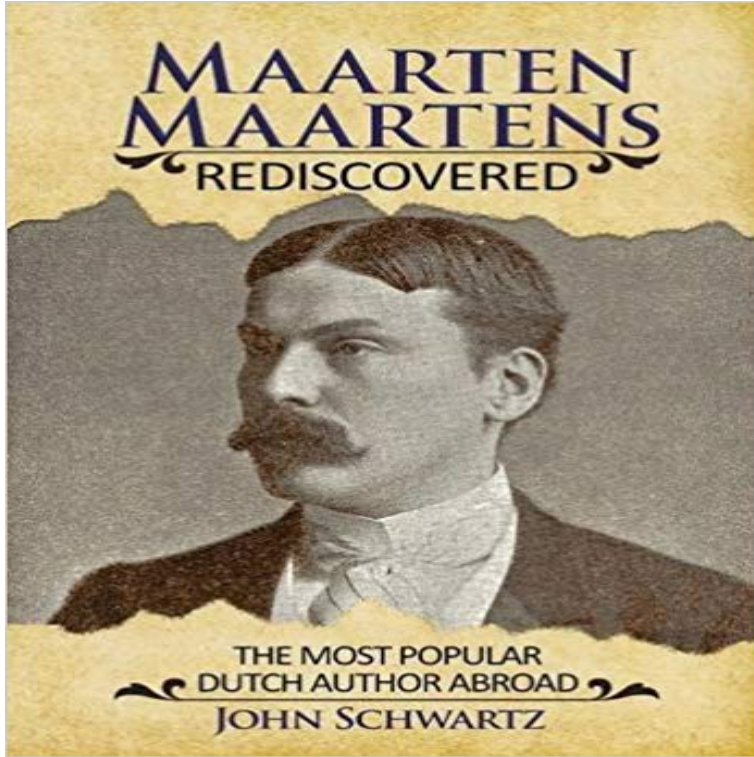


Maarten Maartens: Rediscovered



Maarten Maartens (1858-1915), the pseudonym of Dutch author Jozua Marius Willem van der Poorten Schwartz, who wrote directly in English, received honorary degrees for his work from Aberdeen University in 1905 and Western Pennsylvania University-now Pitt University-in 1907. President Theodore Roosevelt received him and his daughter Ada at the White House for a private discussion. William Sharp, a 19th-century British poet, critic and novelist, and a contemporary of Maarten Maartens, writes in 1896, There are few authors of the day more widely popular with the English-reading public all over the world than the now celebrated Anglo-Dutch romancist, Maarten Maartens. It is interesting to note that the testimony of many of the leading librarians, both in America and Great-Britain, is to the effect that few if any novels are in such steady demand throughout the year as those of the able writer just named... Kirkus Reviews says in their Magazine of September 1, 2015: ...After a short overview of Maartens life and career, Schwartz grants a chapter each to Maartens commercially published novels. Each includes a few notes on the novels publishing history, its reception, its principal characters, a summary of the story's events, a brief note on its themes, and a selection of choice passages. The thorough summaries make up a majority of the text, averaging 25 pages each, and they'll give readers a sense of Maartens talent and craft. Several of them, including those for *The Sin of Joost Avelingh* (1889) and *Gods Fool* (1892), may make readers want to seek out the original novels. As a means of stirring more interest in the author, the book succeeds, although anyone planning on reading the novels perhaps shouldn't read too far into the summaries. Readers may wonder why Schwartz hasn't simply republished the novels themselves, as they're surely now in the public domain.

Even so, there's something wonderfully Borges-ian about reading summarizations of unread novels of a forgotten writer. One hopes that Maartens will return to print in the near future. An odd but alluring retelling of the works of an obscure author.

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