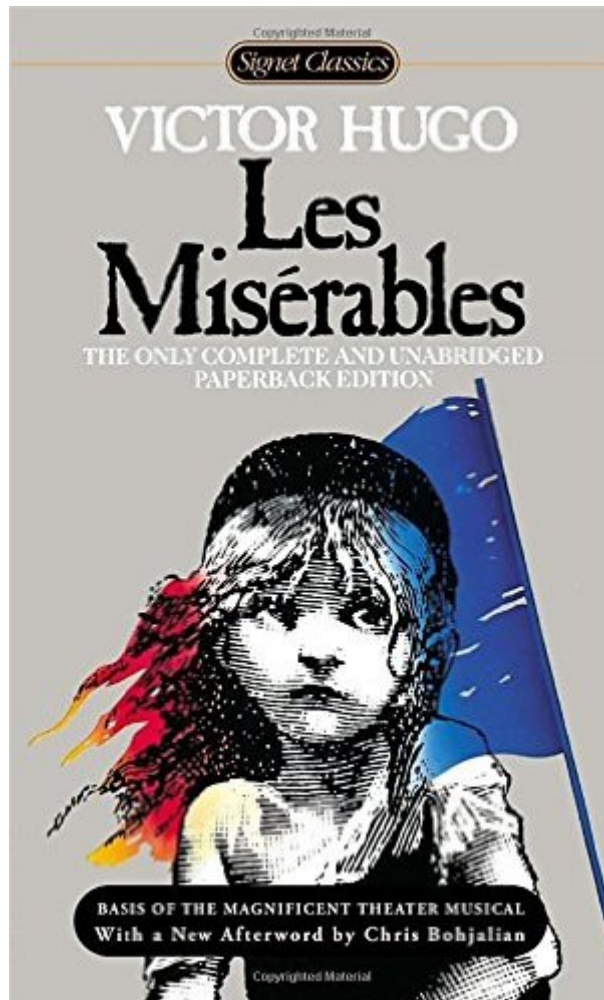


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# Les Miserables (Signet Classics)



## Synopsis

Introducing one of the most famous characters in literature, Jean Valjean "the noble peasant imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread" *Les Misérables* ranks among the greatest novels of all time. In it, Victor Hugo takes readers deep into the Parisian underworld, immerses them in a battle between good and evil, and carries them to the barricades during the uprising of 1832 with a breathtaking realism that is unsurpassed in modern prose. Within his dramatic story are themes that capture the intellect and the emotions: crime and punishment, the relentless persecution of Valjean by Inspector Javert, the desperation of the prostitute Fantine, the amorality of the rogue Thénardier, and the universal desire to escape the prisons of our own minds. *Les Misérables* gave Victor Hugo a canvas upon which he portrayed his criticism of the French political and judicial systems, but the portrait that resulted is larger than life, epic in scope "an extravagant spectacle that dazzles the senses even as it touches the heart." This Signet Classics edition is the ONLY completely unabridged paperback edition available today. Translated by Lee Fahnestock and Norman Macafee, based on the classic nineteenth-century Charles E. Wilbour translation. With an Introduction by Lee Fahnestock and a New Afterword.

## Book Information

Series: Signet Classics

Mass Market Paperback: 1488 pages

Publisher: Signet; Unabridged edition (October 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 045141943X

ISBN-13: 978-0451419439

Product Dimensions: 4.1 x 2 x 6.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars. See all reviews (495 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #6,206 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in Books > Literature & Fiction >

World Literature > European > French #322 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Classics

## Customer Reviews

Having not read many literature books in my lifetime, undertaking to read one of the finest piece of work ever written is a challenge. If you are like me and have read the reviews on before tackling this gigantic novel then I do not need to go on about how great this book is and what it is all about. Also, if like me, you are a beginner in the world of fine literature, the following are a few tips I would give

to those who haven't read Les Miserables. Here goes:1. Get the book and do not be intimidated by its size. It is huge but the chapters are not very long and this version is made so that it is easier to understand. If you compare several different translation, you will see the difference.2. Make sure to buy the Signet Classic version translated by Lee Fahnestock and Norman MacAfee (ISBN 0-451-52526-4). One reviewer said that this was the best version available and I totally agree with that. This is the new version based on the 19th Century Charles E. Wilbour translation. I had another version of this book and this one is by far the only completely unabridged paperback and also more reader-friendly.3. Have a dictionary handy as there are many words that need translation.4. Knowing the French language/history is a bonus but not required. Although knowing about French history will make some of his detailed descriptions of France not so tedious. In one chapter entitled "In the Year 1817" he talks about what was going on in France in that time period and although I read every single word, I must confess I was confused because it is all based on the history of France in that year of which I know nothing.

Here's my story about how I came to love this book.If you're an average schmuck, with a job (not in academia), a life, and some curiosity, this review is for you.If you're a literary blueblood, this review isnt for you. If your sworn enemy in life used to be your closest friend until they disagreed with you about whether Beowulf was a real person, be offended by my apathy and go away. If you had to turn off the TV newscasts on 9/11 because they were getting in the way of your arguments of whether sonnets devalue prose, just move on down to the next review.I'm not a Literature buff. I tolerated English in high school and college because I had to, skipping what I could, skimming what I could get away with, and bluffing where needed. The thought picking up a stack of books and being dictated a marathon schedule to read them by still makes me bristle with quiet rebellion.After school I ended up with a job with lots of down time between bursts of madness. I decided to make use of slow time going back and leisurely reading some of the 'classics' that I probably should have read before. Twain, Tolstoy, Dickens, Stowe and others pulled from the titles of Cliff's Notes (Hey, if Cliff says they're important....) Funny, but classics are much more palatable when they are read on a leisurely timeframe. Some I liked, some I couldn't care less about, but Les Miserables was, literally, a life-changing text.I fell into Les Mis completely by accident. On day I forgot to pack whatever book I was working on that day and dug around looking for something other than Harlequins and Clancys.

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