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Ida A Novel

By Gertrude Stein



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Ida A Novel By Gertrude Stein

Gertrude Stein wanted *Ida* to be known in two ways: as a novel about a woman in the age of celebrity culture and as a text with its own story to tell. With the publication of this workshop edition of *Ida*, we have the novel exactly as it was published in 1941, and we also have the full record of its creation. Logan Esdale offers informative critical commentary and judiciously selected archival materials to illuminate Stein's experience of authorship from the novel's beginning in early summer 1937, through the various drafts and negotiations with her publisher, to the reviews that greeted the book's publication. Stein's careful and systematic preservation of all *Ida*-related materials for her archive at the Yale University Library was a conscious decision, and an invitation for us to study the complexity of her creative process.

Ida, a character reportedly inspired by Wallis Simpson, the infamous Duchess of Windsor, is someone who becomes well known for being well known. In the novel, a mature Stein explores the significance of being well known to others and the effect that has on where we live and who we love. She offers an engaging picture of Ida's adventures in the world of identity, as well as a fascinating reflection on her own career as a famous personality.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Esdale's innovative approach results in an enriching contribution to Stein scholarship. [...] Highly recommended." – Linda Simon, *Choice*

"Stein constructs a cubist portrait or skewed biography of Ida [and her] contradictory desires—wanting a home, needing to escape; wanting to be known and not. [...] [T]here's a bounty of tension and release [and] [r]elease from textual and narrative tension comes, in part, through Stein's remarkable voice. [...] The editor, Logan Esdale, has written an excellent introduction (and notes throughout) containing necessary biographical and textual information." — Lynne Tillman, *The New York Times Book Review*

"The strangest book I read [when I was young] was *Ida*, by Gertrude Stein, which my mom gave to me without much fanfare. This must have been when I was in high school. It's an odd book, with a telescoping narrator and that new-brain prose of Stein's. My first encounter with very simple sentences looted of sense. I loved it." — Ben Marcus, weirdfictionreview.com

From the Back Cover

"Step by difficult step Logan Esdale slowly entered Stein's domain where she alone had made decisions working on *Ida*, composing her novel and figuring out what to do with *Ida* and how. Esdale's book now becomes a handbook, a new approach to Stein scholarship, and authorship, based on Stein's own archive. He wanted to discover for himself and to show us how she worked as she did." -- Ulla Dydo, author of *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises, 1923-1934*

"For those brave souls who undertake to read and teach that strangest of short novels in British and American literature, Gertrude Stein's *Ida*, Logan Esdale's edition is the indispensable text. It is a major contribution to the scholarship and the interpretation of Gertrude Stein's literary art. Esdale brilliantly sets forth the history and the world of *Ida*, its universe of discourse. If only I'd had Esdale's text when I was supposing what *Ida* said." -- Neil Schmitz, author of *Of Huck and Alice: Humorous Writing in American Literature*

About the Author

Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) was born in Allegheny, PA, of German-Jewish immigrants. She moved to Paris in 1903 and lived in France for the rest of her life. She published *Ida A Novel* in 1941, eight years after she became famous for her best-selling *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. **Logan Esdale** teaches at California State University, Long Beach.

Users Review

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