



## Venice: Pure City

*Peter Ackroyd*

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**Venice: Pure City** Peter Ackroyd

**Peter Ackroyd at his most magical and magisterial—a glittering, evocative, fascinating, story-filled portrait of Venice, the ultimate city.**

The Venetians' language and way of thinking set them aside from the rest of Italy. They are an island people, linked to the sea and to the tides rather than the land. This latest work from the incomparable Peter Ackroyd, like a magic gondola, transports its readers to that sensual and surprising city.

His account embraces facts and romance, conjuring up the atmosphere of the canals, bridges, and sunlit squares, the churches and the markets, the festivals and the flowers. He leads us through the history of the city, from the first refugees arriving in the mists of the lagoon in the fourth century to the rise of a great mercantile state and its trading empire, the wars against Napoleon, and the tourist invasions of today. Everything is here: the merchants on the Rialto and the Jews in the ghetto; the glassblowers of Murano; the carnival masks and the sad colonies of lepers; the artists—Bellini, Titian, Tintoretto, Tiepolo. And the ever-present undertone of Venice's shadowy corners and dead ends, of prisons and punishment, wars and sieges, scandals and seductions.

Ackroyd's *Venice: Pure City* is a study of Venice much in the vein of his lauded *London: The Biography*. Like *London*, *Venice* is a fluid, writerly exploration organized around a number of themes. History and context are provided in each chapter, but Ackroyd's portrait of Venice is a particularly novelistic one, both beautiful and rapturous. We could have no better guide—reading *Venice: Pure City* is, in itself, a glorious journey to the ultimate city.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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