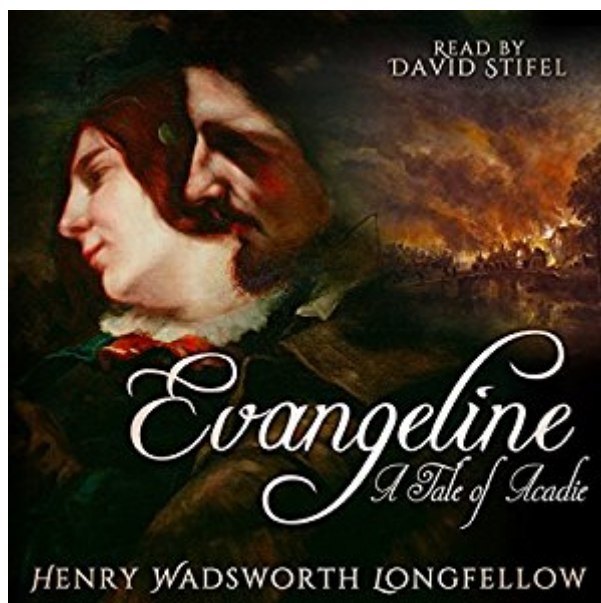


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Evangeline: A Tale Of Acadie



Synopsis

A classic tale of doomed romance, Longfellow's classic epic poem reminds us that man's inhumanity to man and refugees have been with us many centuries. The story of how the Cajuns came to Louisiana is only a part of this moving, evocative poem. Two lovers separated by a cruel fate stand against a canvas of America in the making.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

of sorts. I recently read Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (Dover Thrift Editions) which, in part, depicted the French influence on the culture and society in Louisiana at the end of the 19th Century. Although I had once briefly worked in the northern part of Louisiana, several decades ago, I was only vaguely aware how this French influence occurred, with hazy notions connected with the expulsion of the "Acadians" from Canada. I knew of this poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, which commemorates the event, and finally decided to read it. There was an expulsion of approximately 12,000 descendants of French settlers from the Maritime Provinces of Canada over a decade, from 1755-64. This occurred during what is most often called the French and Indian Wars in North America. The expulsion was conducted by English authorities. Most interestingly, NONE of those expelled were moved to Louisiana. The first wave were moved to the original 13 colonies; and since that was considered a failure, the second wave was moved to England and France. It was those who went to the latter who were the ones who migrated on to Louisiana. Wordsworth wrote this poem almost a century after the

original event. He wrote the poem in dactylic hexameter, which was the epic poem form used by Greek and Roman poets. The form means that each line is composed of six feet, ideally composed of one long and two short syllables each. Who amongst us knows that meaning without looking it up? I might have once known that for the high school test, but it was forgotten within 24 hours. The poem is set in Grand-Pré, which is on the central west coast of modern day Nova Scotia. Wordsworth depicts an idyllic pastoral scene, with sturdy Norman homes dotting the landscape. Evangeline is the daughter of Benedict Bellefontaine, wealthiest farmer, age 70, my coeval. She has eyes only for Gabriel, son of Basel Lajeunesse, the blacksmith. They become engaged, and then the English show up, about half way through the poem, with their expulsion orders (the justification for such an order is never given in the poem.) Benedict never leaves his native land; Gabriel and Evangeline are split up in the confusion of the evacuation, and placed on different ships. Both are briefly in Louisiana at the same time, but not together. A new and improved pastoral scene is depicted, as Longfellow says: "Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like the rivers; Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the farmer." Through time and space the two protagonists wander, across America with Evangeline often just a few days behind Gabriel, never quite catching him, until (gulp!) old age, in Philadelphia, of all places. This edition introduced me to a British publisher called Forgotten Books. They have almost a half million titles in print. They reproduce long out-of-print works. Regrettably they provided no details on the original edition. Furthermore, the reproduction is of so-so quality, a criticism I saw in a review of one of a book on Calculus, by Phillips. Still, the company's mission is a worthy one. Overall, I felt the poem was too simplistic as to the origins of the "ethnic transfer" and the lifelong subsequent chase become both tedious and improbable. 4-stars for both the poem, as well as this edition.

In what may be Longfellow's greatest masterpiece, this epic poem draws us into the village life of 1755 Acadia, at the time of the imminent marriage of Evangeline and Gabriel, whose plans were tragically thwarted by the sudden exile and dispersal of some 12,000-18,000 Acadians, including our hero and heroine, to various distant destinations. Amidst the confusion of their hasty exit at the command of the hostile military presence, the star-crossed lovers become separated and are destined to spend years searching for each other. Although the incident of the Acadian Deportation did occur in history, thus providing the setting, the characters and the story are

all the creations of the Poet. We soon lose sight of this, however, as Longfellow lulls us into his penned reality with his poetic genius. Herein using unrhymed dactylic hexameter (DA da da, DA da da, DA da da, DA da da, DA da da, DA da da) as in, from the famous Prologue, "THIS is the FOREst priMEval. The MURmuring PINES and the HEMlocks, I first fell in love with this poem decades ago when I studied it in my schooldays. I have reread it from time to time, always feeling very moved by it and in awe of the beauty of Longfellow's writing. His phrases are often indescribably ethereal so beautiful that I often repeatedly read the phrases, wanting to hold onto them for a while before proceeding with the tale. His imagery is frequently breathtaking. Two brief examples, randomly selected, are: "and there, in his feathered seraglio, Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock, with the selfsame voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter." (The definition of seraglio: A sultan's palace, especially in the former Turkish Empire. Knowing this definition makes the difference between really appreciating Longfellow's craftsmanship in these lines, or bypassing an opportunity to grasp fully the effect of Longfellow's words.) A few lines further on, we read: "Murmuring ever of love; while above in the variant breezes Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang of mutation." (Is that not exquisite language to tell us that a weather vane was spinning with the changing winds?) I just finished reading this edition on my Kindle. It is nicely formatted, with active Table of Contents. Superb editing - no errors that I have seen. There is a brief biography at the end, though the author is unnamed. The inclusion of this biography apparently justifies the "Annotated" descriptor used, as there are no notes or explanations. The cover art is the only image included. I purchased this Kindle version of "Evangeline" in addition to the Delphi Classics Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Complete Works because I wanted the speedier and easier access to this poem than is allowed by the massive compilation. It's well worth spending \$1.00 for one of my personal favorite pieces of literature. I hope you enjoy Evangeline as much as I do.

The (purposeful) poetic writing means that the reader must concentrate and at times, almost read it out loud, to keep the idea alive. A classic that reveals a portion of the history of the Acadians.

My favorite story of all time, I love Henry Wadsworth Longfellow writings.

Romantic and emotional, the poem still conveys the heart-rending reality of Le Grand D'Étranglement, the forced deportation of the Acadians from their homeland by the British and the Massachusetts colonists. The reality of the event exceeds the sorrow conveyed in the poem and the deportation is still much overlooked by history books in the US.

Brought back old memories of high school when friends and I tackled poetry...a tremendously enjoyable subject for me but agony for some.

everything was fine.

I travelled to Nova Scotia last summer and saw the homeland of the Acadians, but had never actually read Evangeline. I bought it and read it right away when I got home. It's interesting and sad to know this was evidently based on a true story that was told to Longfellow. Sad to know how the Acadians were treated.

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