

World of Wonders



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著者:Robertson Davies

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This is the third novel in Davies's major work, The Deptford Trilogy. While it is not necessary to read the novels in this trilogy in sequence, doing so makes each story more complete and interesting, and clarifies the relationships between some of the characters. This particular novel tells the life story of the unfortunate boy introduced in The Fifth Business, who was spirited away from his Canadian home by one of the members of a traveling side show, the Wanless World of Wonders.

Magnus Eisengrim, now a master magician, describes his life as an innocent child who was introduced not only to rape, but to the sad world of the "freak" show, as he traveled throughout his formative years with these unfortunate people. The main good which came out of this was that he developed empathy for the members of the side show, and that he taught himself the skills of magic and became an accomplished magician. A turning point in his life occurred when he got away from this terrible environment and became an understudy for a famous English actor. In emulating this man, he moved on to become a marvelous illusionist.

The last part of the story is concerned with Magnus's role in making a film about the life of Robert-Houdin; he finally tells his life story to the group of people with whom he is working. In this group there is a friend from his early life--a man who treated him badly when he was the actor's understudy and who doesn't now recognize him--and the director who is trying to help the group work together. Another important character is a woman with a physical disability which had so altered her appearance that it had warped her world view; Magnus helps her come to grips with her situation. The descriptions of the interactions among these unusual characters are Robertson Davies at his best.

作者介绍:

Robertson Davies is a moralist writer who looks at human behavior with a clear eye and describes what he sees. He is compassionate but strives not to be deluded. He frequently asks the question: how responsible are people for their actions?

This particular story is filled with body images which seem to characterize the personalities of the persons described. It was very useful as a novel to be studied during a course entitled "The Body Image in Medicine and the Arts".

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