



Shifting Sands

Hubert Aquin

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This bilingual edition is the first English translation of Aquin's ground-breaking novella. Alone in exotic Naples, an impassioned François anticipates the arrival of girlfriend Hélène. Uncertainty and impatience warp his waiting into an obsessive mélange of recollection and speculation. His interior monologue threads its way through a disorienting universe of claustrophobic dilapidated hotel rooms, hostile incomprehension in the streets of a foreign city, and a train station where rendezvous cannot occur. Unremitting psychological exploration drives the narrator towards extreme personal apocalypse. In this novella the young Aquin turns away from ordinary narrative toward the signature qualities of his later writing. Frank sexuality, grotesque imagery, and autobiographical context helped to keep this story from being published. Joseph Jones' accompanying essay situates the novella with reference to other works where psychic conditions generate a striking literary representation that seems to operate largely outside of any conscious tradition.

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