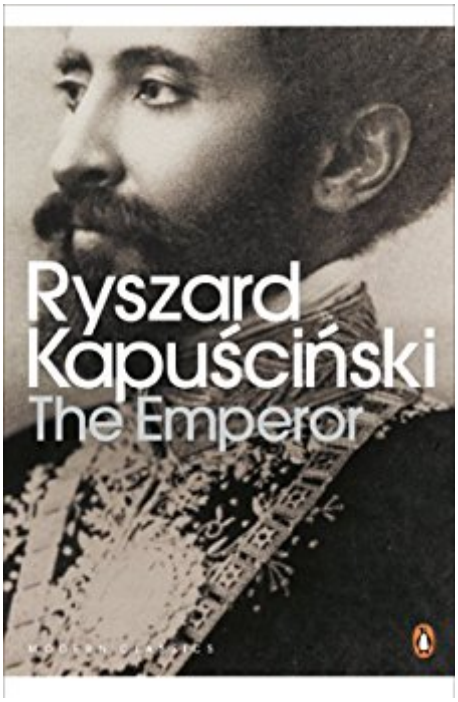
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The Emperor (Penguin Modern Classics)



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Synopsis

After the deposition of Haile Selassie in 1974, which ended the ancient rule of the Abyssinian monarchy, Ryszard Kapuscinski travelled to Ethiopia and sought out surviving courtiers to tell their stories. Here, their eloquent and ironic voices depict the lavish, corrupt world they had known - from the rituals, hierarchies and intrigues at court to the vagaries of a ruler who maintained absolute power over his impoverished people. They describe his inexorable downfall as the Ethiopian military approach, strange omens appear in the sky and courtiers vanish, until only the Emperor and his valet remain in the deserted palace, awaiting their fate. Dramatic and mesmerising, The Emperor is one of the great works of reportage and a haunting epitaph on the last moments of a dying regime.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Emperor is so powerful that when he elevates someone to a new position, he changes their body language completely:First, the whole figure of a man changes. What had been slender and trim-waisted now starts to become a square silhouette. It is a massive and solemn square: a symbol of the solemnity and weight of power. We can already see that this is not just anybodyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s silhouette, but that of visible dignity and responsibility. A slowing down of movements accompanies this change in the figure. A man who has been singled out by His

Distinguished Majesty will not jump, run, frolic, or cut a caper. No. His step is solemn: he sets his feet firmly on the ground, bending his body slightly forward to show his determination to push through adversity, ordering precisely the movement of his hands so as to avoid nervous disorganized gesticulation. Furthermore, the facial features become solemn, almost stiffened, more worried and closed, but still capable of a momentary change to optimism or approval. (34)The man becomes old, he becomes slow, he becomes massive and solemn as he attempt to stifle his quirks to fit into that stagnant court atmosphere. Power sits heavily on his shoulders. All of these observations become ironic when one realizes, by reading through KapucinskiÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s piece, that in fact the ministers spend most of their time not doing their jobs, but hanging around court just to catch the EmperorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s eye to indicate their ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“unshakable loyaltyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. (50) And that, moreover, the Emperor doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t like his ministers to be good at their jobs, so that he ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“shined by contrastÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. (33)Kapucinski doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t need to write a voluminous tome in order to convey what life was like under the repressive rule of Emperor Haile Selassie. Instead he chooses a few details that stick out in the mind: such as the specific way in which a new ministerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s body posture changes upon his promotion to power. There is something about each of these images that causes the reader to pause and think, and remember them afterwards. Five Stars.

The story of how (somehow) Haile Selassie comes to and maintains power. Another revealing, well documented and personal accounting of another African leader taking charge of his country after colonialism. Kapuscinski is undoubtedly the most reliable journalist of the central Africa experience. A must read.

Great book about the downfall of Selassie’s autocratic regime in Ethiopia on 1974. One can easily find parallels with the way other dictatorships work and try to sustain themselves. The book is mostly made of impressions from people close to the Emperor and the regime. I don’t think it’s Kapuscinski’s best book (maybe ’The Shadow of the Sun’ or ’Travels with Herodotus’ are?) but there is no doubt the reading is worth it.The Kindle edition has some minor typos (mainly split words). Nothing that makes the reading too uncomfortable.

A little confusing the way chapters are laid out with initials. Most of the book is very well done and a good short read with not a lot of insignificant writing to distract the reader. I would recommend for anyone who likes Historical politics and wants a chilling look at an unusual Monocracy

Contains valuable information on palace politics during the era of the last King of Ethiopia

The conceit supporting this book, the voices of people from the emperor's inner circle, works admirably to present the full flavour and quasi madness of Haile Selassie's rule. A very readable format for lots of information.

Well written in a detached manner. Sometimes a bit confusing, however, interesting and one gets a clear picture of HAILE SELASSIE. I would have liked more details of his private life and his family.

Kapuscinski does it again! I have only recently discovered this writer and am reading everything of his I can get my hands on. You will too. He has the superb gift of bringing people and places alive often through small details. When I read his book on Russia I couldn't get some of the images of poverty out of my head. In the Emperor he is more detached and just tells us the impossible-seeming truth of the madness of power. Buy it.

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