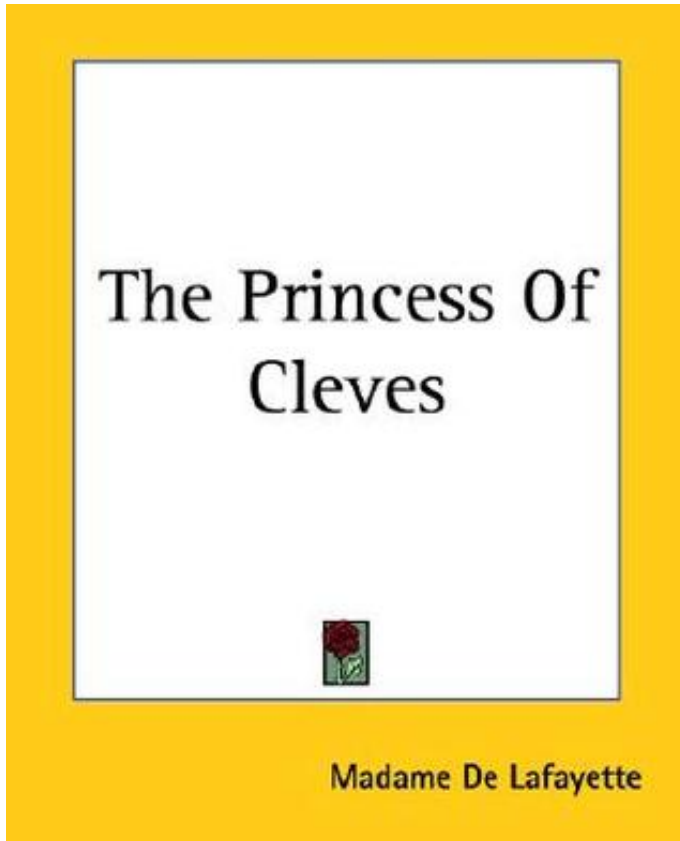

Madame de La Fayette

The Princess de Cleves



Title: The Princess de Cleves

Author: Madame de La Fayette

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Description

Poised between the fading world of chivalric romance and a new psychological realism, Madame de Lafayette's novel of passion and self-deception marks a turning-point in the history of the novel. When it first appeared—anonously—in 1678 in the heyday of French classicism, it aroused fierce controversy among critics and readers, in particular for the extraordinary confession which forms the climax of the story.

Insightful reviews

Debbie Zapata: The idea here was to read this and another short book by the same author for a Literary Birthday Challenge. This book sounded so interesting: the court of Henry The Second of France, with all the intrigue and goings-on that nobility do so well. Enter our young heroine, Mademoiselle de Chartres, whose mother wants to arrange a proper match for her.

Okay so far, but it took paragraphs and paragraphs of names and titles to get to this point. I thought about quitting after needing to go over this sentence half a dozen times:

"...he foresaw great obstructions on the part of the Duke of Nevers his father: the Duke was strictly attached to the Duchess of Valentinois, and the Viscount de Chartres was her enemy, which was a sufficient reason to hinder the Duke from consenting to the marriage of his son, with a niece of the Viscount's."

But I thought no, I am reading War And Peace and keeping everyone straight in my mind, surely I can manage this little book also. So I kept going and our heroine becomes the Princess Of Cleves, but she is not really in love with the Prince, and it sounds to me like they never had a true wedding night. Certainly the Prince is not perfectly happy, that is one clearly expressed fact.

Then our Princess's mother tells her the history of the King's mistress, Diane de Poitiers. But she tells it in paragraphs full of names and titles tossed together like a Caesar salad. Granted that this book was written in 1678, but I was prepared for an old-fashioned writing style; and can usually deal with such things as sentences that go on forever and other marks of past years. However, I could not deal with being served such a confusing, boring platter so I have to mark this one a DNF. I will look for a title about the era, because I am intrigued by the King himself and his times, but I have to put Madame de LaFayette on my never again list. Humble apologies, Madame.

Wealththeow: I can easily see why someone would enjoy this--court politics! beautiful clothes! rakish love interest! verbal fencing!--but I found it hard reading. Everyone seems to have a nickname, a full name, several titles, etc, and they're referred to each indiscriminately. Plus, I have a hard time with any novel that assumes that just *thinking* about another person is The Worst Adultery Ever, so the ending ([view spoiler](#))

Stela:

Il y a quelque chose de très touchant, presque romantique (et non, ce n'est pas une contradiction en termes) dans cet idéal humain à qui songeaient les classiques avec leur « honnête homme » qui parvenait toujours à maîtriser ses passions à l'aide de sa raison. Il dérive, ce quelque chose, de l'opposition entre l'apparente sérénité qu'ils convoitaient en proclamant la suprématie de la raison, et la violence des passions qu'ils s'efforçaient d'apprivoiser et de cacher, opposition qui a donné naissance à la tragédie moderne d'un Racine, d'un Corneille. Et à un chef d'œuvre romanesque, *La princesse de Clèves*.

La confrontation entre devoir et passion reste probablement un des thèmes les plus développés dans la littérature, résultant soit dans le triomphe de la raison du classicisme, soit dans celui des sentiments du romantisme, soit restant sans résolution apparente – dans la littérature d'après.

De ce point de vue, le roman de Madame de Lafayette est à la fois (et c'est exactement cet aspect qui lui confère sa grande valeur) classique et moderne, illustrant en même temps l'idéal humain de son temps (elle vit à l'époque du Roi Soleil!) et les inquiétudes de l'homme moderne, souvent perdu dans un monde qui s'entête à effacer l'axe des valeurs à laquelle il rapportait jadis sa rectitude puisqu'il la considère obsolète et sans relevance.

Voici pourquoi *La princesse de Clèves* continue à être lu plus de trois cents ans après sa parution, car en dehors de la fresque de la Cour royale avec son étiquette compliquée et ses intrigues politiques et passionnelles d'intérêt aussi pour l'historien et des éléments classiques, précieuses et même baroques, à dénicher plutôt par un théoricien littéraire que par le lecteur ordinaire, en dehors donc de toute valeur documentaire il répond, par sa fine analyse psychologique, à nos besoins d'introspection et d'affirmation de cette éthique démodée que nous faisons semblant de prendre à la légère mais dont les exigences ont une austère beauté que nous admirons en cachette tout en nous reconnaissant trop faibles pour les respecter nous-mêmes :

...elle se souvint aussi que ce même homme, qu'elle regardait comme pouvant l'épouser, était celui qu'elle avait aimé du vivant de son mari et qui était la cause de sa mort ; que même, en mourant, il lui avait témoigné de la crainte qu'elle ne l'épousât, son austère vertu était si blessé de cette imagination qu'elle ne trouvait guère moins de crime à épouser M. de Nemours qu'elle en avait trouvé à l'aimer pendant la vie de son mari.

Je ne me souviens pas s'il y a d'autres œuvres littéraires dans lesquelles le triangle conjugal est tranché en faveur du mari. Je suis presque certaine qu'il n'y en aucune où la femme reste fidèle à son époux qu'elle n'aime pas même après sa mort, mais la beauté de ce dénouement tant discuté se trouve moins dans l'achèvement naturel du portrait de l'honnête héroïne comme l'idéal classique dont je parlais tout à l'heure et plus dans le dévoilement de l'intrication de l'âme féminine, qui prévoit qu'un amour accompli est un amour fini et préfère le rejeter pour le garder intact dans son cœur. Courage émouvant ou lâcheté abjecte ? À vous de décider, même si le futur lui donne raison vu que, la voix narrative nous informe, le duc de Nemours ne se meurt pas de la douleur de l'avoir perdue:

... enfin, des années entières s'étant passées, le temps et l'absence ralentirent sa douleur et

éteignirent sa passion.

Dans la mémoire et l'âme des lecteurs, quand même, la princesse de Clèves reste vivante, soit comme un modèle inflexible de la vertu, soit comme une femme forte et intelligente, trop consciente de la fugacité des sentiments pour s'en laisser dominée et trop fière pour s'impliquer dans les jeux galants de la superficielle société qui l'entourait.

Lisa: difficult to assert what i presumed approximately this book. firstly it was once highly bewildering, what with the entire a variety of names and titles flying about, yet as soon as this primary half as soon as out of how i began to take pleasure in it. However, by means of the books finish I had stumbled on it complicated and deeply unsatisfying. I appreciate that a lot of this is often most likely to do with the several criteria and beliefs that have been in position in society at that time, compared to these we are living in now, yet i couldn't locate the various characters sympathetic (in specific Mme & M. de Cleves, although I did think extra leniently in the direction of the Duc de Nemours). a lot of the hindrances the characters confronted have been positioned there through themselves because of their very own rules of propriety and duty, really with regards to Mme de Cleves following her husbands loss of life which, by way of the way, i didn't suppose was once both her fault nor M. de Nemours, yet was once as a result of M. de Cleves deeply indulgent self pity. in the event you don't desire to die, simply get off the bed and prevent feeling sorry for yourself! In general, this ebook is a fascinating perception into how the excessive society of that period idea and acted, yet i wouldn't price it as hugely as others easily as a result of frustrations offered above.

Roberta: Leggerlo è stato un piacere. Il manierismo proprio di questa storia settecentesca è come un arazzo. La principessa di Clèves si sposa in line with dovere, come imposto dalle convenzioni e dai ranghi dell'epoca. L'amore è un'altra cosa e, una volta introdotta alla corte, lo incontra. Los Angeles coreografia con cui lui cerca lei e lei lo evita è elegantissima, così come lo sono i dialoghi e le relazioni delle persone che li circondano. Se avete guardato Woman Oscar o Los Angeles stella della Senna potete avere un'idea. Non credo però possa piacere a tutti: immagino che ciò che io trovo graziosamente coreografato possa sembrare rigido in line with alcuni.

Alicia Kachmar: this is often rather in all probability the saddest, but so much true, "love story" each written. whereas the e-book is steeped in sixteenth century historical past (and written within the seventeenth century), the various tragic realities of love, the inevitable fading of passion, and the complexity of relationships are only as suitable today. I just a little trust the profound argument for unrequited love being the main most popular and natural kind.

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