

## A55 THE BLACK MATE 1922

*A. Trial printing.*

THE BLACK MATE | A NOVEL | BY | JOSEPH CONRAD | FIFTY COPIES | PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION ONLY | 1922

*Collation:* [A]<sup>8</sup> B-E<sup>8</sup>; pp. [1–4] 5–70 [4] 71–74 [75–76]; 191 x 125 mm.; printed on wove paper.

*Contents:* p. 1, half-title ‘THE BLACK MATE’; p. 2, blank; p. 3, title; p. 4, blank; pp. 5–74, text (the four unnumbered pages between p. 70 and p. 71 are blank); p. 75, ‘PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY | THE DUNEDIN PRESS LIMITED, EDINBURGH’; p. 76, blank.

*Binding:* White buckram. Front and back covers stamped in gold with a single rule border within which is an oriental style ornamental spine stamped in gold ‘[*thin rule*] | [*thick rule*] | THE | BLACK | MATE | [*short rule*] | CONRAD | 1922 | [*thick rule*] | [*thin rule*]’. All edges untrimmed. White wove end-papers.

*Copies examined:*

*B. Regular printing.*

THE BLACK MATE | A STORY | BY JOSEPH CONRAD | FIFTY COPIES | PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR | FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION ONLY | 1922

*Collation:* [A]<sup>8</sup> B-E<sup>8</sup>; pp. [1–4] 5–74 [75–76] [4]; 202 x 127 mm.; printed on laid paper.

*Contents:* p. 1, half-title ‘THE BLACK MATE’; p. 2, blank; p. 3, title; p. 4, blank; pp. 5–74, text; p. 75, ‘PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN | FOR JOSEPH CONRAD | BY THE DUNEDIN PRESS LIMITED, EDINBURGH. | FEBRUARY, 1922.’; p. 76 and the last four pages, blank.

*Binding:* Green smooth cloth. Front cover blind stamped with a single rule border within which, stamped in gold, is a circular ornament the center of which is an eight-pointed star; spine stamped in gold ‘[*blind stamped rule*] | THE | BLACK | MATE | [*short rule*] | JOSEPH | CONRAD | [*blind stamped rule*]’; back cover blind stamped with a single rule border. All edges untrimmed. White laid end-papers.

*Copies examined:*

*Notes*

Following *Notes on Life & Letters*, J.B. Pinker proposed putting together a volume of stories to include “The Rover”, at that time still envisaged by Conrad as a shorter piece, and suggested “The Black Mate” as another candidate. The second was not one of Conrad’s favorite pieces. “I don’t know,” he wrote to Pinker, “whether I told you that I wrote that thing in ’86<sup>72</sup> for a prize competition, started, I think, by *Tit-Bits*. It is an extraneous phenomenon. My literary life began privately in 1890 [actually, 1889] and publically in 1895 with *Almayer’s Folly*, which is regarded generally as my very first piece of writing. However, the history of the ‘Black Mate’, its origin etc., etc. need not be proclaimed on the housetops, and *Almayer’s Folly* may keep its place as my

first serious work. Therefore, I agree to your proposal, with the provision that should *The Rover* turn out a longer piece of work than we anticipate, we will try to do without the 'Black Mate'."

*The Rover* turned out a novel and the proposed volume of short stories did not appear in the lifetime of either Pinker or Conrad.<sup>73</sup> However, this proposal by Pinker was responsible for the 1922 printing of "The Black Mate". On January 19th that year Conrad wrote to Pinker: "I would suggest you should leave to me the procuring of the 'Black Mate' text. I can do that through Wise while you are away." In February Wise had "The Black Mate" printed by the Dunedin Press in Edinburgh in an edition of fifty copies. The text of this edition was taken without change from the April 1908 *London Magazine*.

The apparently unique copy in the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library titled *The Black Mate, a novel* evidently is a trial copy rejected by Wise before printing the full edition. In the *London Magazine* the story has the title "The Black Mate, a complete novel" and from this the printer prepared his original title page, deleting the adjective "complete" as self-evident in the book form publication. Wise – or possibly Conrad – changed "novel" to "story". The other changes, adding 'FOR THE AUTHOR' to the title page, and 'FOR JOSEPH CONRAD' plus the date 'FEBRUARY, 1922' to the colophon probably are attributable to Wise.

As the book was "for private distribution" there was no official publication date. Nor were copies deposited in the British Museum or the Library of Congress to secure copyright on either side of the Atlantic. The separate edition of the story was not reprinted.