



# Clarissa: Or the History of a Young Lady (Penguin Classics)

*Samuel Richardson*

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**"Oh thou savage-hearted monster! What work hast thou made in one guilty hour, for a whole age of repentance!"**

Pressured by her unscrupulous family to marry a wealthy man she detests, the young Clarissa Harlowe is tricked into fleeing with the witty and debonair Robert Lovelace and places herself under his protection. Lovelace, however, proves himself to be an untrustworthy rake whose vague promises of marriage are accompanied by unwelcome and increasingly brutal sexual advances. And yet, Clarissa finds his charm alluring, her scrupulous sense of virtue tinged with unconfessed desire. Told through a complex series of interweaving letters, *Clarissa* is a richly ambiguous study of a fatally attracted couple and a work of astonishing power and immediacy. A huge success when it first appeared in 1747, and translated into French and German, it remains one of the greatest of all European novels.

In his introduction, Angus Ross examines characterization, the epistolary style, the role of the family and the position of women in *Clarissa*. This edition also includes a chronology, suggestions for further reading, tables of letters, notes, a glossary and an appendix on the music for the "Ode to Wisdom."

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