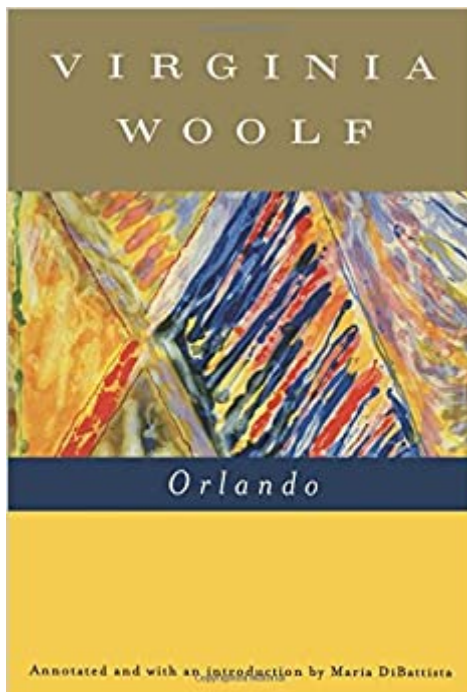


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# Orlando (Annotated): A Biography



## Synopsis

Begun as a "joke," *Orlando* is Virginia Woolf's fantastical biography of a poet who first appears as a sixteen-year-old boy at the court of Elizabeth I, and is left at the novel's end a married woman in the year 1928. Part love letter to Vita Sackville-West, part exploration of the art of biography, *Orlando* is one of Woolf's most popular and entertaining works. This new annotated edition will deepen readers' understanding of Woolf's brilliant creation. Annotated and with an introduction by Maria DiBattista

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## Customer Reviews

"Undoubtedly Virginia Woolf's most intense and one of the most singular (novels) of our era."--Jorge Luis Borges

Begun as a "joke," *Orlando* is Virginia Woolf's fantastical biography of a poet who first appears as a sixteen-year-old boy at the court of Elizabeth I, and is left at the novel's end a married woman in the year 1928. Part love letter to Vita Sackville-West, part exploration of the art of biography, *Orlando* is one of Woolf's most popular and entertaining works. This new annotated edition will deepen readers' understanding of Woolf's brilliant creation.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), one of the major literary figures of the twentieth century, transformed the art of the novel. The author of numerous novels, collections of letters, journals, and short stories, she was an admired literary critic and a master of the essay form. Mark Hussey, general editor of Harcourt's annotated Woolf series, is professor of English at Pace University in New York City and editor of the *Woolf Studies Annual*. Maria DiBattista, professor of English and comparative literature at Princeton University, has written numerous articles on modern literature and film. Her books include *Virginia*

Woolf: *The Fables of Anon*, *First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction*, and, as coeditor and contributor, *High and Low Moderns: British Literature and Culture 1889-1939*. Her most recent book is *Fast Talking Dames*.

VIRGINIA WOOLF (1882–1941) was one of the major literary figures of the twentieth century. An admired literary critic, she authored many essays, letters, journals, and short stories in addition to her groundbreaking novels.

I'll often buy a premium kindle edition of a book that I could otherwise get for a much cheaper price, to get a well-designed reading experience, paragraphs that look like paragraphs, and perhaps some useful scholarship in introductions and annotations. Generally I'm trying to avoid the kind of type layout where there is a blank line between non-indented paragraphs, which is very common in free editions. Hack-job introductions are also a turn-off. I bought the Harcourt/Harvest kindle edition of *"Orlando"*, edited by Mark Hussey, about three years ago, and I'm reading it now. It has way too many typos. There are dozens of times when "tl" becomes "d", so "title" becomes "tide", etc. Disappointing in what should be a quality edition. OCR with shoddy QC, perhaps. Others have complained that the footnotes are not tied to the text. That's true, but it doesn't bother me much, since I just finished reading the Penguin Deluxe *"Les Miserables"*, which did the same thing in a physical (non-kindle) book. Avoiding the intrusiveness of a bunch of superscripted endnotes: to me, that's a reasonable design choice. Overall, this kindle edition of *"Orlando"* isn't really worth paying extra for, so I would recommend rummaging around among the cheaper editions before buying this one.

The product description does not state the notes in this edition are END NOTES, not foot notes. The text does not indicate at all which terms/etc. are annotated. The notes are listed by page number at the end of the novel. Basically, you need to flip to the back of the book to see if there are any notes for each page. I found the notes themselves helpful but inconvenient to use. The playwright Sarah Ruhl (two-time Pulitzer finalist, 2006 recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship) recently released a stage adaptation of this novel. In her introductory notes, she recommends the Penguin Classics version annotated by Sandra M. Gilbert.

If you have an interest in witnessing the perfect use of the English language in narrative, anything written by Woolf will do and *Orlando* is no exception although it is an atypical Woolf work. It is an

interesting mix of humor and serious comments on maleness and femaleness, English class history, and insider jokes some of which require a knowledge of Woolf's personal relationships. It helped me to have finished a recent biography of Virginia Woolf to better understand her work generally and especially this one.

The annotations in the kindle edition are not linked to the text, making it nigh on impossible use this as a reference. Since I already have a paper copy of the book and purchased this solely for the notes, it has proved to be practically useless.

While Orlando is probably not the best example of what would become Virginia Woolf's "music for the soul" style of writing, it does show her extraordinary wit better than anything else I can think of. As a commentary on the inequality of the sexes in society, it is unequaled. A wonderful book; plant your tongue firmly in your cheek and enjoy Orlando.

An absolutely magnificent book about a young nobleman in the time of Queen Elizabeth I, who, by mid-book somehow transforms into a woman. This florid and eloquently-written novel closely examines the nature of sexuality, gender and changing social values over several centuries. Not a transgender book, per se, but a glorious evisceration of the social norms that comprise our gender. Those who have an interest in the transgender arena will particularly appreciate and revel in the author's cutting insights. The irony and humor in this book is absolutely brilliant. Stick with it through the first half as it all comes together to make incredible sense.

For those of you who are interested in modernist writing, go ahead and pick up this book. Woolf wrote this directly at the women of the day to poke fun at what was considered then 'normal' literature. With gender bending and immortality this book is a most for feminism in modernism.

A classic that takes an assignment to force me to read. At times I was intrigued by this story, then others where I'm completely lost to what the author's intentions were. In moments the language becomes so flowery that the reader has to push back to not be consumed by the immense amount of words on each page. Be careful of time because it can get away from you in this book. Gender is also a very unclear theme for alot of the characters Orlando falls in love with, and for Orlando him/herself. All and all Woolf is a spectacular writer with amazing skill and technique. Woolf's ability to transmute the reader through time and story then back to this unreliable narrator/biographior,

then back in story, lends to an amazing read.

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