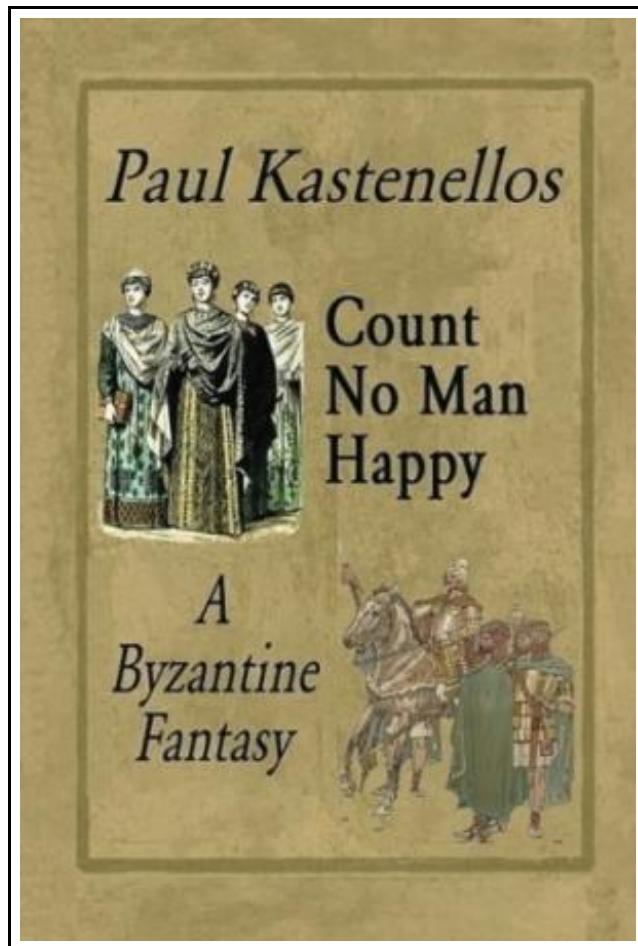


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Apuleius Books, United States, 2011. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 228 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.A Byzantine Fantasy Count No Man Happy is based on the life of the Byzantine emperor Constantine VI who lived in the last years of the eighth century CE. It is factually correct. As a child Constantine had been betrothed to Rotrud, the daughter of Charlemagne, and developed a consuming affection for her although they never met. Their engagement was broken off by his mother, the empress Irene. Irene also competed for power with Constantine when he came of age to rule. At that time the empire was waging wars against invading Bulgars in the north and Haroun el-Rashid of Arabian Nights fame in the east. Despite these threats Irene's passion was for the restoration of icons during the iconoclastic dispute. Conflict between mother and son finally led to unimagined horror. Although it is impossible to entirely recreate a past world in a novel written today, the author has tried to do so in so far as it can be done, without stereotyping or demonizing, or expecting medieval people to respond as a person would today. Their passions are the same as ours, as is their self-deception; but their frame of reference is entirely different. The book's title is from a quote by the ancient Greek Historian Herodotus: Count no man happy until he is dead. Why is not revealed until the story's end. What Kastenellos has written is historically accurate biography set against a backdrop of war, religious extremism, and intrigue. This is offset by elements of fantasy in which Constantine is distracted and comforted by a mid twentieth century model.

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