

# **PAN'S PROPHECY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649226351

Pan's Prophecy by T. Sturge Moore

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**T. STURGE MOORE**

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**TO MY WIFE**



#### THE OCCASION

Needless it is, or should be, to tell how Psyche grew up more beautiful than Aphrodite ; who, being wrought to jealousy, sent forth her son, Love, that he might kindle the girl's heart with unnatural passion for some base object : and how he himself was smitten, and in order to fulfil his desire delivered deceitful oracles to the king, her father ; so that he had her exposed upon a funeral pile in a desert mountain place, there to await fire from heaven. Yet thence she was by Zephyr conveyed to Love's own Palace, where for a time she dwelt ignorantly happy ; since Love availed himself of the night that she might not know her lord, and bade invisible ministrants attend on her by day. Nathless ere long her elder sisters discovered her retreat and, moved by envy, poisoned her mind with monstrous suspicion, so that she thought it possible that not a god but a frightful dragon frequented her bed. Then, disobeying her lord's most express injunction, she, when he was asleep, took a lamp, viewed him and, trying his arrows' sharpness on her thumb, started to see blood ; when burning oil from the shaken lamp was spilled upon the delicious and slumbering divinity which but three seconds before had been revealed to her eyes. He, waking, with the intolerant severity of young and ardent natures, reproved her fault and quitted her ; flying up, though she clung to his legs, though her weak arms

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yielded, though she fell; flying always higher, he preached to her of disobedience from a tall tree's top, and then betook himself to heaven. She, humbled, with a heart more broken than her body, sought a stream and cast herself therein.

These things the old tale telleth: but after this, though it may have recounted nothing false, it surely hath not remembered the whole truth. Not for love of Love that water saved her; nor was her encounter with Pan so meagre. No; for when the time was fully come, the memory of these things and the full significance of her after wanderings was rekindled. Yet if so much escaped the puissant art of days which gave birth to that old tale, how shall it be told to-day? Though it have again burdened a man's mind, how shall it be delivered? Help, O patient Reader; and, though the attention called for be strained and painful, out of pity and to nourish a hope all-orphaned in this adverse age, listen and pardon, listen and help the straitened verse for that old tale's sake.

