



As a Man Grows Older

By Italo Svevo

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As a Man Grows Older By Italo Svevo

Not so long ago Emilio Brentani was a promising young author. Now he is an insurance agent on the fast track to forty. He gains a new lease on life, though, when he falls for the young and gorgeous Angiolina—except that his angel just happens to be an unapologetic cheat. But what begins as a comedy of infatuated misunderstanding ends in tragedy, as Emilio's jealous persistence in his folly—against his friends' and devoted sister's advice, and even his own best knowledge—leads to the loss of the one person who, too late, he realizes he truly loves.

Marked by deep humanity and earthy humor, by psychological insight and an elegant simplicity of style, *As a Man Grows Older* (Senilità, in Italian; the English title was the suggestion of Svevo's great friend and admirer, James Joyce) is a brilliant study of hopeless love and hapless indecision. It is a masterwork of Italian literature, here beautifully rendered into English in Beryl de Zoete's classic translation.-Print ed.

“The poem of our complex modern madness.”—EUGENIO MONTALE

“Svevo has the capacity—so rare as to be almost unknown in the English novel—of handling emotional relationships with a combined tenderness, humour and realism.”—THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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Editorial Review

Review

Svevo has the capacity—so rare as to be almost unknown in the English novel—of handling emotional relationships with a combined tenderness, humor and realism....He writes about characters and situations of universal application.

— *The Times Literary Supplement*

Language Notes

Text: English, Italian (translation)

About the Author

Italo Svevo (1861-1928), whose given name was Ettore Schmitz, was born in Trieste into a Jewish family of Italian and German descent-as his pseudonym reflects. Svevo published two novels in the 1890s, *A Life* and *As a Man Grows Older*, but after they were dismissed by critics and ignored by the public, he abandoned literature and went to work in his father-in-law's paint business. He returned to writing only after the young man whom he had hired to tutor him in English, James Joyce, asked to see his novels and expressed admiration for them. With Joyce's support, he published *The Confessions of Zeno* in 1923 to international acclaim. Svevo had finished a new book (*The Tale of the Good Old Man and of the Lovely Young Girl*) and was at work on another when he was killed in a car crash in 1928.

James Lasdun was born in London and now lives in upstate New York. He has published three books of poetry—*A Jump Start*, *Woman Police Officer in Elevator*, and *Landscape with Chainsaw*—and three collections of short stories, most recently *Besieged* (Selected Stories), of which the title story was made into a film by Bernardo Bertolucci.

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