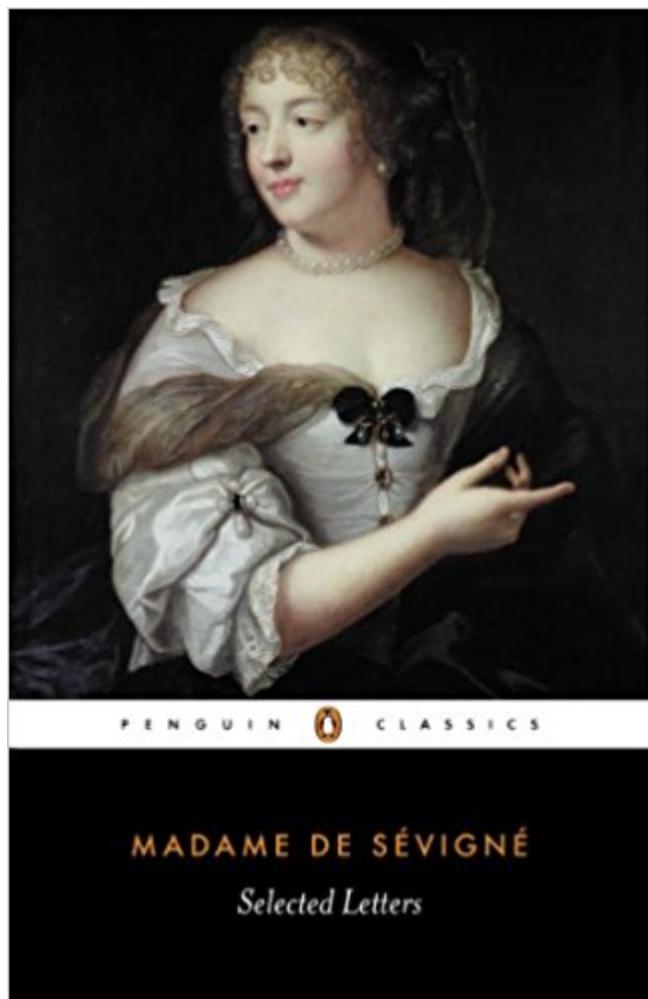


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Selected Letters (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

One of the world's greatest correspondents, Madame de Sévigné paints an extraordinarily vivid picture of France at the time of Louis XIV, in eloquent letters written throughout her life to family and friends. A significant figure in French society and literary circles, whose close friends included Madame de La Fayette and La Rochefoucauld, she reflected on both significant historical events and personal issues, and in this selection of the most significant letters, spanning almost fifty years, she is by turns humorous and melancholic, profound and superficial. Whether describing the new plays of Racine and Molière, speculating on court scandals - including the intrigues of the King's mistresses - or relating her own family concerns, Madame de Sévigné provides throughout an intriguing portrait of the lost age of Le Roi Soleil. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, French (translation)

One of the world's great letter writers, Madame de Sevigne (1626-96) has bequeathed an

extraordinarily vivid picture of life in the France of Louis XIV.

The letters are a literary classic and the translation is a good one. This book is a delight to read.

Maybe I'm just bored with the French aristocracy, but after forever hearing about what a work of art Madame's letters were, I found them to be yawn inspiring.

The letters of the divine Marie have been celebrated for more than three centuries, from her time to ours. It is impossible not to be drawn in to the lost world of le Roi Soleil when you have such a charming companion as your guide. There is an immediacy and sensitivity to her writing that establishes a bond with the reader as palpable today as it was in the 17th century. The Marquise knew everyone and saw practically everything of note in the France of her time, or knew somebody who had seen it. She was a fixture at court, the companion of la Rochefoucauld and Madame La Fayette, saw the plays of Racine and Corneille, and heard the music of Lully. You can read about the trial of Foucquet, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and witness the terrible death of the odious Marquise de Brinvilliers. This Penguin Classics edition by the great Leonard Tancock features wonderful translations but could have done with a few more explanatory notes. And it should have been longer!

The author uses old language. She should not write anything further.

A fine classic I had not read. Madame de Sevigne is in there with the best of the greatest. Thank you Penguin and for making it available in paper form.

loved it

Both Proust and his fictional grandmother adored de Sevigne's letters, but I'd say they're mostly of historical interest. Great letter writers always sound like an oxymoron to me, if by "great" you mean in the literary sense. Do artists write their letters with as much care as their works, and do they intend them for publication? Proust's letters, over which Professor Kolb has taken so much trouble, are exceedingly dull compared to his masterpiece. A mystery to me

I have read the letters in French and commend the translator for capturing their spirit in English. No

small feat given the passage of time that has muddied the context of many of the letters.

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