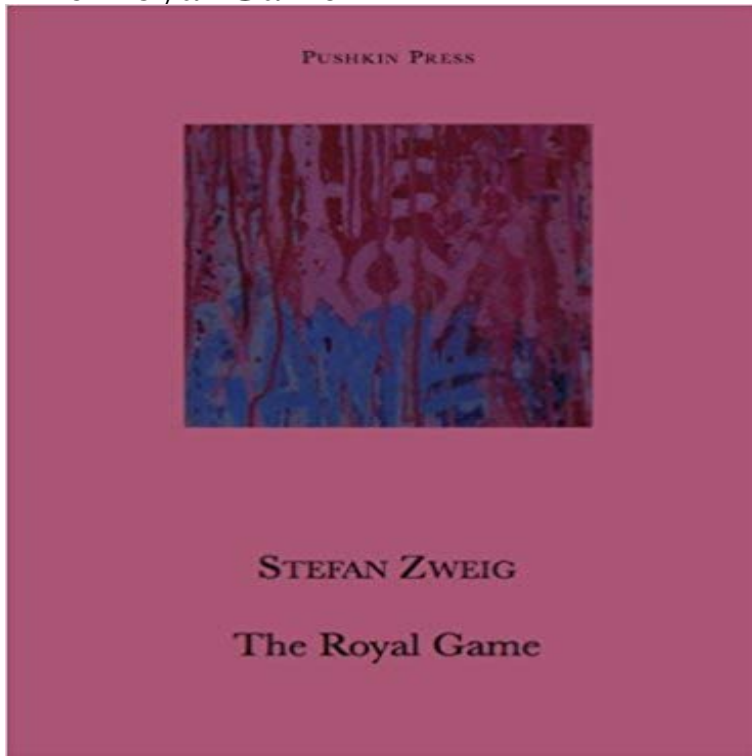


# The Royal Game



A chess game on a transatlantic liner is the starting point for this heartstoppingly intense study of obsession. On a Cruise ship bound for Buenos Aires, a tantalising encounter takes place between the reigning world chess champion and an unknown passenger. The stranger's diffident manner masks his extraordinary ability to challenge the Grand Master in a game of chess; it also conceals his dark and damaged past, the horror of which emerges as the game unfolds. Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) was born in Vienna, into a wealthy Austrian-Jewish family. He studied in Berlin and Vienna and was first known as a poet and translator, then as a biographer. Zweig travelled widely, living in Salzburg between the wars, and was an international bestseller with a string of hugely popular novellas including Letter from an Unknown Woman, Amok and Fear. In 1934, with the rise of Nazism, he moved to London, where he wrote his only novel Beware of Pity. He later moved on to Bath, taking British citizenship after the outbreak of the Second World War. With the fall of France in 1940 Zweig left Britain for New York, before settling in Brazil, where in 1942 he and his wife were found dead in an apparent double suicide. Much of his work is available from Pushkin Press.

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