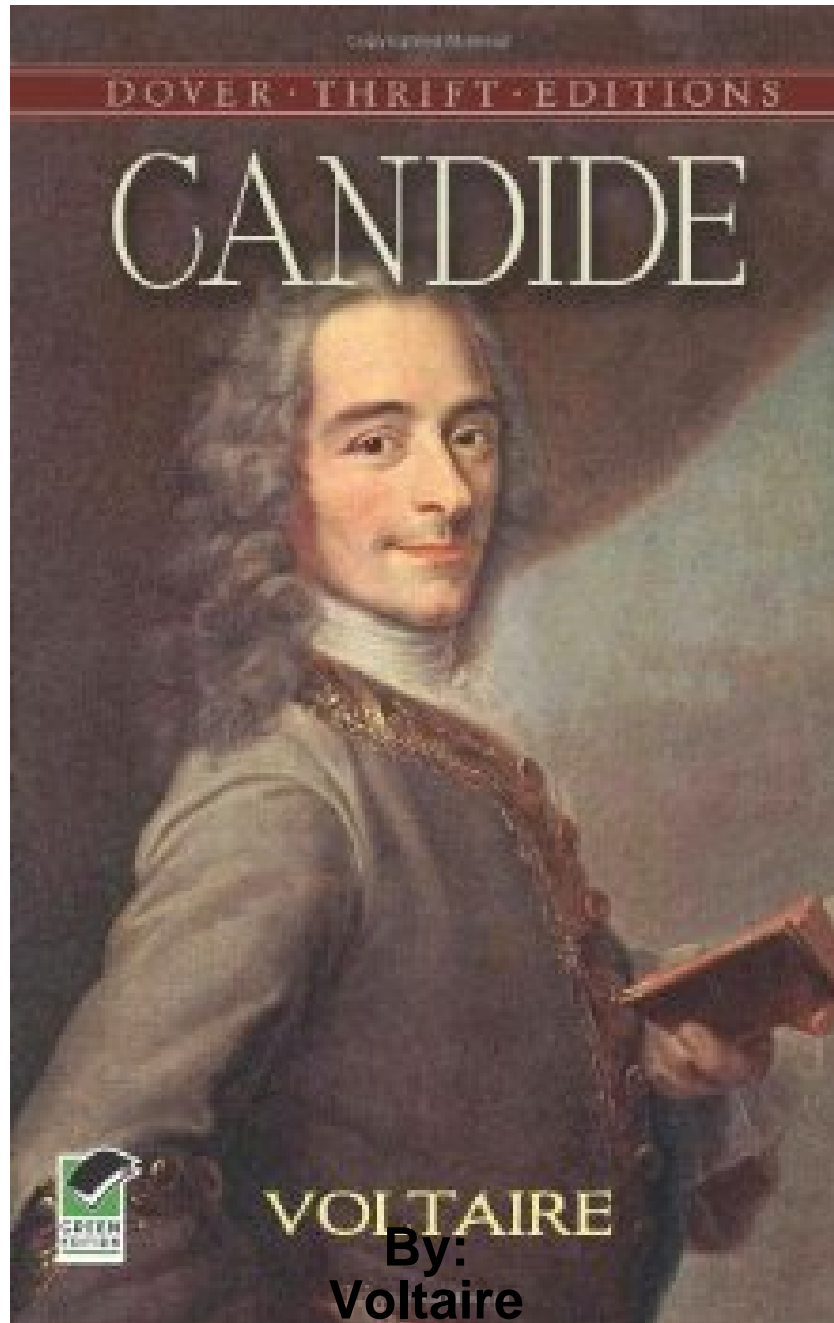


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What people Say:

David Lentz

"Candide" is an accessible masterpiece which demonstrated to the world Voltaire's genius as a satirist. The eponymous Candide is a young man tutored by an optimist who is convinced according to the cause and effect philosophy of Leibniz and perhaps is best summarized in Voltaire's leitmotif that human beings live in the "best of all possible worlds." Alexander Pope rather laughably made the same outrageous claim in his "Essay on Man" in which he writes, "Everything that is is right." How can thi

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buffoon who earns his suffering so extensively at every turn of the road for his unjustified, unbridled optimism? Or are they heroic for their optimism despite the epic disasters that nearly devastate them time after time. Or is their fate really just the human condition and are they both just being all too human? You decide. In the course of your reading of this brief novel you may discover, as I did, that the optimists are constantly challenged by the gap between their optimism and reality, and that the pessimists are doomed to be the unhappiest people on the planet because they cannot imagine a world without misery and, thereby, create it for themselves wherever it doesn't really already exist. Take your pick of perspectives as a "free" human being and challenge your own assumptions about the human condition. Clearly, Balzac would seem to agree with his compatriot, Voltaire, that whatever you make of life on this earth, surely it is no less than an epic human comedy. At least in this life, thankfully, if you can stand back far enough, there is, God knows, no end to the laughter of the human condition.

Manny

-

- It's OK, we can speak English.

, as one might say.

-

I mean, good! So, what do you make of twenty-first century Britain?

-

I am reading of your little

with the expenses of the Houses of Parliament. It is a great moment for

. Now there will be

, the people will be able to choose better representatives, we will see that the country ha

James Lafayette Tivendale

Voltaire's novel introduces the reader to Candide, a wide-eyed, calm and slightly bland young gentleman who resides at Castle Westphalia and who believes in the philosophy that "everything in the world is for the best." One of the first scenes is filled with two emotional opposites for Candide who first gets to kiss his love, Cunegonde behind a screen, only to then be kicked out of the castle, literally, by the Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh.

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Here then commence Candide's incredible, fantastical adventure which takes him all over the globe with his mind ever believing in "The Folly of Optimism". From being a soldier in the Bulgarian army to being shipwrecked, being involved with the aftermath of an earthquake to being robbed and swindled more times than seems fair. Our hero has a lot of bad luck. One of the points of this book though is to present that it isn't just Candide that bad things happen to and that the world is just pretty horrible. Tragic things happen to all our main characters including philosopher Dr. Pangloss and a nice old lady who saved Candide from certain death. The tale is humorously and satirically presented in short, sharp chapters by Voltaire. Some descriptions of doom and degradation are presented in a comic fashion because if they were not they might be too unspeakable to keep us interested in reading about the negativity and heartlessness of humans. The novel features all sorts of nastiness such as rape, murder, prostitution and slavery among others. The only part of this book where Voltaire excludes any use of humour is when he talks about slavery after we meet a mutilated man. This is quite poignant when presenting all the diabolical activities that slavery doesn't deserve any humour - arguably making this the crime Voltaire begrudges the most in this world.

Candide and his valet Cacambo, after nearly being eaten by indigenous people; arrive in Voltaire's

Utopia El Dorado. This was my favourite section of the book as this unobtainable existence is a polar opposite of everything that the two young men have faced so far. Gold and diamonds litter the streets as pebbles, there is no law, science advances to make the Western world jealous, no prisons and is the opposite to the popular viewpoint of the story that "all is misery and illusion". The main plot progression throughout the book is Candide trying to find his love Cunegonde as he wishes to marry her which is his reason for (stupidly in my opinion) leaving this wonderful place.

The whole cast is likable. Some of the times they meet up with friends spontaneously all over the world is amazingly far fetched. Two of the main characters are previously mentioned optimistic philosopher Dr. Pangloss and ultimately pessimistic scholar and travel companion of Candide's, Martin. The juxtaposition here is very interesting. It is very "black and white" for these extreme viewpoints. There is no compromise or middle ground. A great amount of philosophy is discussed throughout the book in conversations usually prompted by Candide who wants answers to how the world works. It may very well be that he changes his optimistic opinion throughout the narrative.

I probably shouldn't like a book with so much negativity but it is incredibly written. It reminded me of Verne's - Around The World In Eighty Days. Both being high octane adventures transversing across the globe but with Candide's undertones being a lot more macabre.

My favourite scene was when Candide discusses classic literature such as Homer, Virgil and Horace to a King who dislikes everything. "You will agree that this is the happiest of mortals, for he is above everything he possesses." Negativity and hatred is a main theme throughout the whole story.

The problem with reviewing classic literature like this is that many greater wordsmiths over centuries have written more poetic and moving opinions. Yet, I enjoyed the book so much I had to write down a few blurbs of thoughts however much the quality is lacking compared to previous critics.

Thanks for reading, James.

Fabian

Slightly disappointed with the next-Gabriel Garcia Marquez, I took on this classic in one sitting.

J**US!

Where has this one been all my life? I adore "Candide" because it is rife with adventure, it is a speedy read, and at the very end you experience a vortex of feelings and NOVEL concepts. It transcends literature itself.

Compare this to Dante. To Shakespeare. I could not help but smile at all the awful misadventures of

our poor fool. This is made for someone, like me, who thinks "The Alchemist"

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Compare this to Dante. To Shakespeare. I could not help but smile at all the awful misadventures of our poor fool. This is made for someone, like me, who thinks "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho isn't all that.

I even told G that I was put off by the cover--that is, not until the entire book is ravished & torn apart by the ravenous reader does the simple, almost academic print of a globe in this edition of "Candide" make sense.

So...

Lizzy

Roger made me think: what major literature work, as nothing less would do!, that I read would fit the definition of

? Of course,

came up front to my mind. And what makes Candide so brilliant and hilarious? Not one think, but various factors combined:

: a hopelessly naïve protagonist, for whom you ha

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came up front to my mind. And what makes Candide so brilliant and hilarious? Not one think, but various factors combined:

: a hopelessly naïve protagonist, for whom you have no choice but be sympathetic with; wastrel nobles, besides a motley group from priests to prostitutes, philosophers (how could Voltaire not

include a parody of himself?) ending with fanatics and fiends;

: The plot is dizzying, hectic and horrifying, while its protagonist goes from nobility to serfdom, from penury to extravagance, from significance and misery to anonymity and contentment. Wholly unconventional! And its readers become dazzled by its unfolding events that that despite being absurd are also utterly real;

: as you turn the pages you realize thatâ€™s he is there, peeking from behind the curtains into the stage, whispering to you: