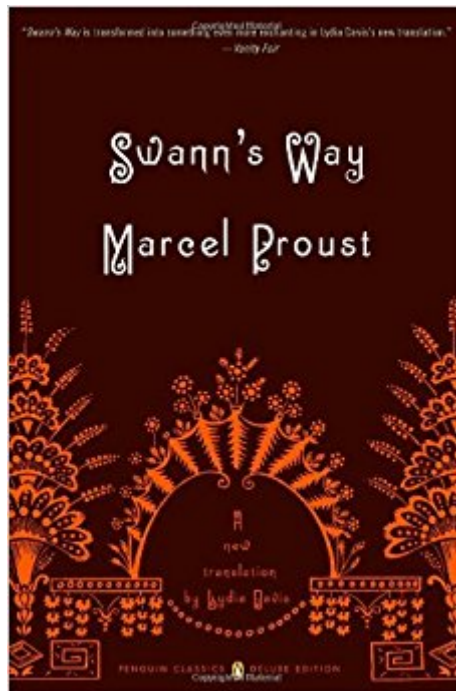


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Swann's Way: In Search Of Lost Time, Vol. 1 (Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition)



Synopsis

Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* is one of the most entertaining reading experiences in any language and arguably the finest novel of the twentieth century. But since its original prewar translation there has been no completely new version in English. Now, Penguin Classics brings Proust's masterpiece to new audiences throughout the world, beginning with Lydia Davis's internationally acclaimed translation of the first volume, *Swann's Way*.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (64 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #39,289 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #46 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > French #1425 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Classics #1922 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Contemporary

Customer Reviews

To read Marcel Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past" is a pleasure and a challenge in the same proportion that any brave read can have. Not only is it a hard task, but also a very pleasant one. The books are written in such a way that readers are transported to another time and place, and get to know the characters as if they were old friends of ours. Of course, if it weren't like that, not many people would dare to try and read the seven novels that compound the whole series. But Proust is a master to keep your interested glued to his words. Even when this words are in a paragraph that lasts four pages. "Swann's Way" is the first novel and it is a blessing and a curse at the same time. It is good because everything is new to us, so the 'nameless' narrator takes his time to explain a lot of things, introduce people, describe places and the action is built up bit by bit. On the other hand, the reader is not used to Proust style and when we come across a paragraph that lasts four pages we get scared. To make things more complicated, when he was writing "Remembrance of Things Past" Proust wanted to make a novel, but he also wanted to philosophize. Therefore, there is a lot of philosophy in his books. At first this device seems to be difficult to understand, to get the gist, but

with time, one gets used to it, and is able to realize that we're not supposed to read this books in the same way we read any other novel. Proust's work is about senses. He does not expect you to understand everything he is saying. His narrative is not cumulative. What he wants, in fact, is to make his reader feel what he was saying, to feel things like time passing through our lives and its effects on our memories.

Just as a general note with Proust translations, compare them in a bookstore before you buy any of them. There is the original C.K. Scott Moncrieff translation, which is beautiful, though based on a flawed edition put together shortly after Proust's death (especially the later books in the set). Then there is Terrence Kilmartin's revision, which is based on a much better French edition. You can still find editions of this used, and occasionally new as well. I prefer this one, as Kilmartin didn't change most of the truly beautiful language that Moncrieff rendered except in a few places to clarify confusing sentences. D.J. Enright, who worked with Kilmartin, made further revisions after the latter's death, whose work (so he says) was incomplete. His reworking is based on yet an even newer edition of the French text, though with fewer changes than the previous French edition had from the original. I feel that Enright modernized the language too much. He claims French hasn't changed much as a language compared to English since the early 20th Century, so to approximate how it would read to a French person today, it needs to be put into more contemporary language. I don't care for it personally. I've read some of these other, altogether new translations, which is a good effort considering the potential for incoherence you might have reading a revision of a revision of a translation (whew!). They're not bad, but nowhere near as much of a "new standard" as, say, the Pevear-Volokhonsky translations of Dostoevsky, which give the reader a clearer original while still using beautiful and idiomatic English. But back to Proust. Decide for yourself!

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