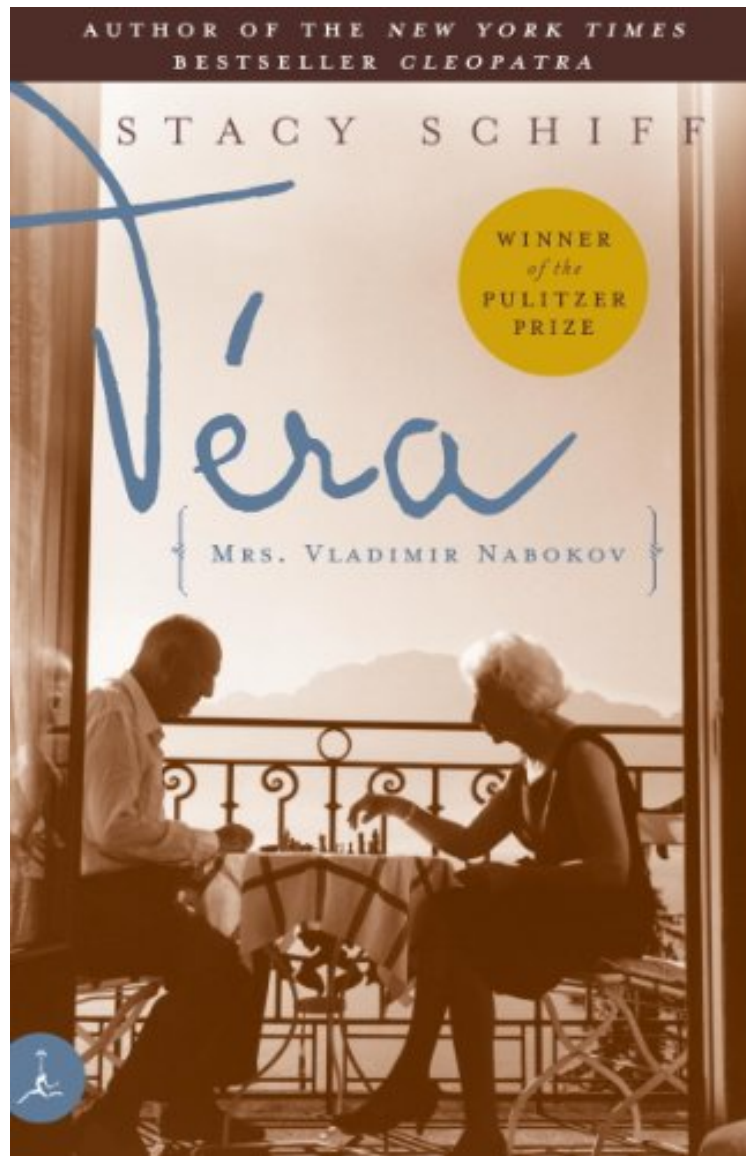


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Von Stacy Schiff

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**Von Stacy Schiff : Vra: (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov) (Modern Library Paperbacks)** before purchasing it in order to  
gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vra: (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov) (Modern Library

Paperbacks):

Kurzbeschreibung  
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Winner of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for biography and hailed by critics as both monumental (*The Boston Globe*) and utterly romantic (*New York Magazine*), Stacy Schiff's *Vra* (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov) brings to shimmering life one of the greatest literary love stories of our time. Vladimir Nabokov, the author of *Lolita*; *Pale Fire*; and *Invitation to a Beheading*, wrote his books first for himself, second for his wife, Vra, and third for no one at all. Without my wife, he once noted, I wouldn't have written a single novel. Set in prewar Europe and postwar America, spanning much of the century, the story of the Nabokovs' fifty-two-year marriage reads as vividly as a novel. Vra, both beautiful and brilliant, is its outsized heroine: a woman who loves as deeply and intelligently as did the great romantic heroines of Austen and Tolstoy. Stacy Schiff's *Vra* is a triumph of the biographical form. She was wearing a black satin mask when they first met in 1923, and in a sense she wore a mask—that of the dutiful wife and helpmeet—throughout their 52-year marriage. Especially after the American publication of *Lolita* made her husband notorious in 1958, Vra Nabokov's presence at her husband's side was crucial, writes her biographer Stacy Schiff: "[It] kept the fiction in its place, reassured readers ... that Nabokov's perversities were of a different kind." But Vra Slonim (1902-91) was essential to Vladimir Nabokov's literary career from the beginning. She had a gift for handling practical matters that her spouse proudly lacked; she screened him from his publishers and his admirers with equal firmness, and in doing so she liberated him to fulfill the artistic genius they both believed he possessed. Praised for a previous biography of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Schiff here cements her reputation as a literary biographer of striking subtlety and perceptiveness. She establishes a strong base in chapter 1 with her excellent analysis of Vra Slonim's youth in a privileged Russian Jewish family in St. Petersburg. She then pursues her subject's elusive personality through hints in Nabokov's work and the comments of friends and colleagues. Schiff's elegant prose and eye for nuance nearly match Nabokov himself in this lucid, unsentimental portrait of a marriage. --Wendy Smith *Pressestimmen* Evocative--an elegantly nuanced portrait of the artist's wife, showing us just how pivotal Nabokov's marriage was to his hermetic existence and how it indelibly shaped his work." -*The New York Times* A stunning achievement. Schiff is to be congratulated for her ability to portray this difficult woman as an individual." -*The Edmonton Journal* Offers more than a peek at the famous author through his wife's eyes. When her 1991 *New York Times* obit called Vra 'Wife, Muse, and Agent' it only hinted at her role, which is rescued from obscurity in Schiff's graceful prose." -*Publishers Weekly* An immensely entertaining story." -*The Toronto Star*