



The Pritchett Century: A Selection of the Best by V. S. Pritchett (Modern Library Paperbacks)

V.S. Pritchett

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"If, as they say, I am a Man of Letters, I come, like my fellows, at the tail-end of a long and once esteemed tradition in English and American writing. We have no captive audience. We do not teach. We write to be readable and to engage the interest of what Virginia Woolf called 'the common reader.'"

In a life that spanned almost the entire course of the twentieth century--he was born in 1900 and died in 1997--Sir Victor Pritchett mastered nearly every form of literature: the novel, short fiction, travel writing, biography, criticism, and memoir. Now, Sir Victor's son Oliver has selected representative samples to illustrate the tremendous scope of his father's brilliance. Included in this volume are sections of Pritchett's memoirs, *A Cab at the Door* and *Midnight Oil*; his reflections on turning eighty; and an account of a visit to the Appalachians written in 1925. There are also portraits of Dublin, New York, the Amazon, and Spain; selections from the novels *Dead Man Leading* and *Mr. Beluncle*; thirteen complete short stories; excerpts from biographies of Turgenev and Chekhov; and critical pieces on Twain, Scott, Dickens, Eliot, Henry James, Tolstoy, Saul Bellow, Salman Rushdie, and others.

"Pritchett has lived as a man of letters must, by his pen, and he has done it with a freshness of interest and an infectious curiosity that have never waned," observed novelist Margaret Drabble. Taken together with Oliver Pritchett's appreciation of his father, and John Bayley's "In Memoriam," *The Pritchett Century* stands as the most comprehensive collection of Sir Victor's work available in one volume.

The Modern Library has played a significant role in American cultural life for the better part of a century. The series was founded in 1917 by the publishers Boni and Liveright and eight years later acquired by Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer. It provided the foundation for their next publishing venture, Random House. The Modern Library has been a staple of the American book trade, providing readers with affordable hard-bound editions of important works of literature and thought. For the Modern Library's seventy-fifth anniversary, Random House redesigned the series, restoring as its emblem the running torchbearer created by Lucian Bernhard in 1925 and refurbishing jackets, bindings, and type, as well as inaugurating a new program of selecting titles. The Modern Library continues to provide the world's best books, at the best prices.

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Robert Tanaka:

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