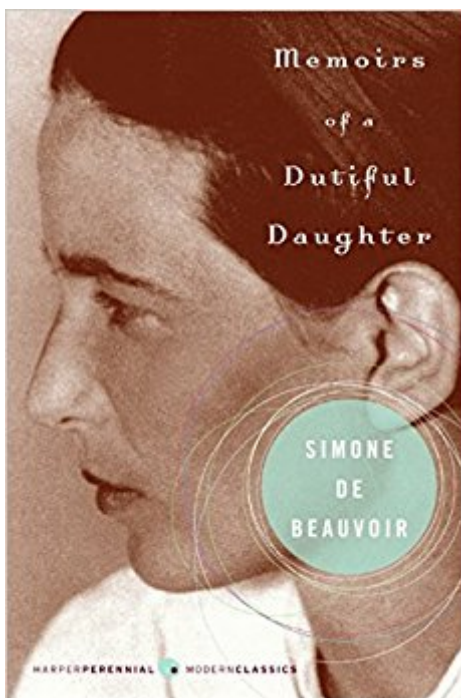


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Memoirs Of A Dutiful Daughter (Perennial Classics)



Synopsis

A superb autobiography by one of the great literary figures of the twentieth century, Simone de Beauvoir's *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* offers an intimate picture of growing up in a bourgeois French family, rebelling as an adolescent against the conventional expectations of her class, and striking out on her own with an intellectual and existential ambition exceedingly rare in a young woman in the 1920s. She vividly evokes her friendships, love interests, mentors, and the early days of the most important relationship of her life, with fellow student Jean-Paul Sartre, against the backdrop of a turbulent political time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“It is a book that will leave no one indifferent, and no one affected in quite the same way.” (New York Times)

“[Beauvoir’s] graciously written memoirs carry distinct appeal in recording the emotional and intellectual birth pangs of a fascinating woman.” (Time)

“This is perhaps the best piece of writing Mlle. de Beauvoir has yet done; the translator does it justice.” (Saturday Review)

French Existentialist philosopher, novelist, essayist, editor, and groundbreaking feminist Simone De Beauvoir was born in Paris, where she lived most of her life. She was the author of the feminist classic *The Second Sex*, several volumes of autobiography, and highly acclaimed novels, including

The Mandarins, winner of the Prix Goncourt.

"Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter" is an exhaustive look at early life of Simone de Beauvoir. The autobiography explains four stages in the development of her life from age 0-20. I recommend this book to anyone interested in the life of Simone de Beauvoir or for an account of bourgeois upbringing in the early 20th century. I do have some complaints. First, the first half of the book is exceptionally exhaustive. She gives detailed descriptions of things that could have easily been summarized. Second, I was expecting this book to elaborate on Beauvoir's early relationship with Sartre. Roughly ten pages are dedicated to Sartre. While her description of Sartre is effusive, it's very short! Third, her memoirs give only a starting point for her intellectual curiosity. I guess I'll have to read "The Prime of Life" :)

I love Simone de Beauvoir and have read *The Second Sex* as well as *The Mandarins* and *She Came to Stay*. She is a great writer. Here though she goes into the minutiae of her childhood memories. For women who have been stifled and formed by a domineering mother, and who finally rebelled, this book will resonate as it did for me. But every episode of her childhood is so long winded that it was hard for me to keep interested.

Simone de Beauvoir's *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, which was published in 1958, not only is a great insight into Parisian and French life at the turn of the 20th Century, but shows the growth of a great writer. Her seminal work, *The Second Sex*, which was published in 1948, made her a star--a writer ticked off about how women had been treated in society. From that book onward, her insights and philosophy, along with Sartre and other intellectuals, made the world sit up and take notice. De Beauvoir, in *Dutiful Daughter*, shows you a single-minded young girl who suddenly becomes a beautiful woman with a lot on her mind. One of the great thinkers, along with Hanna Arendt, of our time.

Very nice read with lots of insight on bringing up complexions, personality development, relationships and perception of the world/God. However, I found it unnecessarily long with some parts too much detailed oriented... Could have been easily 50 pages shorter.

love it and her!

I wanted to love this book, but I never quite managed to connect with it. It is a rather detailed story of the author's childhood and a less-detailed story of early adulthood. I think more focus on her adult life might have made it more resonant for me. However, the author's prose is very descriptive and enjoyable to read.

Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter is the first of Simone de Beauvoir's four autobiographies. "The most innocent conversations were full of hidden traps; my parents construed my words with their own idiom and ascribed to me ideas that had nothing in common with what I really thought. I found myself repeating Barres' phrase: 'Why have words when their brutal precision bruises our complicated souls'. As soon as I opened my mouth, I provided them with a stick to beat me with, and once more I would be shut up in that world which I had spent years trying to get away from, in which everything, without any possibility of mistake, has its own name, its set place and its agreed function, in which hate and love, good and evil are as crudely differentiated as black and white, in which from the start everything is classified, catalogued, fixed and formulated, and irrevocably judged; that world with the sharp edges, its bare outlines starkly illuminated by an implacable flat light that is never once touched by the shadow of doubt." In *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, Simone de Beauvoir lives in a stark black-and-white world with no gray areas or blurred edges. Everything is stiff and rigid -- almost suffocatingly so -- she cannot breathe (philosophically speaking) and cries a lot. "Dutifulness" has a death-grip around her throat! She abhors blatant tradition, mindless religious rites and glaring absurdity -- but, she loves Paris, books, her first cousin Jacques, writing and nature! The Luxembourg garden in Paris (filled with picturesque fountains, diverse minds and fragrant flowers, near the Sorbonne university) plays a major (inspirational) focal point in her formative years. At a very early age, Simone decides she will become a world renowned writer -- but, in order to accomplish such a feat, must give up any idea of marriage and children -- at least in the traditional sense. She plans to focus all her creative energies toward her #1 passion, writing. A meticulous undertaking, satisfying -- very "Dutiful". --Katharena Eiermann, 2007, *The Realm of Existentialism, Presidential Hopeful*

One of Beauvoir's best, A very insightful memoir.

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