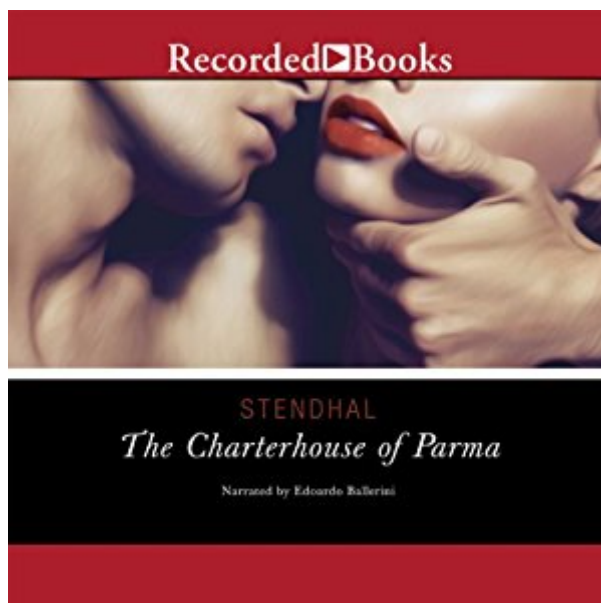


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The Charterhouse Of Parma



Synopsis

In the coming-of-age story, we follow a young Italian nobleman, Fabrizio Valserra, Marchesino del Dongo, on many adventures, including his experiences at the Battle of Waterloo, and romantic intrigues.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let me start by saying that *The Charterhouse of Parma* is an excellent read. I was surprised at some of the reviews that called this work "uneven" and "sloppy". What standard could anyone possibly have for this work to not be a highly recommended read? The descriptions of places, like the lake by the castle, the description of his experience in a battle, these are pieces that you will enjoy and remember. This is what makes a novel. If you are a romantic, and you surely are if you are reading Stendhal, then it is the romance that you will love the most. The relationships between a number of the characters are poignant and simply beautiful at times for their simplicity and at times for their complexity. There are novels that you fly through because you can't bear the suspense and there are others that let you savor and read and reread passages because there is clearly beauty on the page. *Charterhouse* is a novel you will remember for its beauty. Take your time with it and enjoy it.

Recently I wanted to re-read Stendahl's *The Red and the Black* because I had enjoyed it many years ago. Then I looked to see what else he had written and discovered *The Charterhouse of Parma*. I felt this novel was even better than *The Red and the Black*. Such intrigues. People working at cross

purposes to one another without realizing what the other person is thinking. Politics, royalty and the poor. A lot of historical information. I truly enjoyed it.

This is an unconventional novel by the very unconventional Stendhal. Many have commented on the unusual structure of the narrative, the frequent and apparently random plot twists, and the frivolous nature of the principal character. Stendhal reportedly dictated this novel in the period of a few weeks, presumptive evidence of mania, and the brief period of composition is an often cited explanation for the sprawling nature of the narrative. This is only partially correct. The structure of narrative and the twists of the plot reflect a design aimed at making a clear point. The story begins with the broadest canvas possible, the Battle of Waterloo, and concludes with an covert and adulterous love affair and the hero's retirement to a monastery. This progression is a metaphor for Stendhal's view of Europe in the throes of Reaction against Napoleon and the ideas of the Enlightenment. Almost everything in this book is a description and indictment of Reaction. The provincial Italian society depicted by Stendhal is hermetically sealed against any novel or dissenting ideas. This is done in the interest of preserving Christian religion and the virtues of traditional society, including the rule of the aristocracy. The consequences demonstrated by Stendhal are almost the exactly the opposite of these intentions. Marriage is a hypocritical sham, religion exists either as a form of superstition for the masses or to provide careers for the aristocracy, politics is a cynical game of preferment and personal feuds. The ignoble career of the hero, and lives of other main characters, are shown to be the result of the deliberate attempt to wall off the ideas of the Enlightenment. Stendhal also takes the opportunity to ridicule the Romantic movement in a very astute manner. The Charterhouse of Parma is long, has a plot worthy of a modern soap opera, and is written in a peculiar style. It is also witty, tremendously shrewd, and at times hilarious. A remarkable book.

I ENJOYED READING THIS BOOK VERY MUCH. LOTS OF TWISTS AND TURNS, ALWAYS WONDERING WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT. I BOUGHT "THE RED AND THE BLACK" BY STENDHAL, ALSO, TO ENJOY MORE OF THE SAME.

"The Charterhouse of Parma" is a classic of French Romanticism. It's author is Stendhal (a pseudonym of Henri de Bayle) who was present when Napoleon entered Moscow. Bayle came from Grenoble and is famous for this work and "The Red and the Black" his earlier written masterpiece. This novel was written in a marathon time of only 53 days and has been a bestseller

ever since. The Plot: The long novel of over 500 pages (well translated into English by Richard Howard in the Modern Library Edition) is one long romp of adventures, escapes Machiavellian styled political intrigue at the post-Napoleonic court of a fatuous prince of Parma. The hero of the piece is callow Fabrizio Del Dongo. Fabrizio is a somewhat dim witted lad who is present at the battle of Waterloo (one of the best descriptions of the horrors of war in all French fiction). Fabrizio grows up at his distant father's villa at Grianata on Lake Como. Stendhal's novel takes place in Parma and Lombardy and he was infatuated by the Italian way of life. Fabrizio is mentored by two key characters: His aunt Gina Pietranera and Count Mosca her lover and a power at the Parmesians court. Fabrizio is often in love with such luscious creatures as Marietta an actress and Clelia Conti. Clelia is the daughter of the jailer who keeps Fabrizio imprisoned in the Tower of Farnese. He is incarcerated because of his killing of Giletti a rival in love. After many complications, Fabrizio ends his day in quiet retirement at the Charterhouse of Parma. The book is difficult to read! I found Stendhal's style to be dry and difficult to follow. He was an early experimenter at interior monologue in the minds of his characters. The book has plenty of action, romance, intrigue and excitement. It is an essential book in one's literary appreciation of great classics. Stendhal wrote for what he called the "happy few." Enjoy!

The Charterhouse of Parma was my first exposure to Stendahl's writing, and I am now eager to read more. The book's Candide-like character manages -- sometimes in spite of himself -- to negotiate the intrigues and treacheries of Parma and the post-Napoleonic Italian States. At times funny and at times sad, I found this book to be always engaging.

Richard Howard's translation is distinguished, as many reviewers have said. The welcome thing about the Kindle edition, which faithfully reproduces the illustrations, is the inclusion of explanatory notes that go beyond what the Modern Library hardcopy offers. Bravo!

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