



History of My Life, Vols. 1-2

By Giacomo Chevalier de Seingalt Casanova

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In volumes 1 and 2, Casanova tells the story of his family, his first loves, and his early travels. With the death of his grandmother, he is sent to a seminary but is soon expelled. He is briefly imprisoned in the fortress of Sant' Andrea. After wandering from Naples to Rome in search of a patron, he enters the service of Cardinal Acquaviva.

About this edition: Because every previous edition of Casanova's *Memoirs* had been abridged to suppress the author's political and religious views and tame his vivid, often racy, style, the literary world considered it a major event when Willard R. Trask's translation of the complete original text was published in six double volumes between 1966 and 1971. Trask's award-winning translation now appears in paperback for the first time.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

This translation of Giacomo Casanova's epic memoir was first published in a multi-volume set more than 25 years ago, but this new paperback edition makes Casanova's story accessible to the general reader. Thankfully, the great Venetian adventurer's memoirs can finally be read as they were written, without the bowdlerizing that plagued them for two centuries. While Casanova is most notorious for his womanizing, his memoirs are also remarkable as they give a top-to-bottom view of European life in the 18th century. Johns Hopkins University Press has done a handsome job, packaging the entire story in six double volumes. And, in keeping with the spirit of the author, it's worth mentioning that a 17th-century painting of lounging nude woman spans across the spines of the set when they're arranged on the shelf.

Review

Casanova, outed long ago as a flagrant heterosexual, is out again. This time he's out in paperback—the whole of his memoirs in six hefty volumes. What a pity he couldn't be here for a launch party at, say, the Algonquin... Plenty is what the book has—plenty of everything, even without the sex. There are swindles and scandals, pretensions and inventions, clerics, lyrics, and bubbling alembics, sword fights at midnight and complots at the palace, bugs in the beds and bedlam in the tavern, masked balls, ball-ups, and shinnying up drainpipes, flummery, mummery, and summary executions. All that, as the journalists say, plus a pullulating plankton field of biddable, beddable broads, through which Casanova moves with the single-minded hunger of a straining whale, yet somehow brings the whole populated ocean of eighteenth-century society to phosphorescent life. The book teems. It flows. It does everything but end.

(Clive James *New Yorker*)

Trask has written a version in an English fully contemporary yet remarkably Italian in sensibility. With admirable restraint and refinement, he has conveyed the zest and sensuous delight of the original.

(*National Book Award Citation*)

These memoirs are compulsive reading... they are the work not only of a highly accomplished seducer but of a literary artist of the highest talents.

(J. H. Plumb *New York Times Book Review*)

There is some [unadulterated smut], of course, quite a bit—but it pales next to the enormity of the picture Casanova paints of 18th-century Europe: a great theater of intrigue, jostling with political emissaries, spies, impostors, charlatans, runaways, courtesans, Republicans, Freethinkers, Rosicrucians, and Inquisitors.

(*Boston Globe*)

Trask expertly rendered this text into English in 1966, and this is the English version to read... Compulsively

readable... Certainly, few books better convey the sheer, exuberant joy of being alive and young than these reminiscences.

(Michael Dirda *New York Review of Books*)

Casanova is unsurpassed as the recreator of the daily talking interests of 18th-century Europe. He ranges from slut to patrician, from closet to cabinet, waterfront to palace. He is superior to all other erotic writers because of his pleasure in news, in gossip, in the whole personality of his mistresses.

(V. S. Pritchett)

The Chevalier de Seingalt was a most remarkable man, who had some of the qualities of greatness... Has any novelist or poet ever rendered better than Casanova the passing glory of the personal life? the gaiety, the spontaneity, the generosity of youth: the ups and downs of middle age when our character begins to get to us and we are forced to come to terms with it; the dreadful blanks of later years, when what is gone is gone. All that a life of this kind can contain Casanova put into his story. And how much of the world! the eighteenth century as you get it in no other book; society from top to bottom; Europe from England to Russia, a more brilliant variety of characters than you can find in any eighteenth-century novel.

(Edmund Wilson)

These are what Edmund Wilson has rightly called the most interesting memoirs ever written. Indeed, Rousseau, Stendhal, even Augustine, must take their proper place, a half step behind this greatest of storytellers.

(Paul Zweig *Nation*)

From the Back Cover

Giacomo Casanova was born in Venice in 1725. His parents, both actors, wanted him to become a priest, but their hopes were dashed when, at sixteen, he was expelled from the seminary for immoral misconduct. Probably best-known for his reputation as a womanizer, Casanova was in turn a secretary, a soldier in the Venetian army, a preacher, an alchemist, a gambler, a violinist, a lottery director, and a spy. He translated Homer's Iliad into Italian and collaborated with Da Ponte on the libretto for Mozart's Don Giovanni. He retired in 1785 to the castle of a friend - Count Waldstein of Bohemia - in order to write his memoirs. Because every previous edition of Casanova's Memoirs had been abridged to suppress the author's political and religious views and tame his vivid, often racy, style, the literary world considered it a major event when Willard R. Trask's translation of the complete original text was published in six double volumes between 1966 and 1971. Trask's award-winning translation now appears in paperback for the first time.

Users Review

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Juan Hinkson:

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History of My Life, Vols. 1-2 can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to place every word into pleasure arrangement in writing History of My Life, Vols. 1-2 yet doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into new stage of crucial thinking.

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