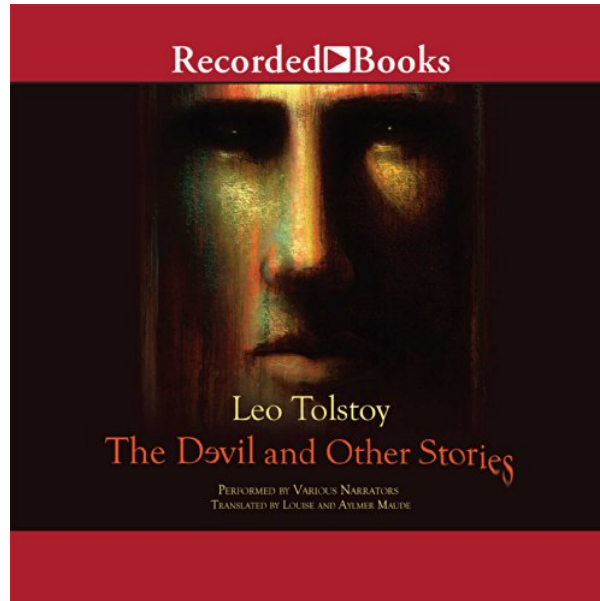


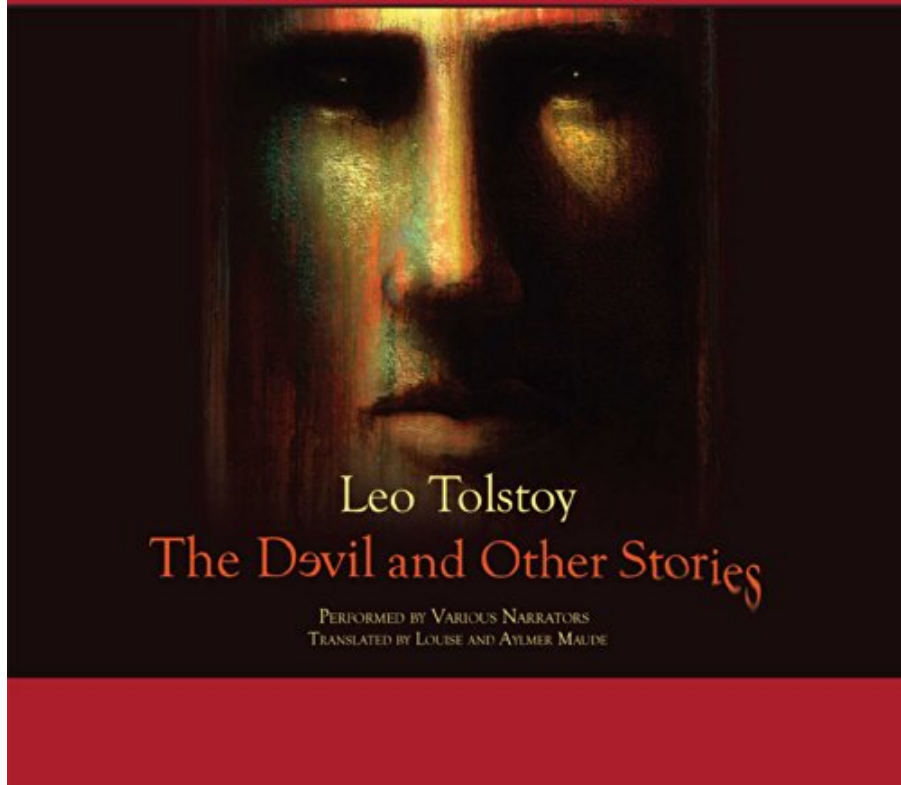
THE DEVIL AND OTHER STORIES BY LEO TOLSTOY, RICHARD F. GUSTAFSON



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This collection of 11 stories spans virtually the whole of Tolstoy's creative life. While each is unique in form, as a group they are representative of his style, and touch on the central themes that surface in War and Peace and Anna Karenina. Stories as different as "The Snowstorm", "Lucerne", "The Diary of a Madman", and "The Devil" are grounded in autobiographical experience. They deal with journeys of self-discovery and the moral and religious thought that characterizes Tolstoy's works of criticism and philosophy. "Strider" and "Father Sergy", as well as reflecting Tolstoy's own experiences, also reveal profound psychological insights. These stories range over much of the 19th-century Russian world, from the nobility to the peasantry, the military to the clergy, from merchants and cobblers to a horse and a tree. Together they present a fascinating picture of Tolstoy's skill and artistry.

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- Published on: 2014-05-20
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 765 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Brilliant Translation and Introduction

By Theophilus

Oxford World Classics have been my choice in Russian literature for many years now. These works typically provide excellent introductions and translations of the great Russian literary masters of the 19th century. This book is no exception. Compared to other versions of these stories, I find this book combines the formality of Russian literary style with the simplicity of a casual reader; it captures the mood of the story and relates it quite well to the reader. I would highly recommend this and other Oxford World Classics works.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

The Wanderers

By Eric Maroney

The collection of Tolstoy's short fiction, *The Devil and Other Stories*, contains some of his finest work. Take but one example, the story "Father Sergy". Tolstoy takes the story of one man, and his spiritual quest, and makes it a type of microcosm for the entire human encounter with the divine, and by extension, humanity.

In Father Sergy's quest, from dashing young officer to Russian Orthodox monk and priest, Tolstoy shows both the benefits and limits of organized religion. Of course, human nature meddles in his efforts as well. His difficulty overcoming pride, and especially lust, dogs him into his sixties. As a famous hermit with the power to heal, he succumbs to the charms of a sick woman. Dogged by his sin, he then becomes an unknown wanderer, moving from place to place, begging for food, having no possessions.

It is obvious that Tolstoy had great sympathy for this type of religious life, as many of his characters who struggle with religious questions end up as wanderers. Positive characters with pearls of wisdom to deliver are usually wanderers as well. No doubt he saw in this life a recapitulation of the life of Jesus and his early followers.

In his fiction, all these ideas interact with one another creating a lively and varied account of all that people are capable of; Tolstoy is not to be messed with. In terms of literature, he is one of the big boys, and every writer should read him, and then read him again.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Brilliant short stories from a Master of Russian Literature

By Eric S. Kim

These are wonderful short stories by Leo Tolstoy, one of the greatest writers to have come from Russia. Every story on this collection deals with Tolstoy's real-life observations and experiences. Each contains issues that are either social, religious, philosophical, or (in only a few occasions) political. For example, "The Devil" deals with the consequences of sexuality, while "Strider: The Story of a Horse" tells of both animal cruelty and flaws of the social class. "Lucerne" and "Diary of a Madman" consist of journal entries by people who deal with the real world.

All in all, I would recommend these short stories to all Tolstoy fans, and fans of Russian Literature in general. Grade: A

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