



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 enormousness 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 his 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

From reader reviews:

Leonard White:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. As we know that book is very important for people. The book History of My Life, Vols. 1-2 ended up being making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is very advantages for you.

The book History of My Life, Vols. 1-2 is not only giving you a lot more new information but also to become your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your spare time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship using the book History of My Life, Vols. 1-2. You never really feel lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

Timothy Wingo:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love History of My Life, Vols. 1-2, you can enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Dean Herbert:

As we know that book is vital thing to add our expertise for everything. By a reserve we can know everything you want. A book is a list of written, printed, illustrated or blank sheet. Every year seemed to be exactly added. This book History of My Life, Vols. 1-2 was filled regarding science. Spend your time to add your knowledge about your science competence. Some people has diverse feel when they reading a book. If you know how big benefit from a book, you can sense enjoy to read a book. In the modern era like right now, many ways to get book which you wanted.

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