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Ciao, Carpaccio!

An infatuation

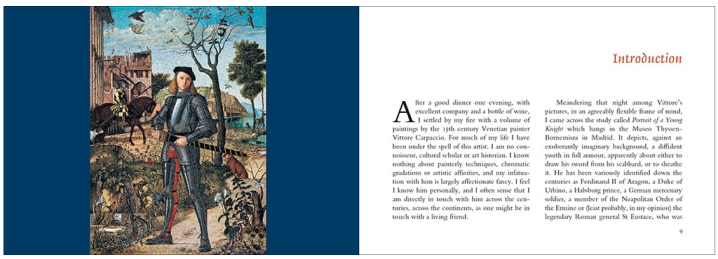
Jan Morris

ISBN	9781843682288
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- Jan Morris on her favourite artist and her favourite city. An enchanting text, richly illustrated

"After a good dinner one evening, with excellent company and a bottle of wine, I settled by my fire with a volume of paintings by the 15th century Venetian painter Vittore Carpaccio. For much of my life I have been under the spell of this artist. I am no connoisseur, cultural scholar or art historian. I know nothing about painterly techniques, chromatic gradations or artistic affinities, and my infatuation with him is largely affectionate fancy. I feel I know him personally, and I often sense that I am directly in touch with him across the centuries, across the continents, as one might be in touch with a living friend…" So starts Jan Morris's latest book, which she has said will also be her last: a genial, witty, and touching journey through the endlessly evocative art of Carpaccio. Saluting the painter whose pictures remain some of the most enchanting ever made of Venice, Jan Morris makes her own last journey to a city she has written about like no other. Richly illustrated with complete paintings and eye-catching details, this book is a fitting swansong by a great writer to her favourite painter.

Jan Morris (1926-2020) was one of the great writers, travellers, journalists and historians of the 20th century, perhaps best known for *Venice*, *Pax Britannica* and *Conundrum.*


Introduction

After a good dinner one evening, with excellent company and a bottle of wine, I settled by my fire with a volume of paintings by the 15th century Venetian painter Vittore Carpaccio. For much of my life I have been under the spell of this artist. I am no connoisseur, cultural scholar or art historian. I know nothing about painterly techniques, chromatic gradations or artistic affinities, and my infatuation with him is largely affectionate fancy. I feel I know him personally, and I often sense that I am directly in touch with him across the centuries, across the continents, as one might be in touch with a living friend.

Meandering that night among Vittore's pictures, in an agreeably flexible frame of mind, I came across the study called *Portrait of a Young Knight* which hangs in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid. It depicts, against an exuberantly imaginary background, a diffident youth in full armour, apparently about either to draw his sword from his scabbard, or to sheathe it. He has been variously identified down the centuries as Ferdinand II of Aragon, a Duke of Urbino, a Habsburg prince, a German mercenary soldier, a member of the Neapolitan Order of the Ermine or (least probably, in my opinion) the legendary Roman general St Eustace, who was

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