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The Common Reader

Virginia Woolf (1882 - 1941)

Read by: Multiple readers Language: English
 Length: 9 hours 55 minutes Formats: MP3 CD, download
 Genre: Fiction, British Fiction Style: Solo

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The Common Reader by Virginia Woolf is a collection of essays that showcases Woolf's keen literary insights and her exploration of the relationship between readers and literature. First published in 1925, the book is divided into two series, with the first focusing on literary criticism and the second on biographical sketches

In these essays, Woolf examines the ordinary reader's experience with literature, challenging conventional notions of what is considered "common" or "universal" in reading. She emphasizes the importance of a diverse and inclusive literary canon that reflects the varied experiences of different individuals. Woolf's prose is characterized by its intellectual depth, wit, and a unique blend of personal and critical perspectives.

The Common Reader is a celebration of the pleasure and intellectual stimulation derived from reading. Woolf discusses a wide range of authors and works, from classic literature to contemporary fiction, showcasing her belief in the transformative power of literature. The collection remains a significant contribution to literary criticism, as Woolf not only analyzes individual works but also delves into broader questions about the nature of reading and the relationship between authors and their audience.

Virginia Woolf (January 25, 1882 – March 28, 1941) was one of the most important modernist English writers of the twentieth century and a pioneer of stream of consciousness narrative. She was born into an upper-middle-class London family that was well established in the social and cultural world of Victorian England. Her father, Leslie Stephen, was a leading figure in Cambridge literary circles. Her mother, Julia, was from a prominent Anglo-Indian family. She grew up speaking fluent French and German, living for part of the year in Paris, and making many trips to Europe. From 1897 to 1901, she attended the Ladies' Department of King's College London, where she studied classics and history and met the early reformers of women's higher education and the women's rights movement. In her teens she began to read the literary and philosophical works that her parents collected and began to write for herself. After her father's death in 1904 the family moved to Bloomsbury, where Virginia became a part of the Bloomsbury Group of artists, writers, and other intellectuals founded by her brother. She married Leonard Woolf in 1912. In 1917 they established the Hogarth Press, which published many of her novels: *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), and *The Waves* (1931). She also wrote many essays, notably "A Room of One's Own" (1929), which have been collected as *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* in six volumes. Throughout her life she suffered from what would be diagnosed today as bipolar disorder. In 1941, at age 59, Woolf died by drowning herself in the River Ouse at Lewes.