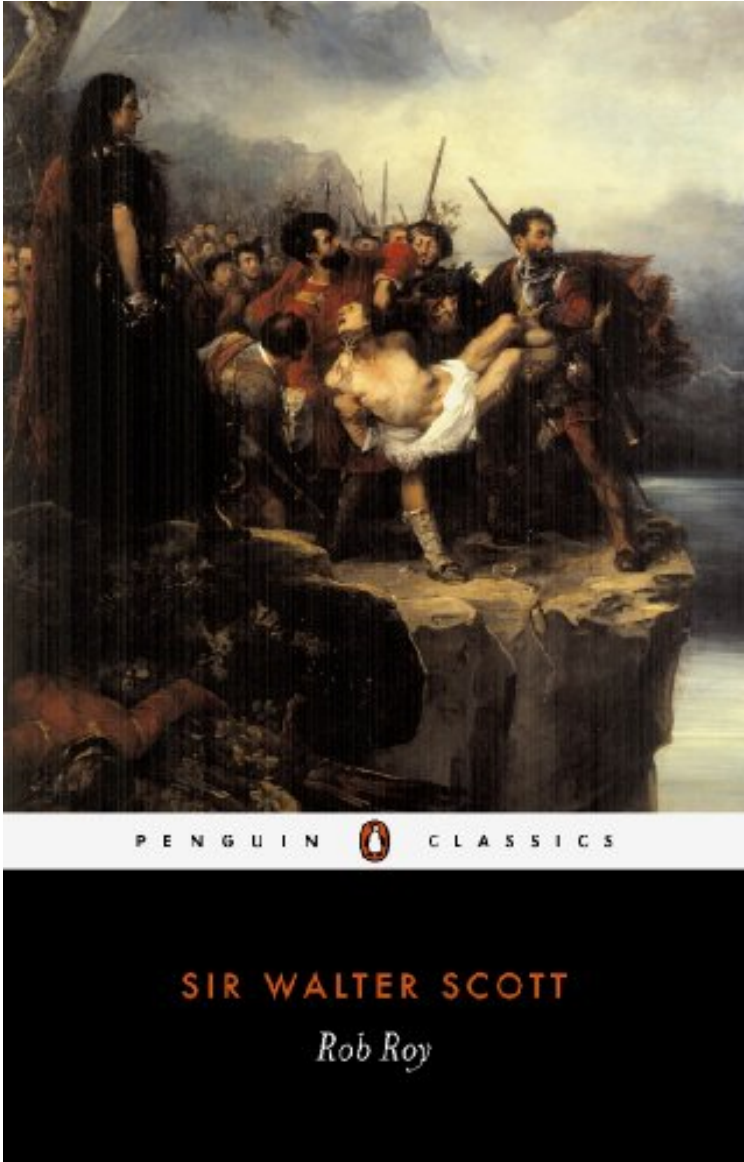


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Rob Roy



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[Download] Rob Roy

Par Walter Scott : Rob Roy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rob Roy:

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Description : Description du produitFirst published in 1817, Rob Roy was not only a resounding success but also one of the first historical novels of its time. Full of swashbuckling action and intrigue, it tells the story of Frank Osbaldistone, the son of a wealthy British businessman, who travels to Scotland, where he is drawn into the lawless world of the fiercely noble outlaw Robert Roy MacGregor. Osbaldistone and Rob Roy, along with the witty Diane Vernon, embark on numerous adventures during the height of the Jacobite uprising. With sweeping descriptions of Scottish landscapes and vivid characterizations, Rob Roy is an epic tale of heroism set against the backdrop of true Scottish history.

Prsentation de l'diteurWhen young Francis Osbaldistone discovers that his vicious and scheming cousin Rashleigh has designs both on his father's business and his beloved Diana Vernon, he turns in desperation to

Rob Roy for help. Chieftain of the MacGregor clan, Rob Roy is a brave and fearless man, able and cunning. But he is also an outlaw with a price on his head, and as he and Francis join forces to pursue Rashleigh, he is constantly aware that he, too, is being pursued - and could be captured at any moment. Set on the eve of the 1715 Jacobite uprising, Rob Roy brilliantly evokes a Scotland on the verge of rebellion, blending historical fact and a novelist's imagination to create an incomparable portrait of intrigue, rivalry and romance. This novel, first published in 1817, achieved a huge success and helped establish the historical novel as a literary form. In rich prose and vivid description, Rob Roy follows the adventures of a businessman's son, Frank Osbaldistone, who is sent to Scotland and finds himself drawn to the powerful, enigmatic figure of Rob Roy MacGregor, the romantic outlaw who fights for justice and dignity for the Scots. This is an incomparable portrait of the haunted Highlands and Scotland's glorious past.

Chapter I
How have I sinned, that this affliction should light so heavy on me? I have no more sons, and this no more mine own. My grand curse hangs over his head that thus transformed thee! Travel? I'll send my horse to travel next.

Monsieur Thomas
You have requested me, my dear friend, to bestow some of that leisure with which Providence has blessed the decline of my life in registering the hazards and difficulties which attended its commencement.

The recollection of those adventures, as you are pleased to term them, has indeed left upon my mind a chequered and varied feeling of pleasure and of pain, mingled, I trust, with no slight gratitude and veneration to the Disposer of human events, who guided my early course through much risk and labour, that the ease with which he has blessed my prolonged life might seem softer from remembrance and contrast. Neither is it possible for me to doubt, what you have often affirmed, that the incidents which befell me among a people singularly primitive in their government and manners have something interesting and attractive for those who love to hear an old man's stories of a past age. Still, however, you must remember that the tale told by one friend, and listened to by another, loses half its charms when committed to paper; and that the narratives to which you have attended with interest, as heard from the voice of him to whom they occurred, will appear less deserving of attention when perused in the seclusion of your study. But your greener age and robust constitution promise longer life than will, in all human probability, be the lot of your friend. Throw, then, these sheets into some secret drawer of your escritoir till we are separated from each other's society by an event which may happen at any moment, and which must happen within the course of a few very few years. When we are parted in this world to meet, I hope, in a better you will, I am well aware, cherish more than it deserves the memory of your departed friend, and will find in those details which I am now to commit to paper matter for melancholy but not unpleasing reflection. Others bequeath to the confidants of their bosom portraits of their external features; I put into your hands a faithful transcript of my thoughts and feelings, of my virtues and of my failings, with the assured hope that the follies and headstrong impetuosity of my youth will meet the same kind construction and forgiveness which have so often attended the faults of my matured age. One advantage, among the many, of addressing my Memoirs (if I may give these sheets a name so imposing) to a dear and intimate friend is, that I may spare some of the details, in this case unnecessary, which I must needs have detained a stranger from what I have to say of greater interest. Why should I bestow all my tediousness upon you because I have you in my power, and have ink, paper, and time before me? At the same time I dare not promise that I may not abuse the opportunity so temptingly offered me to treat of myself and my own concerns, even though I speak of circumstances as well known to you as to myself. The seductive love of narrative, when we ourselves are the heroes of the events which we tell, often disregards the attention due to the time and patience of the audience, and the best and wisest have yielded to its fascination. I need only remind you of the singular instance evinced by the form of that rare and original edition of Sully's Memoirs, which you (with the fond vanity of a book-collector) insist upon preferring to that which is reduced to the useful and ordinary form of Memoirs, but which I think curious solely as illustrating how far so great a man as the author was accessible to the foible of self-importance. If I recollect rightly, that venerable peer and great statesman had appointed no fewer than four gentlemen of his household to draw up the events of his life, under the title of Memorials of the Sage and Royal Affairs of State, Domestic, Political, and Military, transacted by Henry IV., and so forth. These grave recorders, having made their compilation, reduced the Memoirs containing all the remarkable events of their masters' life into a narrative, addressed to himself in propria persona. And thus, instead of telling his own story in the third person, like Julius Cæsar, or in the first person, like most who, in the hall or the study, undertake to be the heroes of their own tale, Sully enjoyed the refined though whimsical pleasure of having the events of his life told over to him by his secretaries, being himself the auditor, as he was also the hero, and probably the author, of the whole book. It must have been a great sight to have seen the ex-minister, as bold upright as a starched ruff

and laced cassock could make him, seated in state beneath his canopy, and listening to the recitation of his compilers, while, standing bare in his presence, they informed him gravely, Thus said the dukeso did the duke infersuch were your graces sentiments upon this important pointsuch were your secret counsels to the king on that other emergency, circumstances all of which must have been much better known to their hearer than to themselves, and most of which could only be derived from his own special communication. My situation is not quite so ludicrous as that of the great Sully, and yet there would be something whimsical in Frank Osbaldistone giving Will Tresham a formal account of his birth, education, and connexions in the world. I will, therefore, wrestle with the tempting spirit of P. P., clerk of our parish, as I best may, and endeavour to tell you nothing that is familiar to you already. Some things, however, I must recall to your memory, because, though formerly well known to you, they may have been forgotten through lapse of time, and they afford the groundwork of my destiny. You must remember my father well; for, as your own was a member of the mercantile house, you knew him from infancy. Yet you hardly saw him in his best days, before age and infirmity had quenched his ardent spirit of enterprise and speculation. He would have been a poorer man indeed, but perhaps as happy, had he devoted to the extension of science those active energies and acute powers of observation for which commercial pursuits found occupation. Yet in the fluctuations of mercantile speculation there is something captivating to the adventurer, even independent of the hope of gain. He who embarks on that fickle sea requires to possess the skill of the pilot and the fortitude of the navigator, and after all may be wrecked and lost, unless the gales of fortune breathe in his favour. This mixture of necessary attention and inevitable hazard the frequent and awful uncertainty whether prudence shall overcome fortune, or fortune baffle the schemes of prudence affords full occupation for the powers as well as for the feelings of the mind, and trade has all the fascination of gambling without its moral guilt. Early in the 18th century, when I Heaven help me! was a youth of some twenty years old, I was summoned suddenly from Bourdeaux to attend my father on business of importance. I shall never forget our first interview. You recollect the brief, abrupt, and somewhat stern mode in which he was wont to communicate his pleasure to those around him. Methinks I see him even now in my minds eye the firm and upright figure; the step, quick and determined; the eye, which shot so keen and so penetrating a glance; the features, on which care had already planted wrinkles; and hear his language, in which he never wasted word in vain, expressed in a voice which had sometimes an occasional harshness far from the intention of the speaker. When I dismounted from my post-horse I hastened to my fathers apartment. He was traversing it with an air of composed and steady deliberation which even my arrival, although an only son unseen for four years, was unable to discompose. I threw myself into his arms. He was a kind, though not a fond, father, and the tear twinkled in his dark eye, but it was only for a moment. Dubourg writes to me that he is satisfied with you, Frank. I am happy, sir But I have less reason to be so, he added, sitting down at his bureau. I am sorry, sir Sorry and happy, Frank, are words that on most occasions signify little or nothing. Here is your last letter. He took it out from a number of others tied up in a parcel of red tape, and curiously labelled and filed. There lay my poor epistle, written on the subject the nearest to my heart at the time, and couched in words which I had thought would work compassion, if not conviction there, I say, it lay, squeezed up among the letters on miscellaneous business in which my fathers daily affairs had engaged him. I cannot help smiling internally when I recollect the mixture of hurt vanity and wounded feeling with which I regarded my remonstrance, to the penning of which there had gone, I promise you, some trouble as I beheld it extracted from amongst letters of advice, of credit, and all the commonplace lumber, as I then thought them, of a merchants correspondence. Surely, thought I, a letter of such importance I dared not say, even to myself, so well writtendeserved a separate place, as well as more anxious consideration, than those on the ordinary business of the counting-house. But my father did not observe my dissatisfaction, and would not have minded it if he had. He proceeded, with the letter in his hand: This, Frank, is yours of the 21st ultimo, in which you advise me (reading from my letter) that in the most important business of forming a plan and adopting a profession for life you trust my paternal goodness will hold you entitled to at least a negative voice; that you have insuperableay, insuperable is the word I wish, by the way, you would write a more distinct current hand, draw a score through the tops of your ts and open the loops of your ls insuperable objections to the arrangements which I have proposed to you. There is much more to the same effect, occupying four good pages of paper, which a little attention to perspicuity and distinctness of expression might have comprised within as many lines. For, after all, Frank, it amounts but to this, that you will not do as I would have you. That I cannot, sir, in the present instance, not that I will not. Words avail very little with me, young man, said my father, whose inflexibility always possessed the air of the most perfect calmness

and self-possession. Can not may be a more civil phrase than will not, but the expressions are synonymous where there is no moral impossibility. But I am not a friend to doing business hastily; we will talk this matter over after dinner. Owen! Owen appeared, not with the silver locks which you were used to venerate, for he was then little more than fifty; but he had the same, or an exactly similar, uniform suit of light brown clothes; the same pearl-grey silk stockings; the same stock, with its silver buckle; the same plaited cambric ruffles, drawn down over his knuckles in the parlour, but in the counting-house carefully folded back under the sleeves, that they might remain unstained by the ink which he daily consumed in a word, the same grave, formal, yet benevolent cast of features which continued to his death to distinguish the head clerk of the great house of Osbaldistone and Tresham. Owen, said my father, as the kind old man shook me affectionately by the hand, you must dine with us to-day, and hear the news Frank has brought us from our friends in Bourdeaux. Owen made one of his stiff bows of respectful gratitude; for, in those days, when the distance between superiors and inferiors was enforced in a manner to which the present times are strangers, such an invitation was a favour of some little consequence.