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Quotes by Pavese, Cesare

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Cesare Pavese (September 9, 1908 – August 27, 1950) was an Italian poet and novelist. Born in San Stefano Belbo, in the province of Cuneo, he moved very early to Torino. As a young man of letters, Pavese had a particular interest in English-language literature, graduating with a thesis on the poetry of Walt Whitman and translating American and British authors that were then new to the Italian public. In 1935 he was arrested on charges of anti-fascism and served almost one year. After the war he joined the Italian Communist Party, but love frustrations and political disillusionments led him to his suicide, by an overdose of barbiturates, in 1950. One of his most famous quotes reads "We don't remember days; we remember moments."

Will power is only the tensile strength of one's own disposition. One cannot increase it by a single ounce.

- Pavese, Cesare

Hate is always a clash between our spirit and someone else's body.

- Pavese, Cesare

It is not that the child lives in a world of imagination, but that the child within us survives and starts into life only at rare moments of recollection, which makes us believe, and it is not true, that, as children, we were imaginative?

- Pavese, Cesare

One does not kill oneself for love of a woman, but because love -- any love -- reveals us in our nakedness, our misery, our vulnerability, our nothingness.

- Pavese, Cesare

Living is like working out a long addition sum, and if you make a mistake in the first two totals you will never find the right answer. It means involving oneself in a complicated chain of circumstances.

- Pavese, Cesare

Literature is a defense against the attacks of life. It says to life: You can't deceive me. I know your habits, foresee and enjoy watching all your reactions, and steal your secret by involving you in cunning obstructions that halt your normal flow.

- Pavese, Cesare

A man is never completely alone in this world. At the worst, he has the company of a boy, a youth, and by and by a grown man --the one he used to be.

- Pavese, Cesare

No woman marries for money; they are all clever enough, before marrying a millionaire, to fall in love with him first.

- Pavese, Cesare

Love is the cheapest of religions.

- Pavese, Cesare

We do not remember days, we remember moments. The richness of life lies in memories we have forgotten.

- Pavese, Cesare

We don't remember days; we remember moments.

- Pavese, Cesare

Life is pain and the enjoyment of love is an anesthetic.

- Pavese, Cesare

Every luxury must be paid for, and everything is a luxury, starting with being in the world.

- Pavese, Cesare

Reality is a prison, where one vegetates and always will. All the rest --thought, action --is just a pastime, mental or physical. What counts then, is to come to grips with reality. The rest can go.

- Pavese, Cesare

All sins have their origin in a sense of inferiority otherwise called ambition.

- Pavese, Cesare

If it were possible to have a life absolutely free from every feeling of sin, what a terrifying vacuum it would be!

- Pavese, Cesare

To choose a hardship for ourselves is our only defense against that hardship. This is what is meant by accepting suffering. Those who, by their very nature, can suffer completely, utterly, have an advantage. That is how we can disarm the power of suffering, make it our own creation, our own choice; submit to it. A justification for suicide.

- Pavese, Cesare

Suffering is by no means a privilege, a sign of nobility, a reminder of God. Suffering is a fierce, bestial thing, commonplace, uncalled for, natural as air. It is intangible; no one can grasp it or fight against it; it dwells in time -- is the same thing as time; if it comes in fits and starts, that is only so as to leave the sufferer more defenseless during the moments that follow, those long moments when one relives the last bout of torture and waits for the next.

- Pavese, Cesare

Perfect behavior is born of complete indifference.

- Pavese, Cesare

No one ever lacks a good reason for suicide.

- Pavese, Cesare

At great periods you have always felt, deep within you, the temptation to commit suicide. You gave yourself to it, breached your own defenses. You were a child. The idea of suicide was a protest against life; by dying, you would escape this longing for death.

- Pavese, Cesare



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