



Extinction: A Novel (Vintage International)

Thomas Bernhard

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From the late Thomas Bernhard, arguably Austria's most influential novelist of the postwar period, and one of the greatest artists in all twentieth-century literature in the German language, his magnum opus.

Extinction, Bernhard's last work of fiction, takes the form of the autobiographical testimony of Franz-Josef Murau, the intellectual black sheep of a powerful Austrian land-owning family. Murau lives in Rome in self-imposed exile from his family, surrounded by a coterie of artistic and intellectual friends. On returning from his sister's wedding to the "wine-cork manufacturer" on the family estate of Wolfsegg, having resolved never to go home again, Murau receives a telegram informing him of the death of his parents and brother in a car crash. Not only must he now go back, he must do so as the master of Wolfsegg. And he must decide its fate.

Divided into two halves, Extinction explores Murau's rush of memories of Wolfsegg as he stands at his Roman window considering the fateful telegram, in counterpoint to his return to Wolfsegg and the preparations for the funeral itself.

Written in the seamless style for which Bernhard became famous, Extinction is the ultimate proof of his extraordinary literary genius. It is his summing-up against Austria's treacherous past and -- in unprecedented fashion -- a revelation of his own incredibly complex personality, of his relationship with the world in which he lived, and the one he left behind.

A literary event of the first magnitude.

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