



THE THISTLES OF THE BARAGAN

Panait Istrati

Translated from the French by Jacques Le Clercq



- Istrati is highly ranked along with classics including Gorky, London, and Steinbeck.
- A powerful, lyrical portrayal of Romanian peasants, dedicated to the victims of the Uprising of 1907 against feudal boyars.
- Vivid descriptions of nature, deeply rooted in Romanian culture and geography.
- Both an intense coming-of-age story and a compelling piece of Romanian literature with global themes of injustice and survival.
- Celebrates all kind of human values and reinforces the faith in humanity.

Panait Istrati, ranked along with Maxim Gorky, Orhan Kemal, Jack London, and John Steinbeck, meets English readers once again with his modern classic.

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*“Where are we going, Yonel?”
“Into the world, Mataké, with the thistles at our heels!”*

The Thistles of the Baragan is the tragic but intensely vibrant story of Mataké and his lust for life, despite all its sharp edges. Leaving his pure heart behind with his mother, this young boy joins his father on a journey in pursuit of a better life for the family. We witness, through Mataké’s voice and eyes, their trials and tribulations, scenes that hit too close to home—of injustice, ruthlessness, and a peasantry caught in the grasp of a poverty so absolute that even the thought of a single bite from a stale bread drives them to violence. Nevertheless, they chase the thistles with childish glee. In the world Istrati paints for them with all his poeticism and descriptive might, the real sorrow lies in being left behind while life flows.

A true ode to humanity and resilience, *The Thistles of the Baragan* brings the reader face to face with the spiked beauty that is living—a beauty that never simply arrives to those who just remain, waiting.

About the Author

Panait Istrati (1884-1935) was born in Brăila. He began to work at a very young age. He learned French on his own and met Romain Rolland, who helped him get his first work *Kyra Kyralina* published in 1924. A significant part of Istrati’s life was spent travelling. He made long trips to many countries. His novels, *My Departures* and *Mediterranean* are all products of these travels. Istrati’s masterpiece *The Thistles of the Baragan* was originally published in 1928, and has become a symbol of his own faith to the great humanity since then.

About the Translator

Jacques Le Clercq (1898-1972) was a professor of French literature and Romance languages at Queens College and Columbia University, and wrote poetry under the pen name of Paul Tanaquil. He translated many French classics into English, including Rabelais, Dumas, Stendhal and Balzac.



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