in feeling themselves stronger, purer, and more moral than those who are 'easily led astray.

Zweig has brilliantly conveyed the swings in expressions of a man, his control is like that of a river which flows with a poise to have no impetus, no hesitation until it mingles with expanse of aqua:

Once more like a little waves, rippling galvanically, spread out from his lips, once again his hands were clasped, the boyish face disappeared behind greedy expectation until the spasmodic tension exploded and fell apart in disappointment: the face that had just looked boyish turned faded, wan and old, light disappeared from the burnt-out eyes, and all this within the space of a second as the ball came to rest on the wrong number.

And as soon you finish the book, you are (innocently) forced to ponder that how magical it's that the author has been able to do so much in so few pages, I won't say he was a minimalist as Beckett was but he surely had deep understanding of human emotions like a psychologist and mastery over choosing them so as to make a portrait (of man) which has just those details that are necessary to make it alive to have a consciousness of its own and not more than that, that so much could happen in one's life over the span of just 24 hours as it's also reinforced by the author himself:

And now you will understand why I suddenly brought myself to tell you about my own experience. When you defended Madame Henriette and said, so passionately, that twenty-four hours could determine a woman's whole life, I felt that you meant me; I was grateful to you, since for the first time I felt myself, as it were, confirmed in my existence.

Ilse says

The heart has its reasons which reason knows not

- Blaise Pascal -

Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point. Petty prejudices, fear of the unknown and the painfulness of having to face one's own shortcomings can swirl one into obnoxious judgmentalness. We, humble and ignorant wizard-apprentices in a life we cannot re-create, might never acquire adequate depth of insight and wisdom to understand another one's – or even our own - heart, one's innermost feelings and inner storms. Austrian writer Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) did, as this gorgeous novella abundantly and proficiently demonstrates.

In a small pension at the French Riviera, an apparently respectable, married woman overnight abandons her husband and offspring to elope with a perfect stranger. Abhorred, a few other couples residing in the pension discuss her conduct vehemently. Why did she behave like that? Was it a planned act of conspiracy, or did it equate a whimsical *coup de foudre*? What kind of woman could be that wicked? (I recall the horrible Sylvia Tietjens in Ford Madox Ford's Parade's End). Their commensal, the narrator, bored and irritated by the bigot display of moral purity and bourgeois arrogance, challenges the couples' haughty thoughts and comes to the defence of the 'fallen' woman. Taking the noble stance that 'he'd rather understand others than condemn them', he draws the attention of another guest, a distinguished, old English lady, Mrs. C. Pushed by the scandal, evoking strong reminiscences, Mrs. C., after 20 years of shame and silence, feels the need to finally pour her heart out on what has been the most eventful and passionate 24 hours in her life. That is where a remarkable tale within the tale starts, ending up in a secular confession - a woman talking about the passion.

Her story catapults us back to the deliciously vicious mundane setting of *fin-de-siècle* Monte Carlo, where Mrs. C, world-weary, seeks thrill in the casino, to feel that she is still alive after her husband's untimely death:

In my second year of mourning, that is to say my forty-second year, I had come to Monte Carlo at the end of March in my unacknowledged flight from time that had become worthless and was more than I could deal with. To be honest, I came there out of tedium, out of the painful emptiness of the heart that wells up like nausea, and at least tries to nourish itself on small external stimulations. The less I felt in myself, the more strongly I was drawn to those places where the whirligig of life spins more rapidly. If you are experiencing nothing yourself, the passionate restlessness of others stimulates the nervous system like music or drama.

Within a space of twenty-four hours she will learn life-reconfiguring lessons on human nature and herself, inspired by the encounter with a troubled young Polish diplomat in the casino: 'I had come to know immeasurably more about reality than in my preceding forty respectable years of life.' The word 'impossible' suddenly has lost its meaning to her. Despair, obsession, passion, crisis will become her part.

Zweig plays masterfully with the conventions of the genre, depicting the raffish aristocrats and the dubious coquettes, lacing the most elegant sentences brilliantly together. The most impressive however is his amazingly intricate psychological dissection of the heart and soul of the aging woman regarding her own life as utterly pointless, aiming to rescue another lost soul.

I summoned everything in me to save him by all the means at my command. A human being may know such an hour perhaps only once in his life, and out of millions, again, perhaps only one will know it- but for that terrible chance I myself would never have guessed how ardently, desperately, with what boundless greed a man given up for lost will still suck at every red drop of life. Kept safe for 20 years from all the demonic forces of existence, I would never have understood how magnificently, how fantastically Nature can merge hot and cold, life and death, delight and despair together in a few brief moments. And that night was so full of conflict and of talk, of passion and anger and hatred, with tears of entreaty and intoxication, that it seemed to me to last a thousand years, and we two human beings who fell entwined into its chasm, one of us in a frenzy, the other unsuspecting, emerged from that mortal tumult changed, completely transformed, senses and emotions transmuted.

Some parallels can be drawn with one of Zweig's literary heroes, both in the psychological scrutinizing of the characters and the intense style: Fyodor Dostoevsky. Zweig's story both echoes White Nights, and, even more The Gambler. (Zweig published a study about Dostoevsky (and Balzac and Dickens) in 1920, Three Masters: Balzac, Dickens, Dostoeffsky).

In 1920, in his Reminiscences of Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, Zweig's highly admired friend, wrote on Tolstoy at cards: 'His hands become nervous when he picks up the cards, exactly as if he were holding live birds instead of inanimate pieces of cardboard.' By letting Mrs. C.'s passion develop from chiromantic observations, comparing hands to animals, one could say Zweig probably paid homage to his dear friend. In turn, Gorky Maxim Gorky wrote about Zweig's novella he had never read anything more profound.

I saw two hands such as I had never seen before, left and right clutching each other like doggedly determined animals, bracing and extending together and

against one another with such heightened tension that the fingers joints cracked with a dry sound like a nut cracking open. They were hands of rare beauty, unusually long, unusually slender, yet taut and muscular – very white, the nails pale at their tips, gently curving and the colour of mother-of-pearl.

As Zweig admired Freud, something could be said about the erotically hued mothering of the widow over a man the same age as her son. Thinking of the flowering phenomenon of wealthy cougar women in our times - the difference in age as such might be less unfamiliar and scandalous than it was back in 1926, which by no means diminishes the power of the story at present.

My thanks go to Ina and Jean-Paul, for their enthusiasm about Zweig stimulated me to blow the dust from Zweig's collected stories residing on the shelf again. This collection's title story is Zweig's most famous work, Chess Story (aka The Royal Game). Even though I remember loving this novella when reading it aeons ago, it was the ominous word 'chess' on the cover that kept me from continuing reading the collection. 25 years ago, my beloved endeavored to learn me the basics of the chess game. He started with checkmating me in 2 moves, naggingly metaphorizing chess to life: losing in chess equals losing in life. Older and wiser, I prefer to second the assertion that chess is not like life, as chess has rules.

Intrigued by Mitteleuropa, its history, literature and art, its intellectual life in the coffee houses (Prague, Budapest, Vienna) and by his fabulous range of interesting friends, I hope to get to Zweig's famous memoir, The World of Yesterday, soon.

I read the novella in a Dutch translation, and would like to thank NetGalley and the publisher Pushkin Press for providing me with a copy of the English translation (by Anthea Bell), which allowed me to insert some quotes in English.

It is not for me to judge another man's life. I must judge, I must choose, I must spurn, purely for myself. For myself, alone.

? Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha

Michael says

This republication of a 1927 novella provided me a first opportunity to experience the fictional work of this beloved Austrian man of letters. This pacificist and humanist escaped from the early rise of Fascism for a life of exile in England, New York, and finally Brazil, where he and his wife committed suicide in 1942. That fate shouldn't affect how you react to his work, but for me it did. I sought something that reflected the struggle to find meaning of human existence in the face of modern evils, but I found instead a cool parable about morality and unintended consequences of kindness.

I did appreciate the elegance and intellectual cleverness of the way he nested a story within a story. Around the dining table of a small hotel in the French Riviera at the turn of the 20th century, the guests witness a respectable married woman with children being charmed by a presumed stranger and suddenly running off with him. The discussion among the guests evokes much moral outrage, but a lone artistocratic widow extols

the virtues of a human capacity to make such a leap for passion at the expense of civilized responsibilies and rational will. She is drawn to relate a comparable story when she was younger and acted out of character to help a man gambling beyond his means at the roulette table in Monte Carlo. It was her fascination with the expressiveness of her hands that moved her to act on his behalf. An amazing riff about her vision of the whole society of gamblers from the perspective of their hands was the best part of this tale for me.

Because she is moved by a sense of suicidal desperation in this man, she gets involved more deeply and is subject to some surprising revelations about his unforeseen character and about her own actions. The multiple displacements for the reader by having actions of one fictional story of reflections on one woman's obscured story kaleidoscoped into another character's reflection on her past give the novella some worthy mental twists. I could respect the artistry of Zweig, but I wasn't able to work up much emotional engagement or garner meaningful take-home lessons on the human condition. Because now a month after reading this, little impact looms in my mind, I notched my initial 4-star reaction down to 3 stars. From this point I am eager to pursue his Chess Story as perhaps a more substantial chance to savor his talents.

This book was provided by the publisher for review by the Netgalley program.

Hoda Elsayed says

Mohammed Salah says

Navra. Hassan says