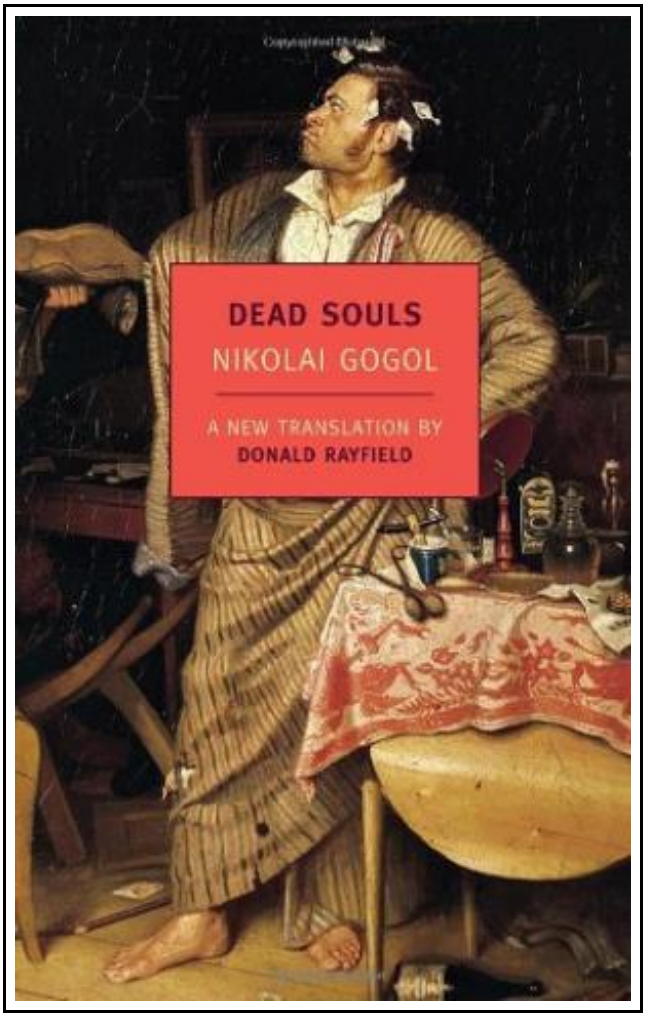
Dead Souls: A Poem



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The New York Review of Books, Inc. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Dead Souls: A Poem, Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol, Donald Rayfield, The first of the great Russian novels and one of the indisputable masterpieces of world literature, Dead Souls is the tale of Chichikov, an affably cunning con man who causes consternation in a small Russian town when he shows up out of nowhere proposing to buy title to serfs who, though dead as doornails, are still property on paper. What can he have up his sleeve, the local landowners wonder, even as some rush to unload what isn't of any use to them anyway, while others seek to negotiate the best deal possible, and others yet hold on to their dead for dear life, since if somebody wants what you have then no matter what don't give it away. Chichikov's scheme soon encounters obstacles, but he is never without resource, and as he stumbles forward as best he can, Gogol paints a wonderfully comic picture of Russian life that also serves as a biting satire of a society as corrupt as it is cynical and silly. At once a wild phantasmagoria and a work of exacting realism, Dead Souls is a supremely living work of art that spills over with humor and passion and absurdity. Donald Rayfield's vigorous new translation corrects the mistakes and omissions of earlier versions while capturing the vivid speech rhythms of the original. It also offers a fuller text of the unfinished second part of the book by combining material from Gogol's two surviving drafts into a single compelling narrative. This is a tour de force of art and scholarship-and the most authoritative, accurate, and readable edition of Dead Souls available in English.

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