



# The Vices

*Lawrence Douglas*

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## **The Vices** Lawrence Douglas

Oliver Vice, forty-one, prominent philosopher, scholar, and art collector, is missing and presumed dead, over the side of *Queen Mary 2*. Troubled by his friend's possible suicide, the unnamed narrator of Lawrence Douglas' new novel launches an all-consuming investigation into Vice's life history. Douglas, moving backward through time, tells a mordantly humorous story of fascination turned obsession, as his narrator peels back the layers of the Vice family's rich and bizarre history. At the heart of the family are Francizka, Oliver's handsome, overbearing, vaguely anti-Semitic Hungarian mother, and his fraternal twin brother, Bartholomew, a gigantic and troubled young man with a morbid interest in Europe's great tyrants. As the narrator finds himself drawn into a battle over the family's money and art, he comes to sense that someone—or perhaps the entire family—is hiding an unsavory past. Pursuing the truth from New York to London, from Budapest to Portugal, he remains oblivious to the irony of the search: that in his need to understand Vice's life, he is really grappling with ambivalence about his own.

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