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The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis
by Ugo Foscolo, translated by J.G. Nichols

A unique edition of a masterly prose work by one of Italy's most celebrated poets, and perhaps the greatest Italian novel of the Romantic movement.

Saddened with his country's loss of freedom, disillusioned with life and racked with loneliness and ennui, university student Jacopo Ortis can only find some comfort in the company of his friends and in his love for Teresa. But when his studies call him back to Padua and he is separated from her, Jacopo's torments become unbearable, and he feels that there is only one way out of his misery—a symbolic gesture against fate, God and all the tyrants of this world.

Allegedly based on the real-life tragic story of the Italian student Girolamo Ortis, and suffused with the author's own autobiographical experiences, The Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis is a masterly prose work by one of Italy's most celebrated poets, and perhaps the greatest Italian novel of the Romantic movement.

Author Bio

Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827) is one of the most popular and studied Italian poets. He is most famous for his long poem 'On Sepulchres', and his unfinished work The Graces. After a life of wanderings, he ended up in London, where he spent the last eleven years of his life mixing with high society and the greatest writers of the day, including Lord Byron. He died in poverty in Turnham Green, now part of London, and his tomb can still be seen in the Chiswick Old Cemetery.

J.G. Nichols was born in Liverpool and lives on the Wirral. His first volume of poetry, The Flighty Horse, was published by Liverpool University Press. He has translated many of the greatest classics of Italian literature, including Dante's Divine Comedy, Boccaccio's Decameron and Leopardi's Canti, and has been awarded the Florio Prize and the Monselice Prize for translation. His latest collection of poetry, Now and Then, was published by Herla in 2009.
The Secret Agent
by Joseph Conrad

Presented in a new annotated edition accompanied with extra material, The Secret Agent is one of literature's first political thrillers, and is widely considered to be among Conrad's masterpieces.

The shop owner Adolf Verloc, member of an anarchist group and secret agent for a foreign government, is summoned to meet Mr Vladimir, the country's ambassador, and told of a plot that involves him planting a bomb at a famous London landmark. Verloc has misgivings, but Mr Vladimir knows how to make people do what he wants, and when the plan goes wrong, it is Verloc who must deal with the repercussions.

A story of espionage, intrigue and corruption based on a real-life attempted terrorist attack in Victorian London, The Secret Agent was one of literature's first political thrillers, and is widely considered to be among Conrad's masterpieces.

"It is one of the best -- and certainly the most significant -- detective stories ever written." - Ford Madox Ford

Author Bio

Joseph Conrad was a master prose stylist, widely regarded as one of the greatest English-language novelists. Writing in the heyday of the British Empire, Conrad drew upon his experiences in the French and later the British Merchant Navy to create short stories and novels that reflect aspects of a worldwide empire while also plumbing the depths of the human soul.
The Life of Castruccio Castracani
by Niccolo Machiavelli, translated by J.G. Nichols

Part of Alma's new 101 pages series, The Life of Castruccio Castracani is the only edition in print of the rise and fall of a very 'Machiavellian' prince.

Rising from humble beginnings as a foundling, Castruccio Castracani came to prominence as one of the most powerful and shrewd warlords in Italy. Indeed, Machiavelli argues, so great was his vigour and charisma that -- had he not been prevented by his untimely death -- he might have surpassed in fame the great generals of antiquity and brought all the territories of Italy under his sole dominion.

Written in Machiavelli's characteristically lucid and terse style, The Life of Castruccio Castracani is not only a key text in understanding the development of the author's ideas on leadership and good statesmanship that would find fuller expression in The Prince, but also a revealing account of the political ferment and fractious factionalism of fourteenth-century Italy.

"Castruccio Castracani is a short book that tells a larger story... it will show that greatness, as Machiavelli defined it five centuries ago, is made, not born."
- Richard Overy

Author Bio

Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469 - 1527) was an Italian diplomat, politician, historian, philosopher, writer, playwright and poet of the Renaissance period, whose most famous work, The Prince (Il Principe), brought him a reputation as an atheist and an immoral cynic.

J.G. Nichols was born in Liverpool and lives on the Wirral. His first volume of poetry, The Flighty Horse, was published by Liverpool University Press. He has translated many of the greatest classics of Italian literature, including Dante's Divine Comedy, Boccaccio's Decameron and Leopardi's Canti, and has been awarded the Florio Prize and the Monselice Prize for translation. His latest collection of poetry, Now and Then, was published by Herla in 2009.
The Prophet
by Kahlil Gibran

Translated into more than a hundred languages, The Prophet takes the reader on a spiritual and philosophical journey.

Having lived in the city of Orphalese for twelve years, the revered Prophet is about to board a ship taking him back to the isle of his birth. Before he departs, a group of people gather round and ask him to share his wisdom.

Written as a collection of poetic essays, and detailing such diverse and sprawling topics as love, death, pleasure and prayer, The Prophet was an immediate success on its initial publication in 1923, and has since been translated into more than a hundred languages.

"Kahlil Gibran speaks about fundamental things -- those which are, or should be, a part of every human life." - New York Times

Author Bio

Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931) was a Lebanese-American writer, poet, artist and philosopher best known for being the author of The Prophet, one of the best-selling books of all time.
The Heretic of Soana
by Gerhart Hauptmann, translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan

Part of the Calder Collection series, The Heretic of Soana is widely regarded as the crowning achievement of Gerhart Hauptmann, the recipient of the 1912 Nobel Prize for Literature and one of the most important exponents of German Naturalism.

When the newly ordained priest Francesco Vela becomes the incumbent of the parish of Soana, a small village in Ticino, he is tasked with bringing back into the Catholic fold a family of shepherds, the Scarabotas, who are accused of indecency and incest. Yet, after visiting them among the grandiose scenery of the alpine mountains and meeting their beautiful daughter Agata, Francesco experiences a spiritual and sensual awakening that throws his world and his beliefs upside down, forcing him to choose between his faith and his desire to connect with nature.

This multi-layered tale, first published in 1918, is widely regarded as the crowning achievement of Gerhart Hauptmann, the recipient of the 1912 Nobel Prize for Literature and one of the most important exponents of German Naturalism.

Author Bio

Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946) was a German playwright, poet and novelist who pioneered German naturalism and is recognized as one of the most prominent dramatists of the early twentieth century.

Bayard Quincy Morgan (1883-1967) was an academic and translator. His translations include works by Goethe, Storm, Kleist, Eichendorff and Hauptmann.
Jacob’s Room
by Virginia Woolf

A new edition of Jacob’s Room, part of 101 Pages series aimed at promoting unjustly neglected works. This affordable edition reflects Alma’s commitment to provide with the most accurate text.

From his childhood on the wild, windswept shores of Cornwall and his college days at Cambridge to his life as a lawyer in London and a fateful journey to the Mediterranean, Jacob Flanders’s story is told by the women in his life, whether through his mother’s correspondence, the conversations of a friend or the thoughts and remembrances of those who love him. An extraordinary departure from traditional forms of the novel, Jacob’s Room is both an elegiac and experimental tale told in pieces and fragments and a paean to the slaughter and loss of the First World War.

"Jacob, of whom people speak, of whom they think, but who is never shown. And yet that denial of presence on the part of the author makes of him one of the most living presences in world literature.” - New Statesman

Author Bio

Adeline Virginia Woolf was an English writer, considered one of the most important modernist 20th-century authors and also a pioneer in the use of stream of consciousness as a narrative device. Woolf was born into an affluent household in South Kensington, London, the seventh child in a blended family of eight.

The most famous member of the Bloomsbury Group, Virginia Woolf (1882 -1941) was a novelist, essayist and critic. Her writing established her as one of Modernism’s leading exponents, as well as a pioneering feminist. Her most famous works include To the Lighthouse, Orlando and Mrs Dalloway.
King Solomon's Mines
by H. Rider Haggard

Haggard's exciting adventure story set in Africa provides a great read for young readers. The extra material at the back will help them to explore this novel further.

When the adventurer Allan Quartermain is asked by Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good to help them find Sir Henry's missing brother, who was last seen trekking into the remote African interior in search of the fabled King Solomon's Mines, he reluctantly agrees, yet fears that there is little hope of coming back alive.

Following a map drawn in blood, the men cross vast deserts and scale snow-covered mountain peaks, facing fearful dangers and hardships, until they reach Kukuanaland, where they meet their greatest peril yet...

"One of the great page-turners in English literature." - Guardian

Author Bio

Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925) was an English writer of adventure books set in exotic locations, the most famous of which are King Solomon's Mines and She.
The Warden by Anthony Trollope

This new edition of The Warden has been modernized to make it more accessible to the modern reader and contains extra material on the author's life and works.

When the peaceful atmosphere of Barchester is destroyed by a scandal concerning the financial affairs of an almshouse, Septimus Harding, the kindly warden who devotes his life to the care of the establishment's twelve elderly residents, finds himself in conflict with his daughter's suitor, the zealous reformer Dr John Bold, who employs the full might of the press against his prospective father-in-law.

The first in the Chronicles of Barsetshire series, The Warden is both a humorous satire of the Church of England and a poignant insight into the manner in which public matters impact private lives.

"A brilliantly spun story, and its central themes are as urgent as ever." - Michael Symmons Roberts

Author Bio

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was the third son of a barrister. After attending Winchester and Harrow schools, Trollope scraped into the General Post Office, London, in 1834, where he worked for seven years. In 1841, he was transferred to Ireland as a surveyor's clerk, and in 1844 married and settled at Clonmel. After a distinguished career in the GPO, for which he invented the pillar box and travelled extensively abroad, Trollope resigned in 1867, earning his living from writing instead. He led an extensive social life, from which he drew material for his many social and political novels.
Mademoiselle de Scudéri
by E.T.A. Hoffmann, translated by Andrew Brown

This unique edition, translated by critically-acclaimed translator Andrew Brown, is one of the earliest examples of the classic murder mystery and it has been an inspiration for a host of thriller and crime writers.

As Paris is shaken by a gang of murderous thieves, the aristocratic Mademoiselle de Scudéri pens a poem to poke fun at the cowardly lovers who now fear to go out at night to see their mistresses. But when she receives an unexpected visit from a young man, who gives her a box of jewels with a note thanking her for supporting the robbers’ cause, the elderly writer is plunged into a dangerous web of passion, intrigue and murder.

First published in 1819 to great acclaim, and displaying all the author’s trademark wit and ingenuity, E.T.A. Hoffmann’s tale has inspired and delighted writers and readers ever since, and remains a benchmark for all modern crime novels.

Translated by Andrew Brown

"Reading Mademoiselle de Scudéri, one is astonished to discover that Hoffmann, yet again, was a precursor, the true inventor… of so much that makes literature pleasurable." - Gilbert Adair

Author Bio

ANDREW BROWN is an author, a lawyer, and a volunteer police officer who lives in Cape Town, South Africa. He won the Sunday Times Fiction Prize for Coldsleep Lullaby, and his work has also been shortlisted for the Alan Paton Award and the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize (Africa Region). He is married and has three children.
My Life with Boris
by Naina Yeltsin, translated by Sheila Fitzpatrick

Rich with intimate details, full of anecdotes and enriched by 100 photos, My Life with Boris is the chronicle of a life lived at the very heart of twentieth-century history.

In this poignant memoir, Naina Yeltsina, the wife of the first president of Russia, recounts the compelling story of her life, from her earliest childhood memories and the time when she met and became engaged to Boris Yeltsin, her companion of over fifty years, to the birth of her daughters and her experiences as First Lady of Russia.

Always shy of the limelight, and rarely giving interviews when her husband was in office, Naina Yeltsina provides the reader with a glimpse into her personal life, whilst offering at the same time a behind-the-scenes look at the epochal events that unfolded around her, including the first Russian presidential elections, the August 1991 coup and the fall of the USSR. Rich with intimate details and full of anecdotes, My Life with Boris is the chronicle of a life lived at the very heart of twentieth-century history.

Author Bio

Born in Titovka in 1932, Naina Iosifovna Girina married Boris Yeltsin in 1956. They had two daughters, Yelena and Tatyana, and lived together until Boris’s death in 2007. My Life with Boris is Naina’s first book.

AUTHOR’S QUOTE:
"This book is not a historical essay, and I do not claim to create a full picture of what happened. These are not the memoirs of a politician -- I am not attempting to analyse social problems. This is not literary prose -- I wrote in the language that I speak. To be honest, as an author, I have only two virtues: I cannot bear approximation -- I try to be precise even in details; and I am unable to embellish facts."

Sheila Fitzpatrick is an acclaimed translator, whose work includes translating the memoir of Naina Yeltsina, the widow of the first President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin.