

GESUALDO BUFALINO



FAVOLA DEL
CASTELLO
SENZA
TEMPO

ILLUSTRAZIONI DI LUCIA SCUDERI



BOMPIANI

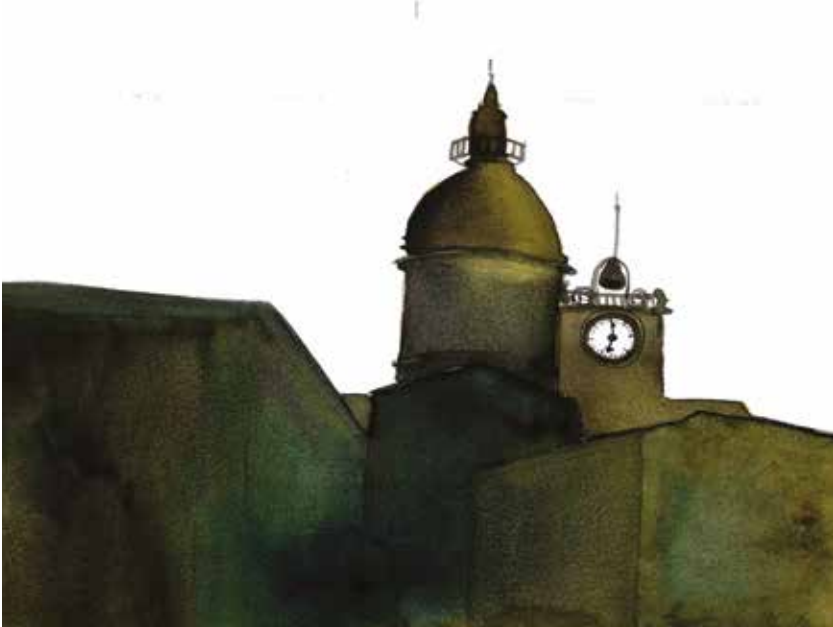


GESUALDO BUFALINO
TALE OF THE TIMELESS CASTLE

translated from the Italian
by Julia MacGibbon

SAMPLE COPY

THE CASTLE WHERE TIME STOOD STILL



There was once a boy named Dino who made his way into the blackness of a wood.

It had been a moth that had enticed him in with the lure of her colours, a moth of a kind he had never seen, with yellow wings and a belly that was equally yellow but also ringed with black stripes,

a moth with a brown back upon which one could make out the outline of a human face: a face with no eyes, no lips and no nose.

He was instantly smitten and chased her from trunk to trunk, never once stopping, moving ever deeper into the shadows, his hand always landing an instant too late on the spot from which the insect had just alighted. He ran on in this way for a great length of time, while the light grew ever feebler and the path ever harder to follow and he began to feel afraid; until, just as he was grabbing hold of a branchlet to steady his passage over a





patch of uneven ground, he felt his fingers close in on – and cried out at his luck – his frenetic little prey. Not wanting to reopen the fist he had made, he confined himself to observing her through the tiny window between his thumb and

forefinger, before placing her slowly and carefully into his little box. At the very moment in which he did so, however, he heard someone speak. He looked all around him but not a living soul came into view and he was forced to acknowledge that it had been the moth he had heard speaking from the gaol in which she was imprisoned, despite the fact that the voice was human – a sharp and plaintive woman's voice.

‘I was,’ it keened, ‘already captive, here inside this tiny insect’s body, branded with death’s escutcheon but free, at least, to flutter around in the air, to warm myself in the sun, to lower myself into the honeyed nectar of a flower and to drink it, and to wear its fragrant perfume, and to live. Now a second set of stiffer chains rob me of that vestige of my liberty. Evermore shall I languish within these four walls.’ Such a sorrowful speech would not have failed to move the boy, who, from the words of wise



writers, had learned all of piety's delights, had not a mocking laugh, from a leafy bough above him, marked its coda. He lifted his eyes and saw nothing. He reopened the box; the moth was no longer inside. Instead, there she was, circling around him, relentlessly flaunting her melancholy death's head. 'Who are you? What do you want of me? Why do you tease me?' he cried. 'And how came you – fairy or hag or whatever you be – to wear so ignoble a guise?' The answer was another laugh, this time a weary one, followed by these words:



‘My name is Atropos; my realm is that of the cantons of the Night. I was, until recently, omnipotent and feared throughout the universe, for my mouth exhaled a deathly breath and I had gargantuan hands ready to smother the every breath of other beings. Sovereign in every clime, but exiled like a leper from a single spot: that place whose name is the Castle Where Time Stands Still...’



Gesualdo Bufalino

Tale of the Timeless Castle

FAVOLA DEL CASTELLO SENZA TEMPO

A new edition of Bufalino's fable for the 100th anniversary of the author, illustrated by Lucia Scuderi and enriched by a forward by Nadia Terranova.

Dino is following a butterfly with a skull on its back through a dark wood: when he gets to trap it into a box, he hears it talk. Its name is Atropo, it belongs to the Night and tells him about the Timeless Castle, a sinister place inhabited by the Immortals, souls who escaped the Flood and are condemned to play a neverending chess match, unable to fool their jailer, Time. Could Dino have the power to free them? And to which consequences?

GESUALDO BUFALINO was born in Comiso, Sicily, in 1920 and died in 1996. He was a teacher and a translator for many decades and spent a secluded life in his hometown, establishing himself among the finest Italian writers of the 20th century only in his late years with *Diceria dell'untore*, which gained the 1981 Supercampielo Prize. Among his book, all published by Bompiani: *L'uomo invasore* (1986), *Il malpensante* (1987), *L'isola nuda* (1988), *Le menzogne della notte* (1988, Premio Strega), *Il matrimonio illustrato* (1989), *Saldi d'autunno* (1990), *Qui pro quo* (1991), *Argo il cieco* (1992), *Calende greche* (1992), *Il Guerrin Meschino* (1993), *Museo d'ombre* (1993), *Bluff di parole* (1994), *Tommaso e il fotografo cieco* (1996), *Dizionario dei personaggi di romanzo* (2000).



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