

A few weeks ago, strolling with my four daughters in Venice, I was reminded that I had not outgrown that vanity which is so notorious a characteristic of authors.

We had paused to look in the windows of a bookshop on the corner of one of the Campos between St Mark's and the Accademia Bridge, when suddenly Nerissa called to her sisters: she had seen Il Ritorno del Maruaino in the pretty white + green of the admirable Medusa series.

There was an unfamiliar look of surprised respect in their young eyes as they showed me the volume.

I shall always be grateful to Signor Arnaldo Mondadori for this moment of exquisite gratification. I realized then, that thanks to him, I was able to repay, in however meagre a fashion, the immense pleasure and happiness I have received from Italy and Italian culture. Viva Mondadori!

David Garnett

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