

A blazingly original fiction collection by one of the most liberated women of her age
THE GUESTHOUSE AT THE SIGN OF THE TEETERING GLOBE

by Franziska zu Reventlow

When *THE GUESTHOUSE AT THE SIGN OF THE TEETERING GLOBE* first appeared in Germany in 1917 – at the height of the First World War – it was largely ignored. With the benefit of a century's hindsight, FRANZISKA ZU REVENTLOW's collection of seven thematically related stories reveals itself as a blazingly original and compelling work. In the last book to appear before her death in 1918, and now the first to be published in English, 'bohemian countess' Reventlow diagnoses a world in feverish transition with dry humour and a profound sense of the uncanny.

It is a world that appears to be tilting on its axis. Accustomed certainties are no more, alliances are forged and just as soon abandoned. In the first story, we meet reform-minded German eccentric Hieronymus Edelmann on a Spanish island, where he leads a crocodile around on a leash and lures his compatriots to a precarious guesthouse. His motives are opaque, but one of his schemes is a correspondence association which appears to be an analogue chat room. Elsewhere we find the 'polished little man' who moves in truly mysterious ways and may in fact be a group delusion; a séance that turns into an illicit affair across dimensions; and a band of travellers overawed by the occult power of their luxury luggage – consumers possessed by their possessions. This edition pairs *THE GUESTHOUSE AT THE SIGN OF THE TEETERING GLOBE* with three other short stories by the author, along with an extensive afterword that recounts author's extraordinary life.

FRANZISKA ZU REVENTLOW (1871-1918) was one of the most liberated women of her age. Born a countess, on achieving her majority she fled her aristocratic family to pursue a life of total liberty – artistic, social and sexual. She became one of the most magnetic figures in Munich around 1900, when it was a dynamic centre of arts and letters and avant-garde notions. Revered by her bohemian admirers as a 'heaven Madonna', Reventlow raised her illegitimate child alone, supporting herself with translation, satirical articles and even prostitution. The five books published in her lifetime drew extensively from the author's life. Barely known outside Germany, the life and work of Franziska zu Reventlow are well overdue for discovery.

RIXDORF EDITIONS is a Berlin-based press which is introducing forgotten German classics to a contemporary English-language readership, focusing on the Wilhelmine period (1890-1918), a time of unexpected daring and innovation. Its first two titles are *The Guesthouse at the Sign of the Teetering Globe* and Magnus Hirschfeld's non-fiction *Berlin's Third Sex*, with two further titles coming in spring 2018.



Franziska zu Reventlow

The Guesthouse at the Sign of the Teetering Globe

translated and with an afterword
by James J. Conway

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