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Daniel Defoe : Memoirs of a Cavalier, Volume I before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Memoirs of a Cavalier, Volume I:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Vivid period piece gets you into the mind of a real cavalier!By AmanIt's hard to not only be taken to a different place, but to leave yourself mostly behind and really get into someone else's story. Today, most writers endlessly psychoanalyze people and their motivations and think that they're being deep by "getting into someone's head". However, most psychology is about as deep as a kiddie pool, and not as clean.Defoe presents a story whose details reveal a way of life that is not just dead, but quite foreign to us moderns

despite being part of the late Renaissance period. The memoir is so authentic that it quite fooled contemporaries into thinking that it was a real memoir! The beauty of it is by what is said and not said, it reveals a personal narrative whose strengths and weaknesses are self-explanatory and don't require constant self-analysis. And this is a good thing for any of us today, IMHO. As both a part of history with point of view and engaging tale, this is quite good. It may appeal more to those who have been a soldier or know European history of 1630-50, but I think it will have general appeal b/c the narrative voice is so strong. Point to make - the 2-star review has a few of the facts incorrect, and I think misses the point on some of what is represented. The narrator DOES make personal judgments on events he witnesses, often stating it just that way. He says he found Italy not to his liking and explains why, for instance. He finds himself drawn to Gustavus Adolphus and explains why. Yes, there are many terrible events, but the Thirty Years War was particularly brutal and is critical to both a history of Western institutional religion and modern Germany. Generally, I'd say this will appeal to people who want story and memoir with their history, rather than just modern historical analysis. 11 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Daniel Defoe By Judith C. Kinney This is obviously one of Defoe's more obscure works. Part I begins in 1630. A young English nobleman, a second son, though his father's favorite, decides to see something of the world and begins traveling on the continent with a friend. He signs on with the troops of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, who's aiding German Protestants against, I think, the Catholics. This ten-year period occurs near the end of the Thirty Years War. My knowledge of seventeenth-century European history is practically nonexistent, so I didn't really understand the issues involved and didn't learn much more from this book. In Part II, our nameless hero returns to England, where the Civil War between the Cavaliers (the king's troops) and the Roundheads (Puritans) is about to get underway. (It was at the end of the Civil War that Charles I was beheaded, after which the Commonwealth took over for eleven years until the restoration of Charles II in 1660.) I thought this part might be more interesting, as I do know something about English history, and it was. Like A JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR, this book, too, has a fictional narrator in a historical setting. If you like Defoe, you will not dislike this book. If you don't like Defoe, this book won't change your mind. 5 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Of soldiers and citizens By Luc REYNAERT Daniel Defoe's 'hero' is a mercenary: 'I confess, when I went into arms at the beginning of this war, I never troubled myself to examine sides. I was glad to hear the drums beat for soldiers, as if I had been a mere Swiss, that not cared which side went up or down, so I had my pay.' He is full of admiration for the battle tactics of his masters. But, what happens after the battle is over doesn't bother him: towns delivered to the 'fury of the soldiers', plundering, looting and slaughtering innocent women and children. The soldier is amazed about the 'prodigious stupid bigotry of the people' and 'the entire empire of the priests over the souls and the bodies of people'. But he clearly sees that 'religion is the pretence not the cause of war'. Behind the veil of religion lay the fundamental interests of the warring parties: the Protestant masters fighting the Catholics to keep their 'privileges' (not paying the tithes to Rome and its clergy) and the Puritans fighting the King in order to restore the rights of their power base (Parliament). This novel with all its massacres and diseases has only historical value as a picture of army life in the 17th century. Only for historians and Defoe fans.

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About the Author Daniel Defoe, born Daniel Foe, was an English trader, writer, journalist, pamphleteer, and spy, most famous for his novel Robinson Crusoe.