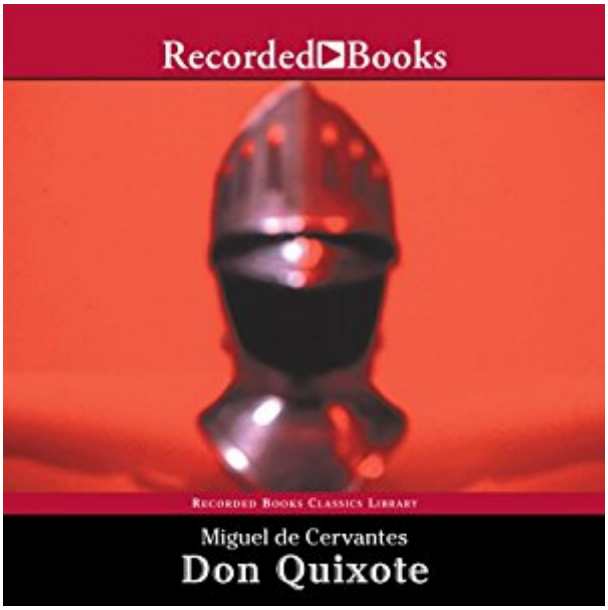
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Don Quixote: Translated By Edith Grossman



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Synopsis

Don Quixote is the classic story. Called the first modern novel, this marvelous book has stood the test of time to become irrevocably intertwined with the fabric of society. Sixteenth-century Spanish gentleman Don Quixote, fed by his own delusional fantasies, takes to the road in search of chivalrous adventures. But his quest leads to more trouble than triumph. At once humorous, romantic, and sad, Don Quixote is a literary landmark. This fresh edition, by award-winning translator Edith Grossman, brings the tale to life as never before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There’s only one original "Quixote", but there are literally dozens of translations, and an almost infinite number of commentaries about the quality, integrity and appeal of those various translations. But, if you would just like to sit down with a readable and fairly mainstream version there are two free Kindle volumes that offer you a happy choice.The four "major" translations that are referenced over and over again are by Smollett, Grossman, Putnam, and Raffel. (There are roughly a dozen "minor" but well known and vigorously defended or reviled others.) But, the first translation, which was published in 1612, within just seven years of the release of "Quixote" itself, was by Thomas Shelton. The most popular translation after that, until the "modern" era, was Ormsby’s 1885 version.Happily, Kindle offers a free copy of Ormsby’s version. It also offers a kindleunlimited, (and sometimes free as a promotion), copy of Gerald Davis’ reworking of the Shelton version.Some people favor Raffel, (although faulted for being too oversimplified), or Putnam, (faulted for being too colloquial). Grossman is the most modern, but is frequently criticized for taking great liberties and being almost purposefully prolix and obscure. Of course, each translator brought his or her own

sense of style, and own sense of the work, to the project, and all of them felt fairly free to put their own authorial stamp on the book. Ormsby is highly regarded because of his scholarly effort to achieve "accuracy". The Davis book is highly regarded, although sometimes relegated to a niche position, because of the translator’s attempt to find a middle ground between the Shelton original and a modern reader’s sensibilities.This Kindle Ormsby is the 1885 version, not the Norton update of 1981. But that’s fine, since the update modernized some language but didn’t change the text dramatically. As a bare public domain version you don’t get notes, footnotes, modern annotations and the like. You do, however, get the full text, include Ormsby’s analysis of prior translations. The book is formatted well enough and has a basic table of contents. It is readable, if unadorned.The Kindleunlimited Davis is also barebones, although there is a nice preface by Davis. Again, the formatting and type editing is fine and unfussy. It is also perfectly readable.I prefer the Davis version, but that really is a matter of personal taste. It is nice to be able to suggest that not only are these two freebies adequate, they do indeed have an honorable place amongst all of the best translations. As a consequence you do not have to lower your standards, or accept an inferior translation, when selecting one of these freebies as your text of choice.Surprisingly, each Kindle version can be augmented, for a few dollars, with Audible Narration. The Ormsby narration is a bit more energetic, the Davis narration is more solemn. I only sampled them, but both seemed fairly engaging.Please note, because there are so many editions of each and all of these books, and because is not at its best when mixing and matching books, editions, and reviews, it’s important to mention which books this review refers to. The kindleunlimited Davis displays a white cover and a pencil or engraved image of Don Quixote framed in yellow. It clearly states that it is "The New Translation By Gerald J. Davis". The free Ormsby sports the generic public domain cover, in brown and buff. Don’t mistakenly buy some expensive "collectible" mass market copy, unless that’s what you want.

This review is for the Norton Critical Edition published in 1981, edited by Jones and Douglas.Two modern translations of Don Quixote, those by Raffel (the newer Norton Critical Edition) and Grossman (the perennial bestseller), seem to dominate the market right now. I suspect I am not alone in being annoyed by Raffel’s overzealous attempts to modernize the book and Grossman’s stubborn refusal to use common words whenever possible. If you are looking for a compromise between the two, this is an excellent candidate.This is a revision of the 1885 translation by Ormsby, who produced arguably the most accurate English translation of the book. The editors updated some of the language and added copious footnotes. The text reads very well, almost as well as

Raffel's version, but also retains some of the features of the novel that have been lost in modern translations. Notably, Don Quixote takes great pleasure in using outdated language (e.g., "thou," "giveth"), even though the ordinary people he encounters don't understand his speeches. More recent translations have largely done away with this, simply conveying Don Quixote as being long-winded and overly descriptive, and always being met with dumbfounded reactions. Here you truly experience Don Quixote speaking like someone from a different generation than the rest of the characters.Where Raffel translates Don Quixote's nickname as "the Knight of the Sad Face" and Grossman uses "the Knight of the Sorrowful Face," this edition uses the classic "Knight of the Mournful Countenance." Maybe not such a big deal, but it strikes me as disingenuous to use the emoticon-like "sad face" to describe what Sancho meant to refer to Don Quixote's worn-out, gaunt appearance.Out of the translations I've read, this one contains none of the encumbrances I've found in Raffel (oversimplified), Grossman (pretentious), Smollett (archaic), Rutherford (reliant on British slang), Putnam (tastes like the 1950s), Montgomery (riddled with errors), Motteux (censored) or Lathrop (not as evocative). (I have yet to read Starkie's version.)This is the edition of my favorite novel that I will always turn to, and I recommend it without hesitation. In my opinion, although Raffel has made the text more accessible, and Grossman has made it more artsy, the crown still belongs to the older Norton Edition for a wonderfully executed balancing act of accuracy and emotion.

Don Quixote was written in two books, published 10 years apart. I was aware of some of the familiar episodes, like the windmills, that occur early in the first book, but had not appreciated the wit and creative depth of the full two-volume work. For example, in volume 2, Don Quixote meets people who know of him because they have read the first book. He also meets people who think they know him because they have read a false second volume (an actual book written by another author based on the first DQ book). In the second book, particularly, we see DQ as something of split personality. He continues his misguided and humorous adventures (although sometimes with unexpected success) as the delusional knight errant, but both he and Sancho Panza can be wise and thoughtful in some real human circumstances.

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