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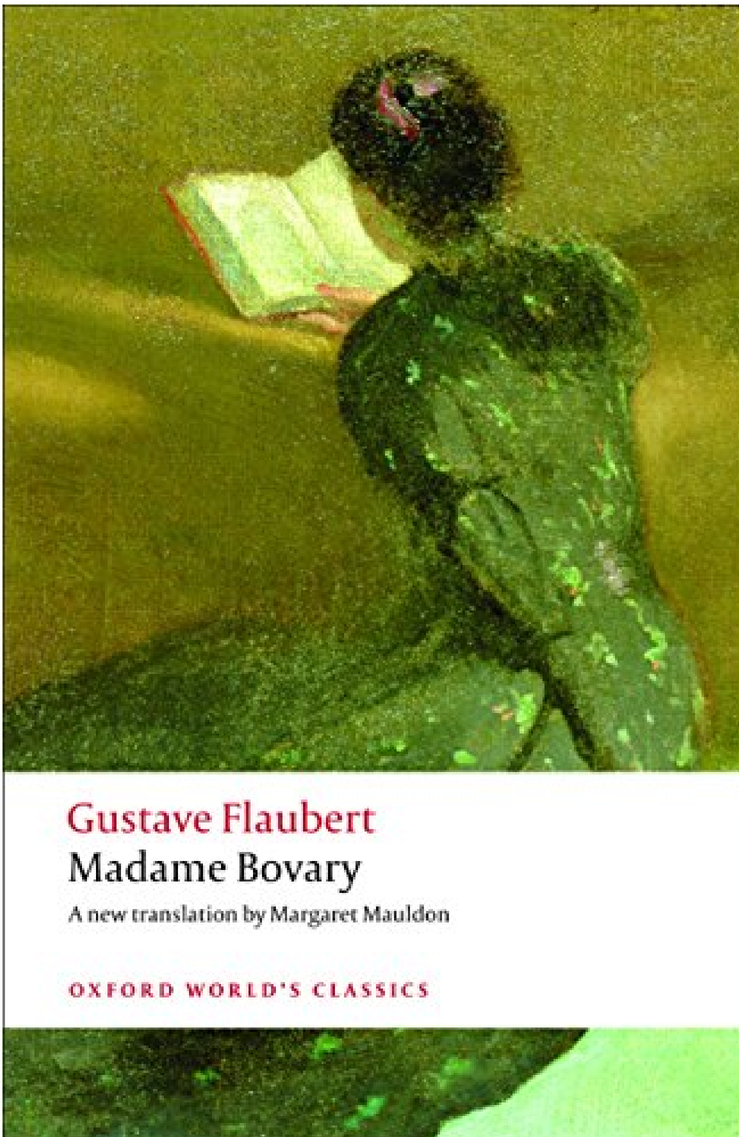
Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners



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(Read and download) Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners

Par Gustave Flaubert, Mark Overstall : Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners:

Description : Description du produitOne of the acknowledged masterpieces of 19th century realism, Madame Bovary is revered by writers and readers around the world, a mandatory stop on any pilgrimage through modern literature. Flaubert's legendary style, his intense care over the selection of words and the shaping of sentences, his unmatched ability to convey a mental world through the careful selection of telling details, shine on every page of this marvelous work. Now the award-winning translator Margaret Mauldon has produced a modern translation of this classic novel, one that perfectly captures the tone that makes Flaubert's style so distinct and admired. Madame Bovary scandalized its readers when it was first published in 1857. And the story itself remains as fresh today as when it was first written, a work that remains unsurpassed in its unveiling of character and society. It tells the tragic story of the romantic but empty-headed Emma Rouault. When Emma marries Charles Bovary, she imagines she will pass into the life of luxury and passion that she reads about in sentimental novels and women's magazines. But Charles is an

ordinary country doctor, and provincial life is very different from the romantic excitement for which she yearns. In her quest to realize her dreams she takes a lover, Rodolphe, and begins a devastating spiral into deceit and despair. And Flaubert captures every step of this catastrophe with sharp-eyed detail and a wonderfully subtle understanding of human emotions. Malcolm Bowie, a leading authority on French literature, explores Flaubert's genius in his masterly introduction to this must-have book for all lovers of great literature.

Prsentation de l'diteur'Would this misery go on forever? Was there no escape? And yet she was every bit as good as all those other women who led happy lives!'When Emma Rouault marries Charles Bovary she imagines she will pass into the life of luxury and passion that she reads about in sentimental novels and women's magazines. But Charles is a dull country doctor, and provincial life is very different from the romantic excitement for which she yearns. In her quest to realize her dreams she takes a lover, and begins a devastating spiral into deceit and despair.Flaubert's novel scandalized its readers when it was first published in 1857, and it remains unsurpassed in its unveiling of character and society. In this new translation Margaret Mauldon perfectly captures the tone that makes Flaubert's style so distinct and admired.ABOUT THE SERIES: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the widest range of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.From The Washington Post's Book World/washingtonpost.comIt still astonishes. If one were to ask, "World, which is the most perfect novel ever written?," the world would immediately answer: Madame Bovary. There are novels of greater structural complexity, such as Lord Jim and The Good Soldier, or of a broader social canvas, like Anna Karenina and In Search of Lost Time, or of more stylistic dash -- Ulysses, Lolita -- and many far more beloved (Pride and Prejudice, The Great Gatsby, The Leopard), but Madame Bovary still stands as the most controlled and beautifully articulated formal masterpiece in the history of fiction. Flaubert's artistic sensibility veered most naturally to gaudy excess, not to say a voyeuristic passion for the fleshy, sanguinary and transgressive. A little too much was hardly enough for him. In The Temptation of St. Anthony (three versions, 1849, 1856, 1874), the Queen of Sheba offers herself to the austere saint as a sexual paradise, which she sums up in the quite believable assertion, "I am not a woman, I am a world." Similarly, Salammbo (1862) -- an utterly static novel about ancient Carthage -- presents painterly tableaux of orgy, battle and torture. (I like its overripe sickly-sweetness, but am nearly alone in this taste -- it should have been illustrated by the Delacroix of "The Death of Sardanapalus.") By contrast, Flaubert's most ambitious completed novel, A Sentimental Education (1869) -- a vast social portrait of Paris in the 1840s -- errs in being too dry, too slow-moving, too programmatic. Yet its final pages -- in which the callow Frederic again meets the once-adored but now white-haired Madame Arnoux -- remain among the most honest and disillusioning in all fiction. Only in Madame Bovary (1857) -- and the story "A Simple Heart" (1877) -- did the novelist find just the right style, serene in tone, mildly ironic, tightly organized (partly through the use of unobtrusive symbolism), concise, exact and virtually without stylistic grand-standing. You can shake Madame Bovary and nothing will fall out. Like certain other classics (The Scarlet Letter, for instance), Flaubert's tale of adultery in the provinces suffers from being a staple of the school curriculum. Generations of French-language students have parsed their way through its paragraphs, noting Emma's future ruination because of her romantic reading and brief glimpse of aristocratic life, speculating about the horse or butterfly symbolism, dissecting the stichomythia of the scene at the country fair where the announcement of agricultural prizes alternates with Rodolphe's honeyed words of seduction. Such linguistic close analysis, which Flaubert invites and rewards, may nonetheless displace attention from an equally important aspect of the novel: its narrative economy and speed. Here is one advantage to reading a translation, particularly a fine one like Margaret Mauldon's: You don't need to pause to look up all those mots justes in a dictionary. Too often students merely work their way through the text with the same grim determination that its author relied on to compose it. In Madame Bovary Flaubert never allows anything to go on too long; he can suggest years of boredom in a paragraph, capture the essence of a character in a single conversational exchange, or show us the gulf between his soulful heroine and her dull-witted husband in a sentence (and one that, moreover, presages all Emma's later experience of men). Returning from their wedding, the newlyweds and the bridal party must cross a farmer's field: "Emma's dress was rather long and the hem trailed a bit; from time to time she would stop and lift it up, then, with gloved fingers, delicately remove the wild grasses and tiny thistle

burrs, while Charles stood empty-handed, waiting for her to finish."As in Jane Austen, there's pervasive irony throughout Flaubert, some of it verging on the heavy-handed: Charles, unaware as usual, announces to the lecherous Rodolphe "that his wife was at his disposal." But what struck me most in rereading the book this time are its tiny, almost casual, naturalistic details: Describing the houses in Yonville, we learn that "here and there the plastered walls, crossed diagonally by black beams, support a straggly pear tree, and at the doors of the houses are miniature swinging gates, to keep out the baby chicks that cluster round the step to peck at crumbs of brown bread soaked in cider." Leon, a young lawyer who has begun to fall in love with Emma, accompanies the young mother on a visit to the wet-nurse: "Madame Bovary blushed, and he turned away, fearful lest his glance might perhaps have been too bold. The baby had just vomited on the collar of her dress, and she put her down again in the cradle. The wet-nurse quickly came over to wipe up the mess, assuring Emma that it wouldn't show." At the agricultural fair, "to one side, about a hundred yards beyond the enclosure, motionless as a statue of bronze, stood a great black bull wearing a muzzle, with an iron ring in its nostril. A child dressed in rags held it by a rope." Finally, what could be more true to life than this? Leon is trying to seduce Emma inside the Rouen Cathedral, but "she seemed determined to let him talk without interrupting him. She sat with her arms crossed, looking down at the rosettes on her slippers, occasionally wriggling her toes slightly inside the satin." Though Madame Bovary escapes Flaubert's predilection for overblown, histrionic description, his heroine is primarily a woman of gestures, a mime of the grandly operatic emotions she yearns to feel. In her love-talk Emma can be as saccharine as a P.G. Wodehouse female lyricizing over the stars as "God's daisy chain." Because she comes to fear any diminution in passion, Emma inevitably takes to growing more brazen, more desperately fantastic, with each sexual encounter. Fundamentally, she is an empty vessel, a pretty B-movie actress trying out new roles which she then overplays.And yet it's hard not to sympathize with this doomed young woman. Flaubert may have wanted us to regard her as essentially kitsch, a creature formed by impossible reveries of blissful self-fulfillment, whether in marriage, passion or religious observance. But Emma nonetheless tries, and tries hard, to live her dreams and in this sense is hardly different from, say, Fitzgerald's Gatsby. Or any of the rest of us. Don't we all ache with unabashed hopes, unassuaged desires? For Emma, the ball at La Vaubyessard shines as a golden interlude in her drab life, a glimpse of paradise. Nonetheless, "little by little, in her memory, the faces all blurred together; she forgot the tunes of the quadrilles; no longer could she so clearly picture the liveries and the rooms; some details disappeared, but the yearning remained." The yearning always remains. For the modern reader, familiar with adultery through magazine articles, television soap operas or personal experience, Madame Bovary shows how surprisingly common, how standardized, is the blueprint for such illicit affairs: The soft-focused imaginings, the touch of a hand, a suggestive phrase or smile, the search for seclusion, the breathless rush to the lover's arms, the fear of exposure, the financial outlay (and the need to hide it), the ever-growing recklessness, and then, more and more often, the violent arguments and impossible demands, the violation of promises, mutual recrimination and, finally, inevitably, the tearful break-up, leading to further heartache or embitterment and, sometimes, relief. As Flaubert writes about the last days of the affair with Leon, "They knew one another too well to experience that wonderment of mutual possession that increases its joy a hundredfold. She was as sick of him as he was weary of her. Emma was discovering, in adultery, all the banality of marriage." When Emma tells her first lover, Rodolphe -- cad, bounder, scoundrel, rake -- how much she adores him, how she will be his servant, submit to his every desire as his concubine, Flaubert observes: "He had heard these things said to him so many times that they no longer held any surprises for him. Emma was just like all his mistresses, and the charm of novelty, gradually falling away like a garment, laid bare the eternal monotony of passion, which never varies in its forms and its expression." Such world-weary, Gallic cynicism. But Emma truly loves Rodolphe (or thinks she does). Still "he could not see -- this man of such broad experience -- the difference of feeling, beneath the similarity of expression. Because wanton or venal lips had murmured the same words to him, he only half believed in the sincerity of those he was hearing now; to a large extent they should be disregarded, he believed, because such exaggerated language must surely mask commonplace feelings: as if the soul in its fullness did not sometimes overflow into the most barren metaphors, since no one can ever tell the precise measure of his own needs, of his own ideas, of his own pain . . ." That is movingly true in itself -- how often do words fail us when we wish to express our deepest feelings -- but Flaubert, in his genius, caps even this with one of his most imaginative and disheartening similes: " . . . and human language is like a cracked kettledrum on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when what we long to do is make music that will move the stars to pity." In his excellent introduction to this new edition, Malcolm Bowie further

analyzes this passage to demonstrate how Flaubert is actively arguing with his own characters, thus enhancing the narrative dynamic of the novel. That's certainly true, but ordinary readers can think about it later. What truly matters is this: Madame Bovary is available in a superb new translation, in a handsome hardback volume, and if you've never read it, or if you've only worked through it in first-year college French, you need to sit down with this book as soon as possible. This is one of the summits of prose art, and not to know such a masterpiece is to live a diminished life. Some early critics complained that Emma's story was a sordid and commonplace one, yet that is, paradoxically, its glory. The novelist once famously proclaimed that he himself was Madame Bovary -- but failed to add that so are you, so am I. We are all the victims of unrealized or unrealizable dreams. They somehow slip from our grasp or glitter before our eyes, only a little beyond our reach. "I admire tinsel as much as gold," Flaubert once wrote in a letter. "Indeed, the poetry of tinsel is even greater, because it is sadder."Copyright 2004, The Washington Post Co. All Rights Reserved.Revue de presseA superb new translation. s