



Beware of Pity (New York Review Books Classics)

Stefan Zweig

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Wes Anderson on Stefan Zweig: "I had never heard of Zweig...when I just more or less by chance bought a copy of *Beware of Pity*. I loved this first book. I also read the *The Post-Office Girl*. *The Grand Budapest Hotel* has elements that were sort of stolen from both these books. Two characters in our story are vaguely meant to represent Zweig himself — our “Author” character, played by Tom Wilkinson, and the theoretically fictionalised version of himself, played by Jude Law. But, in fact, M. Gustave, the main character who is played by Ralph Fiennes, is modelled significantly on Zweig as well."

The great Austrian writer Stefan Zweig was a master anatomist of the deceitful heart, and *Beware of Pity*, the only novel he published during his lifetime, uncovers the seed of selfishness within even the finest of feelings.

Hofmiller, an Austro-Hungarian cavalry officer stationed at the edge of the empire, is invited to a party at the home of a rich local landowner, a world away from the dreary routine of the barracks. The surroundings are glamorous, wine flows freely, and the exhilarated young Hofmiller asks his host—s lovely daughter for a dance, only to discover that sickness has left her painfully crippled. It is a minor blunder that will destroy his life, as pity and guilt gradually implicate him in a well-meaning but tragically wrongheaded plot to restore the unhappy invalid to health.

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