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Magellan



Synopsis

The Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) is one of the most famous navigators in history – he was the first man to sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and led the first voyage to circumnavigate the globe, although he was killed en route in a battle in the Philippines. In this biography, Zweig brings to life the Age of Discovery by telling the tale of one of the era's most daring adventurers. In typically flowing and elegant prose he takes us on a fascinating journey of discovery ourselves.

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Customer Reviews

“What did Zweig have that brought him the fanatical devotion of millions of readers, the admiration of Herman Hesse, the invitation to give the eulogy at the funeral of Sigmund Freud? To learn that, we would have to have a biography that illuminated all aspects of his work, that read all of his books, and that challenged, rather than accepted, the apparent modesty of his statements about his life and work.” – Benjamin Moser, Bookforum
Zweig's readability made him one of the most popular writers of the early twentieth century all over the world, with translations into thirty languages. His lives of Mary Stuart and Marie Antoinette were international bestsellers.” – Julie Kavanagh, The Economist
Intelligent Life
Zweig's accumulated historical and cultural studies, whether in essay or monograph form, remain a body of achievement almost too impressive to take in... Full-sized books on Marie-Antoinette, Mary Stuart, and Magellan were international best sellers.” – Clive James, Cultural Amnesia
Stefan Zweig cherished the

everyday imperfections and frustrated aspirations of the men and women he analysed with such affection and understanding." – Paul Bailey, Times Literary Supplement "To read Zweig is to be in the presence of a properly mature writer, for all that his characters are often in the grip of highly inappropriate desires. (...) These are unforgettable stories, beautifully translated. Anthea Bell is a first-rate translator; she brings out the humour as well as the anguish that make Zweig's work so sympathetically acute." – Nicholas Lezard, The Guardian "Touching and delightful. Those adjectives are not meant as faint praise. Zweig may be especially appealing now because rather than being a progenitor of big ideas, he was a serious entertainer, and an ardent and careful observer of habits, foibles, passions and mistakes." – A.O. Scott, The New York Times

Stefan Zweig was born in 1881 in Vienna, a member of a wealthy Austrian-Jewish family. He studied in Berlin and Vienna and was first known as a translator and later as a biographer. Zweig travelled widely, living in Salzburg between the wars, and enjoying literary fame. His stories and novellas were collected in 1934. In the same year, with the rise of Nazism, he briefly moved to London, taking British citizenship. After a short period in New York, he settled in Brazil where in 1942 he and his wife were found dead in bed in an apparent double suicide.

Magellan was a Portuguese explorer who led the first expedition to sail from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. He is the one who named the Pacific Ocean (from the Spanish word "paz" meaning "peaceful sea") for the calmness of its water and the lack of wind. Although he wasn't alive to complete the entire journey himself after he was killed in a rather unnecessary battle with a local king in the Philippines, the expedition that he once led resulted in the first circumnavigation of the earth. Needless to say, the journey wasn't smooth and clear skies all along otherwise there would hardly be a reason to write a full book about this expedition. Magellan had to overcome the Portuguese king who tried to sabotage this voyage, the mutiny of his crew, hunger, thirst and very harsh weather. Oh, yeah, he also lost his life. Zweig and his stirring prose style seem well suited for the task of writing about this dramatic expedition. Just consider this, for example:

"His native country left him in the lurch; his ties with office and duty had been severed. So much the better, now he was free. As so often when a man seems to be at the mercy of the winds, he is in reality being blown back upon his own self." In his novels, Zweig tends to focus in the psychological aspects of his characters. What drove them and why they acted the way they did. This shows in his biography of Magellan. He portrays him as a quiet introvert and

as a very calculated man who rarely made any decision without considering the long term; he was also fairly harsh (at least according to our standards today), but yet very fair. Zweig doesn't dwell too much into the details of each and every small thing that happened. Along with his dramatic and enjoyable prose style, "Magellan" reads more like one of Zweig's novels.

Fascinating story and worth learning more about Magellan. It made me want to find another book on the subject. Quick easy read. Knocked down to 3 stars because the author got quite flowery in language and flattering of the subject about half way through the voyage.

Fascinating history + the Zweig style. Very interesting and revealing about the times and personalities of Magellan and his world.

Excellent story, well written, a great adventure story with some history thrown in.

Fantastic adventure of the time of the great navigations, where we can have notion of the adversities that have passed these adventurers.

Well researched and highly readable, if somewhat long-winded at times. Stefan Zweig is very attentive to details and unbiased in his description of Magellan's personality.

thank you

I was a fast read and well written

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