



The Golden Ass: The Transformations of Lucius

Apuleius

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The Golden Ass: The Transformations of Lucius Apuleius

In all of literature, there are few books with the vitality of *The Golden Ass*. The story follows Lucius, a young man of good birth, as he disports himself in the cities and along the roads of Thessaly. This is a wonderful tale abounding in lusty incident, curious adventure and bawdy wit.

Robert Graves (1895-1985) was a British poet, novelist, translator, and critic. His many books include the historical novels *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*, the autobiography *Good-bye to All That*, and the mythic/literary studies *The White Goddess* and *The Greek Myths*.

In all of literature there are few books with the vitality of *The Golden Ass*. Boccaccio borrowed freely from it; and later it served both to amuse and to instruct Cervantes, Fielding, and Smollett. T. E. Lawrence carried it in his saddlebags all through the Arab Revolt, and it was Lawrence who first introduced the book to his friend Robert Graves.

The story is about Lucius Apuleius, a young man of good birth, who, while disporting himself in the cities and along the roads of Thessaly, encountered many diverting and strange adventures. Not the least of these was that Apuleius suffered the indignity of being turned into an ass after trying to steal a sorceress's magic. How Apuleius supported his misfortune and how he contrived to dedicate himself to the one goddess who could help him resume his human form make up the body of this tale. *The Golden Ass* is rich in lusty incident, curious adventure, and bawdy wit.

"Robert Graves' translation abandons the aureate latinity of Apuleius for a dry, sharp, plain style—which is itself a small masterpiece of twentieth-century prose."—**Kenneth Rexroth**, *Saturday Review*

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