Leaves of Grass: The Death-Bed Edition (Modern Library) by Walt Whitman

Misrepresentation: This Is 1892 Deathbed Edition!

Abraham Lincoln read it with approval, but Emily Dickinson described its bold language and themes as disgraceful. Ralph Waldo Emerson found it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet produced. Published at the authors expense on July 4, 1855, Leaves of Grass inaugurated a new voice and style into American letters and gave expression to an optimistic, bombastic vision that took the nation as its subject. Unlike many other editions of Leaves of Grass, which reproduce various short, early versions, this Modern Library Paperback Classics Death-bed edition presents everything Whitman wrote in its final form, and includes newly commissioned notes.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

My Personal Review:
Although the poems are beautiful... and I certainly dont mean to bash Whitman with this 2-star rating... its the wrong book. NOT AS ADVERTISED. This was supposed to be the original 1855 edition. Thats what I expected, and therefore (in my mind) what I was paying for. The original 1855 edition, according to modern literary analysis, was the strongest/purest version. It was the true starting point of Whitmans own (and consequently Americas) poetic awakening. Consisting of just 12 perfect poems, it was THAT edition which Emerson praised so highly.

Whitman never put out another book... just revision after revision, addition after addition, and edition after edition of Leaves Of Grass... until you wind
up with the deathbed edition which is a severely bloated and different work from the original.

I was very much looking forward to a slender volume of the original edition. Which is what the item description says this is. Its not. Be forewarned... its the Deathbed Edition of 1892... nearly 500 pages. And frankly, there are MUCH better versions of the deathbed edition. Sturdier versions with nicer pages exist (this is a pretty weak paperback, printed on pulp pages), with better footnotes and more authoritative introductions. Shop around.

To sum up... the 2 star rating is because lying about which edition this is, is a terrible way to sell the book. Whitman was fantastic and the poetry contained in the book itself is first rate. It just would have been nice to get what I paid for. The true edition, written by a YOUNG Whitman at the height of his powers...

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price: