



Speak, Memory (Everyman's Library)

By Vladimir Nabokov, Brian Boyd

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From one of the 20th century's great writers comes one of the finest autobiographies of our time. *Speak, Memory* was first published by Vladimir Nabokov in 1951 as *Conclusive Evidence* and then assiduously revised and republished in 1966. The Everyman's Library edition includes, for the first time, the previously unpublished "Chapter 16"—the most significant unpublished piece of writing by the master, newly released by the Nabokov estate—which provided an extraordinary insight into *Speak, Memory*.

Nabokov's memoir is a moving account of a loving, civilized family, of adolescent awakenings, flight from Bolshevik terror, education in England, and émigré life in Paris and Berlin. The Nabokovs were eccentric, liberal aristocrats, who lived a life immersed in politics and literature on splendid country estates until their world was swept away by the Russian revolution when the author was eighteen years old. *Speak, Memory* vividly evokes a vanished past in the inimitable prose of Nabokov at his best.

(Book Jacket Status: Jacketed)

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Even if you already own Nabokov's earthy, otherworldly account of his astounding life, you must buy this 1999 edition. And if you've never read *Speak, Memory*, you must do so at once. This volume is essential because it includes the unpublished last chapter, a pseudo-review comparing *Speak, Memory* with another, nonexistent memoir called *When Lilacs Last*. (That title refers to Whitman's poem on Lincoln's assassination and to the lilacs of Nabokov's childhood home) Chapter 16 is a key to what the imaginary reviewer accurately calls a "unique freak as autobiographies go," revealing its novel-like nature and unifying themes and images (chess, puzzles, spirals, jewels, rainbows, exile, the stained-glass shadow patterns that the future casts on the present). Maybe Nabokov thought he gave too much away, and one sees the formal superiority of ending the book with chapter 15. But the added essay is a gem that dazzles and illuminates.

You have to consult biographies like Brian Boyd's for the full, remarkable facts of Nabokov's life. A millionaire at 17 (his sister danced in Diaghilev gowns with Fabergé gems at the Winter Palace), repeatedly exiled, forced to bust out of one chrysalis after another into new lives, the writer retained only the infinite wealth of his memory and art. This book is a mosaic shaped by a mind so metaphorical that, as a babe, Nabokov perceived letters as colors, the alphabet as a rainbow.

The loss of his father is at *Speak, Memory*'s core. This memoir is worth owning for a single paragraph alone, about the sight of Nabokov senior being tossed aloft by grateful peasants he'd been generous to--a dozen or so with locked arms flinging him up in a hip-hip-hooray ritual.

There, for an instant, the figure of my father in his wind-rippled white summer suit would be displayed, gloriously sprawled in midair.... Thrice, to the mighty heave-ho of his invisible tossers, he would fly up ... and then there he would be, on his last and loftiest flight, reclining, as if for good, against the cobalt blue of the summer noon, like one of those paradisiac personages who comfortably soar, with such a wealth of folds in their garments, on the vaulted ceiling of a church while below, one by one, the wax tapers in mortal hands light up to make a swarm of minute flames in the mist of incense, and the priest chants of eternal repose, and funeral lilies conceal the face of whoever lies there, among the swimming lights, in the open coffin.

Nabokov recaptures the paradise of his youth, and acquits himself of the coldness of which some accuse him. He plays literary games, but he plays for keeps. --*Tim Appelo*

From Library Journal

Published as *Conclusive Evidence* in 1951 and later revised in 1966, Nabokov's title has been further updated with an additional, previously unseen chapter. Considering his profile in world literature, this is essential for public and academic libraries.

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Review

"[Nabokov] has fleshed the bare bones of historical data with hilarious anecdotes and with a felicity of style that makes *Speak, Memory* a constant pleasure to read. Confirmed Nabokovians will relish the further clues and references to his fictional works that shine like nuggets in the silver stream of his prose." —*Harper's*

"Scintillating...One finds here amazing glimpses into the life of a world that has vanished forever." —*New York Times*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Winston Nakashima:

Spent a free time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book is usually option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the e-book untitled Speak, Memory (Everyman's Library) can be great book to read. May be it could be best activity to you.

Katy Pinkham:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them household or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity honestly, that is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a e-book. The book Speak, Memory (Everyman's Library) it is quite good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book offers high quality.

John Stanley:

The book untitled Speak, Memory (Everyman's Library) contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains the girl idea with easy approach. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was authored by famous author. The author brings you in the new period of time of literary works. You can read this book because you can please read on your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open up their official web-site and also order it. Have a nice examine.

Carmela Williams:

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