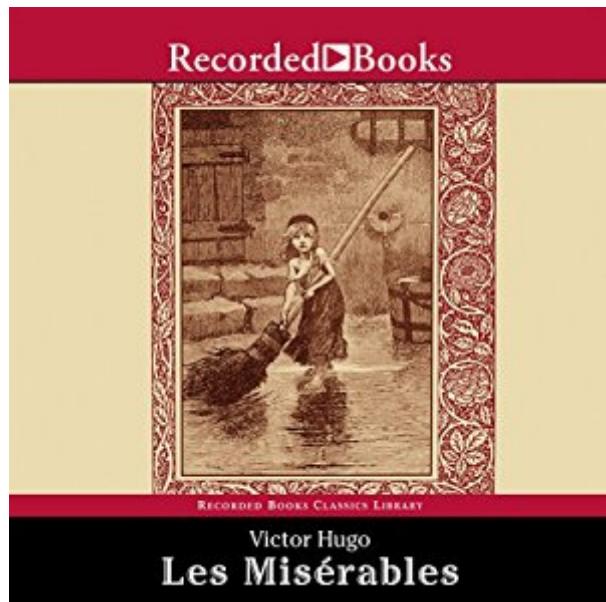


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Les Misérables: Translated By Julie Rose



Synopsis

One of the great classics of world literature and the inspiration for the most beloved stage musical of all time, *Les Misérables* is legendary author Victor Hugo's masterpiece. This extraordinary English version by renowned translator Julie Rose captures all the majesty and brilliance of Hugo's work. Here is the timeless story of the quintessential hunted man-Jean Valjean-and the injustices, violence, and social inequalities that torment him.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Customer Reviews

I have both the original Wilbour translation and the Norman Denny translation of this book, and I'd say that the Denny translation is the more readable of the two. Graham Robb, in his award-winning biography of Hugo has called Denny's translation "swiss cheese" and "translation as censorship." However, it's well-written, and the "excised" sections are included as appendices to which any reader can turn. In places where Denny edits the prose, he captures the spirit of the novel. But the best comparison is made by reading here's Wilbour from the beginning of Part Two, Book Four: "Forty years ago, the solitary pedestrian who ventured into the unknown region of La Salpetriere and went up along the Boulevard as far as the Barrier d'italie, reached certain points where it might be said that Paris had disappeared. It was no longer a solitude, for there were people passing; it was not the country for there were houses and streets. It was not a city, the streets had ruts in them, like highways, and grass grew along their borders; it was not a village, the houses were too lofty. What was it then? It was an inhabited place where there was nobody. It was a desert place where there was somebody. It was a boulevard of the great city, a street of Paris, wilder at

night than a forest and gloomier by day than a graveyard. It was the old quarter of the horse-market."Denny's version of the same passage" A stroller forty years ago penetrating beyond the Salpetriere by way of the Boulevard de l'Hopital as far as the Barrierr d'italie, would have come to a region where Paris seemed to disappear.

When a publisher announces the first unabridged translation of a world classic in over a hundred years, one has to get excited. But then you see it is by the same Julie Rose who recently mangled Dumas' LE CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE. Ms. Rose makes so many obvious mistakes in LES MISERABLES that one really doubts her fluency in French. But more seriously (!), it is her approach to the craft of translation that is really the problem. Ms. Rose is of the hip and groovy school. Nineteenth century peasants should of course sound like Paris Hilton. This makes the book less "stuffy" and more palatable to the "general reader". For example Hugo's Tholomy's is "un viveur de trente ans, mal conservé"; that is, a bon vivant of thirty, in bad shape. Rose's is "a wasted high roller of thirty". The MTV phrase "wasted" would be bad enough, but then she has to throw in another anachronistic expression "high roller". This means a serious gambler, not the same thing at all. Graham Robb, the biographer of Hugo, found numerous serious errors in this translation incl. that the Duke of Clarence was drowned in a butt of malmsey ("une tonne de malvoisie"), rather than Rose's ridiculous "a tun of marsala" and that the "sacre" of Charles X was his coronation not his "consecration". Marius was not "fierce" with pretty girls (Rose) but "shy" ("farouche"). And on and on. An amateur but arrogant production all the way, and a real disgrace. The original Wilbour translation, which was quite respectable, was revised and corrected by Lee Fahnestock and Norman MacAfee for Signet some years ago. It is still available and is by every standard superior.

I am a university professor -and French by birth and parenthood- and I teach Masterpiece of World Literature. Knowing very well the original text of Victor Hugo and having presented papers on Les Miserables in international academic colloquiums, I decided to put Les Miserables on my program. As the original has quite a voluminous number of pages and I have to cover many pieces, I decided to go for an abridged version of it. My disappointment is total!!!!1. This is the most ancient translation of Les Miserables made in 1862 (like that the publisher doesn't need to pay any copyright to any translator or author making a full profit) and the English is dated and not always faithful to the original (for instance when Cosette watch herself in the mirror the French original says that she felt like she was ugly [laide] but it is translated homeless (a word my student didn't even understand).2. In addition, the abridged work made here is one of the worse I have seen. The classic pieces have

been removed (like: who was Fantine and how she got Cosette and was abused by a student in Paris and how she was really in love with him - she was a grisette - Fantine selling all she has (hair, teeth ...) to provide for Cosette and becoming a prostitute is removed - the famous episode of Valjean taking Cosette back from the Thenardier is not even there!!!! Valjean giving the factory back to the workers, etc ...). The first part Fantine should be renamed as so much on Fantine has been cut! The cut is completely arbitrary and there are absolutely no transitions between the cuts! It is a lame work. I had to make photocopies of the missing text to be able to do my class!3.

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