The Story of My Life

Read by Peter Wickham

GIACOMO CASANOVA • VOLUME 1

The Story of My Life is the explosive and exhilarating autobiography by the infamous libertine Giacomo Casanova. Intense and scandalous, Casanova’s extraordinary adventures take the listener on an incredible voyage across 18th-century Europe – from France to Russia, Poland to Spain and Turkey to Germany, with Venice at their heart. He falls madly in love, has wild flings and delirious orgies, and encounters some of the most brilliant figures of his time, including Catherine the Great, Louis XV and Benjamin Franklin. He holds a verbal duel with Voltaire, a pistol duel with a Polish noble, and finds himself hauled before the court multiple times, including in London, where the judge in question turns out to be none other than Henry Fielding. His appetite for life is voracious; for him, a life lived close to the precipice is the only life worth living.

The book is divided into six sections. Volume 1 contains the first two sections: ‘1: Venetian Years’ and ‘2: To Paris and Prison’.

Peter Wickham was born in New Zealand and studied for the theatre at the Rose Bruford College in England. He has worked as an actor in the West End, and in theatres all over the UK and abroad, from Venezuela to Laos. He has performed in television and film, and has written a successful series of introductions to Shakespeare for the BBC World Service. He was a member of the BBC Radio Drama Company, where reading short stories and serials started his audiobook career. For Naxos AudioBooks, he has read Darwin’s On the Origin of Species, Hobbes’s Leviathan and Swift’s A Tale of a Tub.
The man who is delivered from great perplexity...

Availing myself of a moment during which...

As we were getting within one hundred yards...

He who goes slowly, goes safely, said the friar...

From Terini I went on foot to Otricoli...

After dinner we repaired to my room...

I left Salerno with two priests...

Chapter 9

Don Gennaro, as I returned home...

The next day she asked me...

When a man is in love very little is enough...

Just after I had left M. Vivaldi’s house...

I naturally felt it my duty to call...

In the evening I called upon Lucrezia.

As I wished not to neglect Gama’s advice...

The first rays of the sun, piercing through...

With a deep reverence, which expressed...

Chapter 10

As soon as I had written the sonnet...

The cardinal gave me, then, the stanzas...

I spoke the last words because he saw...

Chapter 11

When I was dressed, I thought I ought to pay...

While I was waiting for him, Marina came in...

I went out to get some money from the banker...

The trust placed in Providence...

Chapter 12

‘After Salimberi, you are the only man…’

‘Here it is. You suppose me wealthy…’

You have already guessed, I have no doubt...

I found myself free, with gold and jewels...

Episode 3: Military Career. Chapter 13

In spite of my surprise, and of the difficulty I had...

Had I received Thérèse’s letter one week sooner...

After my visit to Madame Manzoni...

Towards the end of the month...

Chapter 14

You can find throughout Italy, in Greece...

We arrived at the Venetian Embassy in Pera...

Notwithstanding all the politeeness...

‘It is all perfectly true; yet you must forgive me…’

We spoke of many other things...

‘No doubt of it, and confession supposes…’

Yusuf was highly delighted at hearing me speak...

I spent a pleasant day with Yusuf...

The threat, and the tone...

The lady who was then most eminent...

I spent my days in a continual state of rage...

As I was concluding my translation...

When I woke up the next morning...

The bells begin to toll, and I proceed towards...

One of the peasants, an elderly...

Our dinner was nearly over, when we heard...

Chapter 15

A few days afterwards, as I was entertaining...

I put a stop to the quarrel by telling Fastidio...

During the following days it struck me...

As M. D---- R---- was saying the last word...

I would often be indiscreet enough to remain...

From the day when, by giving me her hair...

After that conversation, in which I had enjoyed...

Episode 4: Return to Venice. Chapter 16

‘Do we make a mystery of it?’

In the morning, worn out with fatigue...

The first thing I resolved on...

I have observed a singular thing in Corfu...

Chapter 17

The waiter of the magazzino came to be paid...

An hour later, two noblemen...

‘On the second day, during the festivities…’

With all these oddities, the three friends...

Chapter 18

The next day, Zawosi called on me very early...

I knew an honest widow who resided in a lane...

I was thus engaged in a rather delicate...

I intended to make some enquiries the next day...

The count and his son came to dinner.

Now and then we recollected that the time...

Towards dusk, the count and his son...

Chapter 19

Christine did not utter a single word…

While we were talking I kept looking...

We had the whole evening before us...

I spent one hour with her, fighting...

We dined rather late, and I took care...

A certain Countess of Tos… from Treviso...

Episode 5: Milan and Mantua. Chapter 20

We were in the habit of walking to a farm...

Declaration. I hereby declare that...

The court had not yet arrived.

‘That husband is indeed a sensible fellow.’

O’Neilan was only twenty-three years old...

Chapter 21

The son then took a letter out of his pocket...

Capitani called me, and I joined him.

The next morning, as soon as I was dressed...

Chapter 22

Capitani took leave of me on the following day...

When I made my appearance at Narici’s house...

The state of excitement in which I was...

Chapter 23

My business was in reference to a carriage...

My happiness would have been too great...

‘We dined gaily together…’

I felt sure that she could not refuse me...

‘As you know that I entertain great friendship…’

To Paris and Prison. Episode 6: Paris. Chapter 1

When I found myself in the streets...

We were enjoying our dessert when the hosier...

Whilst my dear Henriette was taking her lesson...

As I had nothing particular to do…
Chapter 2

Thus supremely happy, and finding in one...

Chapter 3

We left Parma late in the evening...

Chapter 4

‘How have you contrived,’ I said to him one day...

Chapter 5

I had for my supper what was left of the meal...

Chapter 6

Baletti called on me and entreated me...

Chapter 7

I took a coach and drove to Coraline’s...

Chapter 8

The Italian comedians obtained at that time...

Chapter 9

The young and lovely O-Morphi...

Chapter 10

Such is the way in which Maria Teresa...

Chapter 11

We found the officer waiting for us...

Chapter 12

The moment we had reached the long avenue...

Chapter 13

I had just risen at noon...

Chapter 14

Not knowing what to do in Venice...

Chapter 15

She threw herself, crying bitterly, on a chair...
The next morning at day-break…

Chapter 28
Lawrence, who remained alone with me…
I had no doubts as to his curiosity…
I told Lawrence that I wanted to celebrate…
‘My aim and my only aim has always been…’

Chapter 29
Assuming an inspired air, I said, ‘Be seated…’
The rest of the day was devoted to high…
I called my companions, and we set all…
Not knowing what to do next…

Chapter 30
As soon as I got through I made haste…
In due course we reached Mestre.
I was given an excellent supper, and I ate…
I went out and walked for two hours…
As I was now alone in peace and quietness…
At Strassburg I rejoined Madame Rivière…

Chapter 31
I was given an excellent supper, and I ate…
I went out and walked for two hours…
As I was now alone in peace and quietness…
The brother was not a man of a very pleasing…
As soon as I got back to my own lodging…

Chapter 32
As soon as I found out that M. de Choiseul…
I listened and was weary…
The brother was not a man of a very pleasing…
As soon as I got back to my own lodging…