



The Memoirs of Casanova (Illustrated Edition): The Incredible Life of Giacomo Casanova – Lover, Spy, Actor, Clergymen, Officer & Brilliant Con Artist

Giacomo Casanova , Arthur Machen (Translator)

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A series of adventures wilder and more fantastic than the wildest of romances, written down with the exactitude of a business diary; a view of men and cities from Naples to Berlin, from Madrid and London to Constantinople and St. Petersburg; the 'vie intime' of the eighteenth century depicted by a man, who to-day sat with cardinals and saluted crowned heads, and tomorrow lurked in dens of profligacy and crime; a book of confessions penned without reticence and without penitence; a record of forty years of "occult" charlatanism; a collection of tales of successful imposture, of 'bonnes fortunes', of marvellous escapes, of transcendent audacity, told with the humour of Smollett and the delicate wit of Voltaire. Who is there interested in men and letters, and in the life of the past, who would not cry, "Where can such a book as this be found?" Yet the above catalogue is but a brief outline, a bare and meager summary, of the book known as "THE MEMOIRS OF CASANOVA"; a work absolutely unique in literature. He who opens these wonderful pages is as one who sits in a theatre and looks across the gloom, not on a stage-play, but on another and a vanished world. Giacomo Casanova (1725-1798) was an Italian adventurer and author from the Republic of Venice. He often signed his works Jacques Casanova de Seingalt after he began writing in French following his second exile from Venice. He has become so famous for his often complicated and elaborate affairs with women that his name is now synonymous with "womanizer". He associated with European royalty, popes and cardinals, along with luminaries such as Benjamin Franklin, Voltaire, Goethe, and Mozart.

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From Reader Review The Memoirs of Casanova (Illustrated Edition): The Incredible Life of Giacomo Casanova – Lover, Spy, Actor, Clergymen, Officer & Brilliant Con Artist for online ebook

Marius says

Utterly fascinating Memoirs, well deserving twelve volumes. By comparison, my boring life will barely occupy several sheets of paper.

My only regret is that I didn't have the means to acquire the unabridged edition, translated by William R. Trask. This 'Everymans' Library' is a heavily abridged edition, although on good paper and well-bound hardback. For instance, the last volume, consisting of 14 chapters, is not even included.

Jonathan says

The rating is for this edition and this translation. Not only is it so heavily edited as to remove any of the power of the original text, but the translator himself has admitted he "modernised" the language to make it "easier" for modern readers. Fuck you is what I say to that. And fuck Penguin.

Also fuck Penguin for this type of crap: <http://www.penguin.com/static/html/cl...>

Brendan says

It's just so good. Where else are you going to meet a complete dirt bag who can tell you everything about meeting Voltaire and Benjamin Franklin and who gets congratulated by doctors for giving people VD?

This version is very puritanical. The original is 1400 pages and this version is cut down to 400 and you will read dozens of pages about the food he ate and then in italics the authors will cut between chapters *Casanova soon met a pair of sisters whom he pitted against each other in a threesome, which is where he lost his virginity*. And after reading all about pre-enlightenment Venetian life for 200 pages you kinda want to read about pre-enlightenment threesoms.

Marti says

The entire story of Casanova's life is about seven volumes. After reading this edition -- which consists of what the editors think are the best parts -- I want to read the entire thing one day. It's hard to believe all of this is true as it reads more like an adventure novel. If you enjoyed the *Diary of Samuel Pepys, Tom Jones, The Three Musketeers* and other picaresque tales, you will definitely want to read this.

Casanova's name of course has become synonymous with flagrant womanizing, and there is a lot of that here (including a few instances which readers may find a little disturbing in that they seem more like child prostitution). There is however, much more to this story. Casanova was someone who moved between the high and the low worlds. Born to an actress, he managed to get enough of a good education as to be able to hobnob with the intellectuals and courtiers of his day who found his conversation and person amusing. It seems he almost always had large sums of money, even if it is not always clear how he got it (odd translation jobs for noblemen, setting up lotteries and gambling seemed to be his main sources of income). However, as is often the case, many of his powerful friends distanced themselves from him later in life after too much reckless behavior won him the enmity of more conservative elements of society who sought to banish him from their cities.

Particularly gripping was the account of his escape from the "Leads" prison in Venice and his soujourns to Paris and Madrid (where he was again thrown into prison "by mistake"). His observations of the people and customs still ring true today.

Fuad Alsultan says

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Shelly says

Let me say that if I could have dinner with ten people - regardless of the time period - I would DEFINITELY want Giacomo Casanova there! He had adventure after adventure. I loved the story! It was a really wild ride. And the thing I liked most about it was it was so fresh and exciting - not your average book from the 1700s! This guy knew how to get what he wanted out of life. I recommend it highly.

Lina AL Ojaili says

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L. W. says

The guy was an asshole pervert with no regard for females, but he was also genius. And I named my dog after him.

David says

Casanova famously replied to a woman who asked him what he sought, ‘A moment that lasts a lifetime.’

Although she flew past him she left an impression, an imprint, like no other. When he was writing his memoirs in old age, impoverished financially but rich in memories, she blazed back into life for him again, untarnished, forever young and forever his.

There’s an instinct to possess, and it’s a hard lesson to finally understand that nobody can possess anything, least of all another human being.

Casanova grasped that the most we can have is fleeting moments that encapsulate transient joys and preserve them in memory like flies in amber, to be contemplated and cherished later, when everything has changed.

There are certain people I would love to gobble up, possess, kiss and love to pieces while there’s still time. But time itself is the problem. These people have changed, though parts of them are scattered across the years like fragments of meteorites that burned up in our atmosphere, and some of those fragments persist and continue to glow incandescently.

Melanie says

Even though this is the abridged version, it is a must read. Many people think Casanova was a romantic, which he was, but he was also a seducer of nuns, a thief, con-man, charlatan, and addict! After a visit to

Venice I believed I needed to read about the man I'd heard of, in his own words. There is sex of course, but there is also humor, action, and adventure. I learned much about Italian history, geography, privilege, and politics all while thoroughly enjoying an entertaining - and yes, sensual - story.

Robyn Blaber says

When I read old book, I don't often consider them to be "instructional". Any advice of a philosophical or scientific nature that has been written more than a few years ago is likely to contain assertions that are remarkable for their time, but laughable for our time. Casanova is not like this at all. His memoirs could be titled "Bad advice for a good life."

He has all qualities that a bad person would need. He keeps bad company. He drinks. He gambles. He falls in an out of love unimaginably quickly... and yet we like him. Despite his bad habits and inconstancy, we like him because he always means well.

His conquests in love stand up to any memoir I've ever read, though at times his stories have the ring of the unbelievable. One might question whether they are complete fictions, but I'm inclined to believe every one despite the assertion of the occasional critic. Casanova's hedonistic philosophy ends up as admirable as any I've ever read, if not impossible to follow. If I could sum it up only in a line it would be, "Be a slave only to your passion."

Nick Ruffilo says

I actually read the unabridged version of this book (Diaries of Casanova Vol 1-6) but I think its important to put this review here as I believe it will get the most exposure.

Critics hailed this as the best slice of 1700s culture throughout Europe and I have to agree.

What drew me most about the book was the nature in which it pulled me in. I mainly read psychology and business type books, so for me to get engrossed in a story is a rarity. On top of that - I'm usually not one for books more than 300 pages (this was nearly 2400 pages in total). But, despite all of that, the conversational nature as well as the perspective from which it was written was amazing.

Because it was a true story (or at least it is told as such, and while many facts were verifiable, it is impossible to prove some of the adventures Casanova writes of) the introspection that you get is very real and easy to relate to. I found myself caring a great deal about all of the characters as they were painted in such a way that they became real to me.

My only complaint is the sheer amount of names in the book. Casanova did a great deal of traveling, and was a very popular person, so it is very reasonable that he would meet 20 new people in each region, but it became a bit tedious trying to keep up with them as time went on.

All in all, I suggest that if you wish to read this, you attempt to find a copy of the unabridged Vol 1 (I bought my copy from a rare book dealer for \$15). If you like that, continue on, otherwise I guess you can just shoot for this shortened version.

Denis says

What an extraordinary, exhilarating, brilliant book! Of course this is an abridged version: the original manuscript of Casanova's memoir takes 14 volumes, so who knows what amazing episodes are missing from this edition! But to be honest, the editors seem to have done a great job at patching all the present chapters together, and at explaining each times briefly what happens during the ones that have been cut: the fluidity of the book, as well as its comprehension, are therefore never a problem. Casanova wrote in French - I would have read the book in its original language had I known that when I bought it, but I found the translation flawless. I was not sure what I was getting into when I opened this book, except that it seemed like a good read while sipping coffee in Venice after having visiting the cavernous jail where Casanova was once incarcerated. I was in for quite a surprise. First, Casanova writes marvelously well: his style is surprisingly modern, it's laced with a great sense of humor and fantastic wittiness, his vast knowledge is fascinating. Second, his life is so incredibly filled with adventures of all sorts that it's as entertaining as any popular best-seller. You'll find everything, in this book. Absolute suspense. Diabolical political intrigue. Intelligent religious discourse. Intense historical drama. Convoluted romance. Wild sex. Lots of wild sex. Esoteric mysteries. And much more. Casanova travels all of Europe, from France to Russia, from Poland to Spain, from Turkey to Germany, while Venice remains at the heart of his complicated life: reading this book is like going through an incredible voyage across XVIII century Europe. Everywhere he goes, Casanova encounters the most brilliant minds of his time (the likes of Voltaire or Catherine the Great, for example), but he also falls madly in love (either with innocent or dangerous women), and engages himself in situations that become sometimes so complicated that you just wonder how he'll find his way out of them. Is it all real? Maybe. Maybe not. Who cares. It's just amazing. Casanova's reputation as a great lover is not usurped, and some scenes are wonderfully naughty - I have in mind the torrid love affair he had at some point with a nun, or some delirious orgies to which he participated. But there's much more to him than that, and if sex is often his downfall, it's certainly not all that this memoir is about. Capable of laughing at himself (always a good point, as far as I'm concerned), Casanova is also quite proud of himself, but never to the point of becoming conceited. And, actually, he's quite humble in his own way, and he does not shy away from narrating dubious episodes which cast him in a rather bad light. He was a scoundrel, and a thief, and he's not hiding it. There is, especially toward the end, when his constant wandering seems to take a toll on him, a hint of melancholy that is quite touching. As for people who think that what happens today in our society is new, read this book - Casanova's life as a debauched student makes the Spring break students look tame in comparison, and his descriptions of religious intolerance, and political tyranny, invite chilling comparisons. Quite simply a great, great book.

Ramy says

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