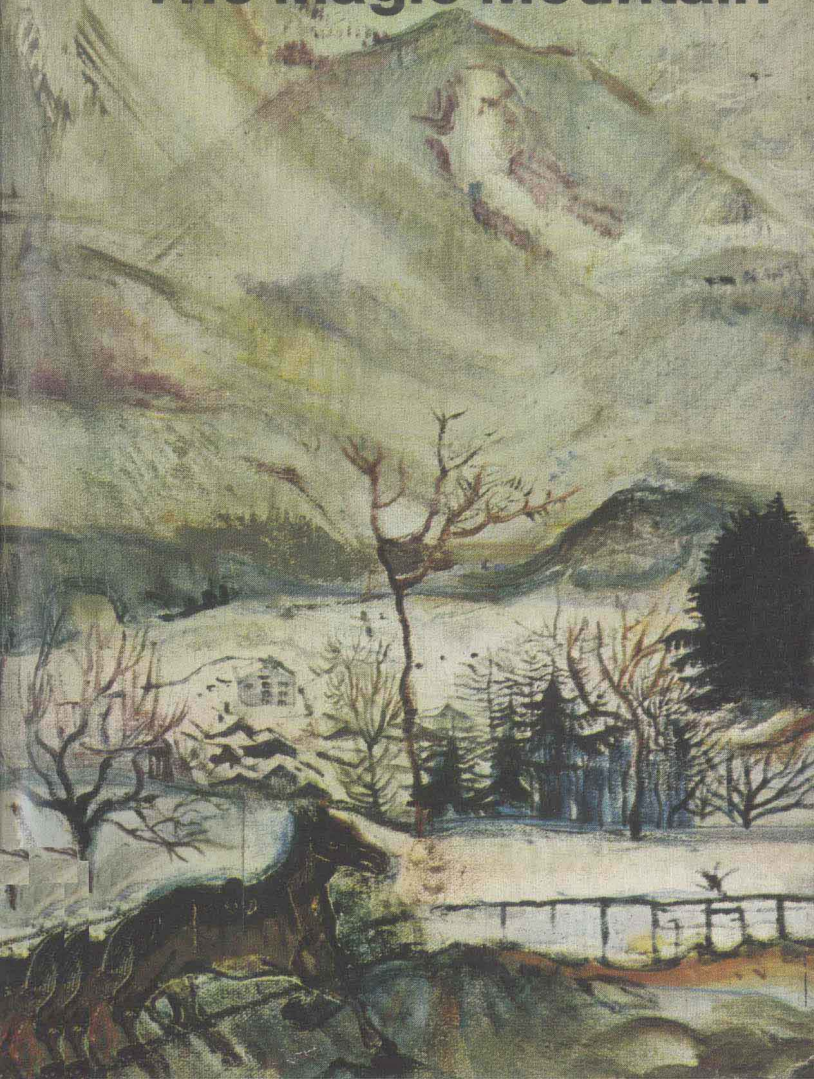


Thomas Mann

The Magic Mountain



THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

THOMAS MANN

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TRANSLATED BY
H. T. LOWE-PORTER



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Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd, 182-190 Wairau Road, Auckland 10, New Zealand

Der Zauberberg first published 1924
This translation first published by Martin Secker 1928
Published in Penguin Books 1960
Reprinted 1962, 1964, 1967, 1969, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1977

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THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

Thomas Mann was born in 1875 in Lübeck of a line of prosperous and influential merchants. His father was head of the ancestral firm and was twice mayor of the free city. Brought up in the company of five brothers and sisters, he completed his education under the drastic discipline of North German schoolmasters, and entered an insurance office in Munich at the age of nineteen.

Secretly he wrote his first tale, *Fallen*, and shortly afterwards left the insurance office to study art and literature at the University in Munich. After spending a year in Rome, he devoted himself exclusively to writing. His major works include *Buddenbrooks* (1901), *Death in Venice* (1911), *The Magic Mountain* (1924), and the tetralogy *Joseph and his Brothers*, the first volume of which was published in 1933. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929.

In 1933 Mann left Germany to live in Switzerland, and then he settled in the United States, living first in Princeton, New Jersey, and later in California, where he wrote *Doctor Faustus* and *The Holy Sinner*. He revisited his native country in 1949 and in 1952 returned to Switzerland where *The Black Swan* (1954) and *Confessions of Felix Krull* (1955) were written. He died in 1955.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The translator wishes to thank, in this place, a number of scholars, authorities in the various special fields entered by *The Magic Mountain*, without whose help the version in all humility here offered to English readers, lame as it is, must have been more lacking still. That they gave so generously is not to be interpreted otherwise than as a tribute to a work of genius. But with all their help, the great difficulty remained: the violet had to be cast into the crucible, the organic work of art to be remoulded in another tongue. Shelley's figure is perhaps not entirely apt here. Yet, since in the creative act word and thought are indivisible, the task was seen to be one before which artists would shrink and logical minds recoil.

But of the author of *The Magic Mountain* it can be said in a special sense that he has looked into the seeds of Time. It was indispensable that we should read his book; intolerable that English readers should be barred from a work whose spirit, whatever its vehicle, is universal. It seemed better that an English version should be done ill than not done at all.

H. T. L.-P.

FOREWORD

THE STORY of Hans Castorp, which we would here set forth, not on his own account, for in him the reader will make acquaintance with a simple-minded though pleasing young man, but for the sake of the story itself, which seems to us highly worth telling — though it must needs be borne in mind, in Hans Castorp's behalf, that it is his story, and not every story happens to everybody — this story, we say, belongs to the long ago; is already, so to speak, covered with historic mould, and unquestionably to be presented in the tense best suited to a narrative out of the depth of the past.

That should be no drawback to a story, but rather the reverse. Since histories must be in the past, then the more past the better, it would seem, for them in their character as histories, and for him, the teller of them, rounding wizard of times gone by. With this story, moreover, it stands as it does to-day with human beings, not least among them writers of tales: it is far older than its years; its age may not be measured by length of days, nor the weight of time on its head reckoned by the rising or setting of suns. In a word, the degree of its antiquity has noways to do with the passage of time — in which statement the author intentionally touches upon the strange and questionable double nature of that riddling element.

But we would not wilfully obscure a plain matter. The exaggerated pastness of our narrative is due to its taking place before the epoch when a certain crisis shattered its way through life and consciousness and left a deep chasm behind. It takes place — or, rather, deliberately to avoid the present tense, it took place, and had taken place — in the long ago, in the old days, the days of the world before the Great War, in the beginning of which so much began that has scarcely yet left off beginning. Yes, it took place before that; yet not so long before. Is not the pastness of the past the profounder, the completer, the more legendary, the more immediately before the present it falls? More than that, our story has, of its own nature, something of the legend about it now and again.

We shall tell it at length, thoroughly, in detail — for when did a narrative seem too long or too short by reason of the actual time or space it took up? We do not fear being called meticulous, inclining as we do to the view that only the exhaustive can be truly interesting.

Not all in a minute, then, will the narrator be finished with the story of our Hans. The seven days of a week will not suffice, no, nor seven months either. Best not too soon make too plain how much mortal time must pass over his head while he sits spun round in his spell. Heaven forbid it should be seven years!

And now we begin.

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THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

CHAPTER ONE

Arrival

AN UNASSUMING young man was travelling, in midsummer, from his native city of Hamburg to Davos-Platz in the Canton of the Grisons, on a three weeks' visit.

From Hamburg to Davos is a long journey — too long, indeed, for so brief a stay. It crosses all sorts of country; goes up hill and down dale, descends from the plateau of Southern Germany to the shore of Lake Constance, over its bounding waves and on across marshes once thought to be bottomless.

At this point the route, which has been so far over trunk-lines, gets cut up. There are stops and formalities. At Rorschach, in Swiss territory, you take train again, but only as far as Landquart, a small Alpine station, where you have to change. Here, after a long and windy wait in a spot devoid of charm, you mount a narrow-gauge train; and as the small but very powerful engine gets under way, there begins the thrilling part of the journey, a steep and steady climb that seems never to come to an end. For the station of Landquart lies at a relatively low altitude, but now the wild and rocky route pushes grimly onward into the Alps themselves.

Hans Castorp — such was the young man's name — sat alone in his little grey-upholstered compartment, with his alligator-skin hand-bag, a present from his uncle and guardian, Consul Tienappel — let us get the introductions over with at once — his travelling-rug, and his winter overcoat swinging on its hook. The window was down, the afternoon grew cool, and he, a tender product of the sheltered life, had turned up the collar of his fashionably cut, silk-lined summer overcoat. Near him on the seat lay a paper-bound volume entitled *Ocean Steamships*; earlier in the journey he had studied it off and on, but now it lay neglected, and the breath of the panting engine, streaming in, defiled its cover with particles of soot.

Two days' travel separated the youth — he was still too young to have thrust his roots down firmly into life — from his own

world, from all that he thought of as his own duties, interests, cares and prospects; far more than he had dreamed it would when he sat in the carriage on the way to the station. Space, rolling and revolving between him and his native heath, possessed and wielded the powers we generally ascribe to time. From hour to hour it worked changes in him, like to those wrought by time, yet in a way even more striking. Space, like time, engenders forgetfulness; but it does so by setting us bodily free from our surroundings and giving us back our primitive, unattached state. Yes, it can even, in the twinkling of an eye, make something like a vagabond of the pedant and Philistine. Time, we say, is Lethe; but change of air is a similar draught, and, if it works less thoroughly, does so more quickly.

Such was the experience of young Hans Castorp. He had not meant to take the journey seriously or commit himself deeply to it; but to get it over quickly, since it had to be made, to return as he had gone, and to take up his life at the point where, for the moment, he had had to lay it down. Only yesterday he had been encompassed in the wonted circle of his thoughts, and entirely taken up by two matters: the examination he had just passed, and his approaching entrance into the firm of Tunder and Wilms, ship-builders, smelters, and machinists. With as much impatience as lay in his temperament to feel, he had discounted the next three weeks; but now it began to seem as though present circumstances required his entire attention, that it would not be at all the thing to take them too lightly.

This being carried upward into regions where he had never before drawn breath, and where he knew that unusual living conditions prevailed, such as could only be described as sparse or scanty — it began to work upon him, to fill him with a certain concern. Home and regular living lay not only far behind, they lay fathoms deep beneath him, and he continued to mount above them. Poised between them and the unknown, he asked himself how he was going to fare. Perhaps it had been ill-advised of him, born as he was a few feet above sea-level, to come immediately to these great heights, without stopping at least a day or so at some point in between. He wished he were at the end of his journey; for once there he could begin to live as he would anywhere else, and not be reminded by this continual climbing of the incongruous situation he found himself in. He looked out. The train wound in curves along the narrow pass; he could see the front carriages and the labouring engine vomiting great masses of brown, black, and greenish smoke, that floated away. Water roared in the abysses on the right; on the

left, among rocks, dark fir-trees aspired toward a stone-grey sky. The train passed through pitch-black tunnels, and when daylight came again it showed wide chasms, with villages nestled in their depths. Then the pass closed in again; they wound along narrow defiles, with traces of snow in chinks and crannies. There were halts at wretched little shanties of stations; also at more important ones, which the train left in the opposite direction, making one lose the points of the compass. A magnificent succession of vistas opened before the awed eye, of the solemn, phantasmagorical world of towering peaks, into which their route wove and wormed itself: vistas that appeared and disappeared with each new winding of the path. Hans Castorp reflected that they must have got above the zone of shade-trees, also probably of song-birds; whereupon he felt such a sense of the impoverishment of life as gave him a slight attack of giddiness and nausea and made him put his hand over his eyes for a few seconds. It passed. He perceived that they had stopped climbing. The top of the col was reached; the train rolled smoothly along the level valley floor.

It was about eight o'clock, and still daylight. A lake was visible in the distant landscape, its waters grey, its shores covered with black fir-forests that climbed the surrounding heights, thinned out, and gave place to bare, mist-wreathed rock. They stopped at a small station. Hans Castorp heard the name called out: it was "Davos-Dorf." Soon he would be at his journey's end. And suddenly, close to him, he heard a voice, the comfortable Hamburg voice of his cousin, Joachim Ziemssen, saying: "Hullo, there you are! Here's where you get out!" and peering through the window saw his cousin himself, standing below on the platform, in a brown ulster, bare-headed, and looking more robust than ever in his life before. He laughed and said again: "Come along out, it's all right!"

"But I'm not there yet!" said Hans Castorp, taken aback, and still seated.

"Oh, yes, you are. This is the village. It is nearer to the sanatorium from here. I have a carriage. Just give us your things."

And laughing, confused, in the excitement of arrival and meeting, Hans Castorp reached bag, overcoat, the roll with stick and umbrella, and finally *Ocean Steamships* out of the window. Then he ran down the narrow corridor and sprang out upon the platform to greet his cousin properly. The meeting took place without exuberance, as between people of traditional coolness and reserve. Strange to say, the cousins had always avoided calling each other by their first names, simply because they were afraid of

showing too much feeling. And, as they could not well address each other by their last names, they confined themselves, by established custom, to the thou.

A man in livery with a braided cap looked on while they shook hands, quickly, not without embarrassment, young Ziemssen in military position, heels together. Then he came forward to ask for Hans Castorp's luggage ticket; he was the concierge of the International Sanatorium Berghof, and would fetch the guest's large trunk from the other station while the gentlemen drove directly up to supper. This man limped noticeably; and so, curiously enough, the first thing Hans Castorp said to his cousin was: "Is that a war veteran? What makes him limp like that?"

"War veteran! No fear!" said Joachim, with some bitterness. "He's got it in his knee — or, rather, he had it — the knee-pan has been removed."

Hans Castorp bethought himself hastily.

"So that's it?" he said, and as he walked on turned his head and gave a quick glance back. "But you can't make me believe you've still got anything like that the matter with you! Why, you look as if you had just come from manœuvres!" And he looked sidelong at his cousin.

Joachim was taller and broader than he, a picture of youthful vigour, and made for a uniform. He was of the very dark type which his blond-peopled country not seldom produces, and his already nut-brown skin was tanned almost to bronze. With his large, black eyes and small, dark moustache over the full, well-shaped mouth, he would have been distinctly handsome if his ears had not stood out. Up to a certain period they had been his only trouble in life. Now, however, he had others.

Hans Castorp went on: "You're coming back down with me, aren't you? I see no reason why not."

"Back down with you?" asked his cousin, and turned his large eyes full upon him. They had always been gentle, but in these five months they had taken on a tired, almost sad expression. "When?"

"Why, in three weeks."

"Oh, yes, you are already on the way back home, in your thoughts," answered Joachim. "Wait a bit. You've only just come. Three weeks are nothing at all, to us up here — they look like a lot of time to you, because you are only up here on a visit, and three weeks is all you have. Get acclimatized first — it isn't so easy, you'll see. And the climate isn't the only queer thing about us. You're going to see some things you've never dreamed of — just

wait. About me — it isn't such smooth sailing as you think, you with your 'going home in three weeks.' That's the class of ideas you have down below. Yes, I am brown, I know, but it is mostly snow-burning. It doesn't mean much, as Behrens always says; he told me at the last regular examination it would take another half year, pretty certainly."

"Half a year? Are you crazy?" shouted Hans Castorp. They had climbed into the yellow cabriolet that stood in the stone-paved square in front of the shed-like station, and as the pair of brown horses started up, he flounced indignantly on the hard cushions. "Half a year! You've been up here half a year already! Who's got so much time to spend —"

"Oh, time —!" said Joachim, and nodded repeatedly, straight in front of him, paying his cousin's honest indignation no heed. "They make pretty free with a human being's idea of time, up here. You wouldn't believe it. Three weeks are just like a day to them. You'll learn all about it," he said, and added: "One's ideas get changed."

Hans Castorp regarded him earnestly as they drove. "But seems to me you've made a splendid recovery," he said, shaking his head.

"You really think so, don't you?" answered Joachim; "I think I have too." He drew himself up straighter against the cushions, but immediately relaxed again. "Yes, I am better," he explained, "but I am not cured yet. In the left lobe, where there were rales, it only sounds harsh now, and that is not so bad; but lower down it is still *very* harsh, and there are rhonchi in the second intercostal space."

"How learned you've got," said Hans Castorp.

"Fine sort of learning! God knows I wish I'd had it sweated out of my system in the service," responded Joachim. "But I still have sputum," he said, with a shoulder-shrug that was somehow indifferent and vehement both at once, and became him but ill. He half pulled out and showed to his cousin something he carried in the side pocket of his overcoat, next to Hans Castorp. It was a flat, curving bottle of bluish glass, with a metal cap.

"Most of us up here carry it," he said, shoving it back. "It even has a nickname; they make quite a joke of it. You are looking at the landscape?"

Hans Castorp was. "Magnificent!" he said.

"Think so?" asked Joachim.

They had driven for a space straight up the axis of the valley, along an irregularly built street that followed the line of the railway; then, turning to the left, they crossed the narrow tracks and