



Egmont

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

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Egmont is a play by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, which he completed in 1788. Its dramaturgical structure, like that of his earlier 'Storm and Stress' play *Gotz von Berlichingen* (1773), is heavily influenced by Shakespearean tragedy. In contrast to the earlier work, the portrait in *Egmont* of the downfall of a man who trusts in the goodness of those around him appears to mark a shift away from 'Storm and Stress' values. In *Egmont*, Goethe relates the fight of Count Egmont (1522-1568) against the despotic Duke of Alba. Egmont is a famous Dutch warrior and the Duke of Alba represents the Spanish invader. Though under threat of arrest, Egmont refuses to run away and give up his ideal of liberty. Imprisoned and abandoned because of the cowardice of his people, and despite the desperate efforts of his mistress Klarchen, he is sentenced to death. *Egmont* is a political manifesto in which Egmont's craving for justice and national liberty is opposed to the despotic authority of the Duke of Alba. It is also a drama of destiny in which the Flemish nobleman, with fatalism, accepts the dire consequences of his straightforwardness and honesty.

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