



## Buddenbrooks (German Edition)

*Thomas Mann*

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## **Buddenbrooks (German Edition)** Thomas Mann

One of the most famous aspects of Thomas Mann's prose style can be seen in the use of leitmotifs. Derived from his admiration for the operas of Richard Wagner, in the case of *Buddenbrooks* an example can be found in the description of the color – blue and yellow, respectively – of the skin and the teeth of the characters. Each such description alludes to different states of health, personality and even the destiny of the characters. Rotting teeth are also a symbol of decay and decadence because it implies indulging in too many cavity causing foods. An example of this would be Hanno's cup of hot chocolate at breakfast.

Aspects of Thomas Mann's own personality are manifest in the two main male representatives of the third and the fourth generations of the fictional family: Thomas Buddenbrook and his son Hanno Buddenbrook. It should not be considered a coincidence that Mann shared the same first name with one of them. Thomas Buddenbrook reads a chapter of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, and the character of Hanno Buddenbrook escapes from real-life worries into the realm of music, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in particular. (Wagner himself was of bourgeois descent and decided to dedicate himself to art.) In this sense both *Buddenbrooks* reflect a conflict lived by the author: departure from a conventional bourgeois life to pursue an artistic one, although without rejecting bourgeois ethics.

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