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Zorba the Greek (English Edition)



Par Nikos Kazantzakis
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Par Nikos Kazantzakis : Zorba the Greek (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Zorba the Greek (English Edition):

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe classic novel, international sensation, and inspiration for the film starring Anthony Quinn explores the struggle between the aesthetic and the rational, the inner life and the life of the mind.The classic novel Zorba the Greek is the story of two men, their incredible friendship, and the importance of living life to the fullest. Zorba, a Greek working man, is a larger-than-life character, energetic and unpredictable. He accompanies the unnamed narrator to Crete to work in the narrators lignite mine, and the pair develops a singular relationship. The two men couldnt be further apart: The narrator is cerebral, modest, and reserved; Zorba is unfettered, spirited, and beyond the reins of civility. Over the course of their journey, he becomes the narrators greatest friend and inspiration and helps him to appreciate the joy of living. Zorba

has been acclaimed as one of the most remarkable figures in literature; he is a character in the great tradition of Sinbad the Sailor, Falstaff, and Sancho Panza. He responds to all that life offers him with passion, whether hes supervising laborers at a mine, confronting mad monks in a mountain monastery, embellishing the tales of his past adventures, or making love. Zorba the Greek explores the beauty and pain of existence, inviting readers to reevaluate the most important aspects of their lives and live to the fullest.

Extrait Zorba the Greek

PROLOGUE I often wished to write *The Saints Life of Alexis Zorba*, a laborer of advanced age whom I exceedingly loved. The great benefactors in my life have been journeys and dreams. Very few people, dead or alive, have helped me in my struggles; yet if I wished to single out those individuals who did engrave their traces most deeply upon my soul, I would presumably designate these four: Homer, Bergson, Nietzsche, and Zorba. The first was a serene, all-bright eye for me like the suns disk, illuminating everything with redemptive brightness. Bergson released me from insoluble philosophical anguishes that had tormented my early youth. Nietzsche enriched me with new anguishes and showed me how to transform misfortune, sorrow, and uncertainty into pride. Zorba taught me to love life and not to fear death. If today I were to choose a spiritual guide from the whole wide world a guru, as they say in India, a venerable father as the monks say at Mount Athos the one I would choose without fail would be Zorba. He possessed precisely what a pen pusher needs for deliverance: the primitive glance that snatches nourishment lovingly from on high; the creative artlessness, renewed at each daybreak, that views everything unceasingly as though for the first time, bequeathing virginity to the everlastingly quotidian elements of wind, sea, fire, women, and bread; the sureness of hand, the freshness of heart, the gallant stalwarts ability to poke fun at his own soul for seeming to harbor a power higher than the soul; finally, that wild, throaty laugh welling up from a source deeper than a mans inner depths, a laugh that erupted redemptively at crucial moments from Zorbas elderly chest, exploding with sufficient power to demolish (and did demolish) all the barricades morality, religion, nationalism erected around themselves by wretched, lily-livered humans to let them hobble securely through their diminished mini-lives. I can hardly endure my rage and sorrow when I consider what nourishment my famished soul was fed by books and teachers for so many years, and then compare this to the leonine brainpower that Zorba fed me for just a few months. My life was fated to be ruined because I encountered this venerable father too late, when the portion of my inner self still capable of being saved was minimal. The great alteration the definitive change of front, the conflagration and renewal did not take place. The time was already too late. Thus Zorba, instead of becoming an exalted, authoritative model for my life, was sadly debased into a literary subject causing me to fill numerous sheets of paper with splotches! The doleful privilege of turning life into art leads many flesh-eating souls to disaster because ardent passion departs the breast when it finds an outlet of this sort. In such a case the soul experiences relief. It no longer fumes with rage, no longer needs to fight breast to breast, to intervene directly in life or action. Instead, it is pleased to admire its ardent passion as it ascends like smoke rings in the breeze and fades away. The soul not only takes pleasure in this relief; it also grows proud, for it believes that it is accomplishing something grand by supposedly eternalizing the irreplaceable temporary moment, which alone possesses flesh and blood in limitless time. This is how Zorba, so full of flesh and bone, degenerated in my hands into paper and ink.

Years ago, the Zorba story, without my wishing it to do so, and, indeed, wishing the opposite, began to crystallize within me. The mystic rites began deep inside me, a musical turbulence at first, a feverish delight and malaise, as though my organism, a foreign body having entered the bloodstream, were struggling to control and annihilate this story through assimilation. Words then began to speed around the nucleus, to encircle and nourish it like an embryo. Blurry memories became clear, sunken joys and sorrows rose to the surface, life was transposed into finer air and Zorba became a tall tale. I still lacked a clear notion of what form to give this tall Zorbatic tale: novel, poem, complex make-believe narrative from the *Thousand and One Nights*, or something matter-of-fact, dry, reproducing the conversations we had on the Cretan shoreline where we lived and were supposedly digging to find lignite. Both of us well knew that this practical purpose was just a smokescreen for the eyes of outside observers. Neither of us could wait for the sun to set, the workmen to leave, the two of us to stretch out on the sand, eat our delicious village food, drink our dry Cretan wine, and begin to talk. Most of the time I said nothing. What could an intellectual say to an ogre? I would listen to him speak about his village near Mount Olympus, about snow, wolves, terrorists during the Balkan Wars, Hagia Sophia, lignite, magnesite, women, God, patriotism, death. Then, suddenly, when he was choking and no longer able to find room for words, he would leap up onto the beachs rough shingle and start to dance. An old man, erect and bony, his head thrown back, his fully round eyes as tiny as a birds, he would dance and shriek, stamping his callused soles on the shoreline, his face spattered with seawater. If I

had listened to his voice not his voice, his outcry my life would have become worthwhile. I would have experienced with blood, flesh, and bone what I now ponder like a hashish smoker and effectuate with paper and ink. But I did not dare. I would see Zorba dancing at midnight with horse-like whinnies, bellowing at me to slip out of my comfortable shell of prudent habit and to flee with him on great journeys. But I remained motionless, shuddering. Many times in my life I have been ashamed because I caught my soul not daring to do what supreme folly life's essence was calling me to do. But never did I feel so ashamed of my soul as I did when in the presence of Zorba. *** One morning we parted at daybreak. I headed abroad once again, suffering from the incurable Faustian disease of learning. He went north and settled near Skopia, in Serbia, where he apparently unearthed a rich vein of magnesite in a mountainside. He hooked a few investors, purchased tools, recruited workmen, and began once again to open up galleries in the earth. He dynamited boulders, constructed roads, brought water, built a house, and married the lusty old codger! married Lyuba, a frisky, good-looking widow, fathering a child with her. One day when I was in Berlin I received a telegram: FOUND MOST BEAUTIFUL GREEN STONE. COME IMMEDIATELY. ZORBA. Germany was then suffering from intense famine. The Papiermark had fallen so low that you carried sackfuls with millions in them to make a small purchase, and when you went to a restaurant to eat you opened your napkin, which was overfilled with paper currency, and emptied it onto the table in order to pay. The day came when ten billion Papiermarks were required for a postage stamp. Hunger, cold, frayed jackets, tattered shoe soles, red German cheeks turned yellow. An autumn wind blew, and people fell in the streets like leaves. Infants were given a bit of rubber to gnaw as a ruse so they wouldn't cry. Police patrolled the bridges over the river to prevent mothers from jumping in at night to save themselves by drowning. It was winter, snowing. A German professor of Chinese in the room next to mine, in order to keep warm, clasped his long brush and attempted to copy some ancient Chinese poem or a Confucian maxim using the incommensurable method of the Far East, by which the tip of the brush, the scholar's delicately elevated elbow, and his heart were required to form a triangle. After a few moments, he used to tell me with pleasure, sweat runs from my armpits and thus I feel warm. It was during those bitter-cold days that I received Zorba's telegram. At first I was annoyed. Millions of people were humiliated and forced to their knees because they lacked a slice of bread to support their spirits and bones, and here comes a telegram telling me to travel a thousand miles to go see a beautiful green stone! Curses on beauty! I said to myself. It is heartless, unable to sympathize with human suffering. But suddenly I was frightened. My annoyance had already dissipated. I felt with horror that Zorba's inhumane outcry was answering another inhumane outcry within myself. A savage vulture in me spread its wings, ready for departure. But I did not depart. Once again, I did not dare. I did not board a train, did not obey the divinely ferocious internal outcry, did not perform a gallant, irrational deed. Following the sensible, frigid, human voice of reason, I took up my pen, wrote to Zorba, and explained. He answered me: Forgive me for saying this, Boss, but you are a pen pusher. You poor creep, you had the chance of a lifetime to see a beautiful green stone, and you didn't see it. By God, sometimes when I have no work to do, I sit down and ask myself, Is there a hell or isn't there? But yesterday, when I received your letter, I said to myself, There sure is a hell for certain pen pushers! *** Memories have begun to flow. They are jostling each other, hurrying. The time has come to put things in order, to start *The Saints Life of Alexis Zorba* from the beginning. Even the most insignificant events related to him gleam clearly, preciously, in my mind at this moment, darting swiftly like multicolored fish in summer's diaphanous seawater. Nothing of his has been lost to me; everything Zorba touched seems to have become immortal. Yet these days I am suddenly worried. It has been two years since I received a letter from him. He is more than seventy years old; he may be in danger. Yes, he most certainly must be in danger; otherwise I cannot explain why I am governed by an abrupt need to reassemble whatever was his: to remember what he said to me and what he did, immobilizing everything on paper to prevent its disappearance as though I wished to exorcise death, his death. I fear that what I am writing is not a book; it is a memorial. Looking at it now, I realize that it contains all the characteristics of a memorial. The tray with its boiled wheat, the kollyva, is embellished with a thick sprinkling of sugar and the name ALEXIS ZORBA written on top with cinnamon and almonds. I look at this name and all at once the indigo-blue sea of Crete rises up, flooding my mind. Words, laughter, dancing, carousing, concerns, muted conversations at twilight, full, round eyes focused upon me forever with tender disdain as though welcoming me at every moment and also bidding me farewell at every moment. Just as, when we view a decorated memorial tray, disparate memories hang like bunched-up bats in the cave of our heart, so Zorba's ghost, without my desiring this, was complicated from the very start by another much-loved shade, Stassinakis, and behind it unexpectedly by still another, that of a fallen woman, Madame Hortense,

kissed a thousand times, her hair dyed a thousand times, whom Zorba and I had met on a sandy Cretan beach by the Libyan Sea. The human heart must surely be a grave that is closed and filled with blood. If it opens, all the inconsolable specters that continually multiply around us, darkening the air, run to it in order to drink, quench their thirst, and return to life. They run to drink our heart blood, knowing that no other resurrection exists. In front of all the rest of them today runs Zorba with gigantic strides, pushing aside the other specters because he knows that the memorial taking place on this day is his own. Let us therefore grant him our blood so that he may be revived. Let us do our best to allow this amazing guzzler, swiller, workhorse, womanizer, and scalawag to remain alive just a little longer the broadest soul, surest body, freest outcry that I ever knew.

Presentation de l'auteur

The classic novel, international sensation, and inspiration for the film starring Anthony Quinn explores the struggle between the aesthetic and the rational, the inner life and the life of the mind. The classic novel *Zorba the Greek* is the story of two men, their incredible friendship, and the importance of living life to the fullest. Zorba, a Greek working man, is a larger-than-life character, energetic and unpredictable. He accompanies the unnamed narrator to Crete to work in the narrator's lignite mine, and the pair develops a singular relationship. The two men couldn't be further apart: The narrator is cerebral, modest, and reserved; Zorba is unfettered, spirited, and beyond the reins of civility. Over the course of their journey, he becomes the narrator's greatest friend and inspiration and helps him to appreciate the joy of living. Zorba has been acclaimed as one of the most remarkable figures in literature; he is a character in the great tradition of Sinbad the Sailor, Falstaff, and Sancho Panza. He responds to all that life offers him with passion, whether he's supervising laborers at a mine, confronting mad monks in a mountain monastery, embellishing the tales of his past adventures, or making love. *Zorba the Greek* explores the beauty and pain of existence, inviting readers to reevaluate the most important aspects of their lives and live to the fullest.