

# CANDIDE

by Voltaire



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UNABRIDGED WITH GLOSSARY AND NOTES

# CANDIDE



Voltaire



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# CANDIDE

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# NOTES

## What is a literary classic and why are these classic works important to the world?

A literary classic is a work of the highest excellence that has something important to say about life and/or the human condition and says it with great artistry. A classic, through its enduring presence, has withstood the test of time and is not bound by time, place, or customs. It speaks to us today as forcefully as it spoke to people one hundred or more years ago, and as forcefully as it will speak to people of future generations. For this reason, a classic is said to have universality.

François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire) was born on November 21, 1694, in Paris, France. He received a Jesuit education, and after writing a satire of the French government, Voltaire was sent to the Bastille in 1717, where he spent eleven months. After his release, he was beaten for insulting a nobleman, and sent to the Bastille again for a few days. Voltaire then left France and lived as an exile in England for a few years, writing philosophical treatises and plays. There, he met Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Sir Isaac Newton, and numerous other English intellectual and literary figures.

After returning to France, he wrote *Philosophical Letters* (1734). In it, he compared the English and French governments, and the book was banned. Voltaire left Paris again and began a long liaison with Madame du Châtelet, the wife of an aristocrat, who lived in Lorraine, France. Through her influence, Voltaire began writing the official history of King Louis XV.

He eventually settled near Geneva, and from there he corresponded with, entertained, and debated many of Europe's greatest scholars.

Voltaire wrote *Candide* in 1759, the most well known and popular of his eighty works. It, too, provoked outrage, and the government ordered that it should be burned. Voltaire spent most of his remaining years in Geneva, but returned to Paris once, in 1778, for a performance of one of his plays, *Irene*. Voltaire died shortly afterward, probably from a combination of excitement and rich food.



# POINTERS

## READING POINTERS

### Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights

To gain a better understanding and appreciation for *Candide*, consider the following:

**Philosophical Optimism** – This belief was put forth by Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) and states that everything that happens in the world has some point and, in the end, everything happens for the best. (This last phrase is spoken frequently in the book.) For example, in the event of a disaster, the “good” in what seems to be a tragedy may not be apparent at the moment, but good will eventually come out of the disaster.

**The Problem of Evil** – The presence of evil in this world is something with which philosophers, theologians, and average people have long grappled. Philosophers pose this question: “If God is all good and all knowing, how can He allow terrible, evil things to happen in a world that He has created?”

**Divine Providence** – Allied with the belief in Philosophical Optimism is a religious notion that there is a divine will that guides our fate; that is, everything that happens to us is God’s will. Related to the question of Divine Providence is the question of Free Will. If our lives are ordained by God, are we responsible for choosing good or evil? Do we have any control over our lives, or are we simply pawns of fate?

**Cause and Effect** – This idea is used by religious philosophers to prove the existence of God. They argue that for every effect there must have been a cause; in tracing this back, eventually the answer they find is that the “first cause” is God.

**Sufficient Reason** – In Leibniz’s philosophy, the “sufficient reason” is that which justifies the existence of things. Like the first cause, the ultimate sufficient reason is God.

Also note the following targets of Voltaire's satire:

- the pretensions and abuses of the upper classes
- the venality, greed, and licentiousness of all classes of people
- the abuses and injustices heaped upon the weak and the injustices suffered by all

While reading, consider what Voltaire seems to be saying about the following:

- the treatment of females
- military training and warfare
- the meaning of life
- natural disasters





# C H A P T E R I

## HOW CANDIDE<sup>†</sup> WAS BROUGHT UP IN A MAGNIFICENT CASTLE, AND HOW HE WAS EXPELLED THENCE

**I**N A CASTLE of Westphalia, belonging to the Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh, lived a youth, whom nature had endowed with the most gentle manners. His countenance was a true picture of his soul. He combined a true judgment with simplicity of spirit, which was the reason, I apprehend, of his being called Candide. The old servants of the family suspected him to have been the son of the Baron's sister, by a good, honest gentleman of the neighborhood, whom that young lady would never marry because he had been able to prove only seventy-one quarterings,<sup>†</sup> the rest of his genealogical tree having been lost through the injuries of time.

The Baron was one of the most powerful lords in Westphalia, for his castle had not only a gate, but windows.<sup>†</sup> His great hall, even, was hung with tapestry. All the dogs of his farmyards formed a pack of hounds at need; his grooms were his huntsmen; and the curate of the village was his grand almoner. They called him "My Lord," and laughed at all his stories.

The Baron's lady weighed about three hundred and fifty pounds, and was therefore a person of great consideration, and she did the honors of the house with a dignity that commanded still greater respect. Her daughter Cunegonde was seventeen years of age, fresh-colored, comely, plump, and desirable. The Baron's son seemed to be in every respect worthy of his father. The Preceptor Pangloss<sup>†</sup> was the oracle of the family, and little Candide heard his lessons with all the good faith of his age and character.

<sup>†</sup>Terms marked in the text with (†) can be looked up in the Glossary for additional information.

Pangloss was professor of metaphysicotheologico-cosmologonigology. He proved admirably that there is no effect without a cause, and that, in this best of all possible worlds, the Baron's castle was the most magnificent of castles, and his lady the best of all possible Baronesses.

"It is demonstrable," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise than as they are; for all being created for an end, all is necessarily for the best end.† Observe, that the nose has been formed to bear spectacles—thus we have spectacles. Legs are visibly designed for stockings—and we have stockings. Stones were made to be hewn, and to construct castles—therefore my lord has a magnificent castle; for the greatest baron in the province ought to be the best lodged. Pigs were made to be eaten—therefore we eat pork all the year round. Consequently they who assert that all is well have said a foolish thing, they should have said all is for the best."

Candide listened attentively and believed innocently; for he thought Miss Cunegonde extremely beautiful, though he never had the courage to tell her so. He concluded that after the happiness of being born Baron of Thunder-ten-Tronckh, the second degree of happiness was to be Miss Cunegonde, the third that of seeing her every day, and the fourth that of hearing Master Pangloss, the greatest philosopher of the whole province, and consequently of the whole world.

One day Cunegonde, while walking near the castle, in a little wood which they called a park, saw between the bushes, Dr. Pangloss giving a lesson in experimental natural philosophy to her mother's chamber-maid, a little brown wench, very pretty and very docile. As Miss Cunegonde had a great disposition for the sciences, she breathlessly observed the repeated experiments of which she was a witness; she clearly perceived the force of the doctor's reasons, the effects, and the causes; she turned back greatly flurried, quite pensive, and filled with the desire to be learned; dreaming that she might well be a *sufficient reason*† for young Candide, and he for her.

She met Candide on reaching the castle and blushed; Candide blushed also; she wished him good morrow in a faltering tone, and Candide spoke to her without knowing what he said. The next day after dinner, as they went from table, Cunegonde and Candide found themselves behind a screen; Cunegonde let fall her handkerchief, Candide picked it up, she took him innocently by the hand, the youth as innocently kissed the young lady's hand with particular vivacity, sensibility, and grace; their lips met, their eyes sparkled, their knees trembled, their hands strayed. Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh passed near the screen and beholding this cause and effect chased Candide from the castle with great kicks on the backside; Cunegonde fainted away; she was boxed on the ears by the Baroness, as soon as she came to herself; and all was consternation in this most magnificent and most agreeable of all possible castles.



## C H A P T E R   I I

### WHAT BECAME OF CANDIDE AMONG THE BULGARIANS†

CANDIDE, DRIVEN FROM terrestrial paradise, walked a long while without knowing where, weeping, raising his eyes to heaven, turning them often towards the most magnificent of castles which imprisoned the purest of noble young ladies. He lay down to sleep without supper, in the middle of a field between two furrows. The snow fell in large flakes. Next day Candide, all benumbed, dragged himself towards the neighboring town which was called Waldberghofftrarbkdikdorff, having no money, dying of hunger and fatigue, he stopped sorrowfully at the door of an inn. Two men dressed in blue observed him.

“Comrade,” said one, “here is a well-built young fellow, and of proper height.”

They went up to Candide and very civilly invited him to dinner.

“Gentlemen,” replied Candide, with a most engaging modesty, “you do me great honor, but I have not wherewithal to pay my share.”

“Oh, sir,” said one of the blues to him, “people of your appearance and of your merit never pay anything: are you not five feet five inches high?”

“Yes, sir, that is my height,” answered he, making a low bow.

“Come, sir, seat yourself; not only will we pay your reckoning, but we will never suffer such a man as you to want money; men are only born to assist one another.”

“You are right,” said Candide; “this is what I was always taught by Mr. Pangloss, and I see plainly that all is for the best.”

They begged of him to accept a few crowns. He took them, and wished

to give them his note; they refused; they seated themselves at table.

“Love you not deeply?”

“Oh yes,” answered he; “I deeply love Miss Cunegonde.”

“No,” said one of the gentlemen, “we ask you if you do not deeply love the King of the Bulgarians?”

“Not at all,” said he; “for I have never seen him.”

“What! he is the best of kings, and we must drink his health.”

“Oh! very willingly, gentlemen,” and he drank.

“That is enough,” they tell him. “Now you are the help, the support, the defender, the hero of the Bulgarians. Your fortune is made, and your glory is assured.”

Instantly they fettered him, and carried him away to the regiment. There he was made to wheel about to the right, and to the left, to draw his rammer, to return his rammer, to present, to fire, to march, and they gave him thirty blows with a cudgel. The next day he did his exercise a little less badly, and he received but twenty blows. The day following they gave him only ten, and he was regarded by his comrades as a prodigy.

Candide, all stupefied, could not yet very well realize how he was a hero. He resolved one fine day in spring to go for a walk, marching straight before him, believing that it was a privilege of the human as well as of the animal species to make use of their legs as they pleased. He had advanced two leagues when he was overtaken by four others, heroes<sup>†</sup> of six feet, who bound him and carried him to a dungeon. He was asked which he would like the best, to be whipped six-and-thirty times through all the regiment, or to receive at once twelve balls of lead in his brain. He vainly said that human will is free, and that he chose neither the one nor the other. He was forced to make a choice; he determined, in virtue of that gift of God called liberty, to run the gauntlet six-and-thirty times. He bore this twice. The regiment was composed of two thousand men; that composed for him four thousand strokes, which laid bare all his muscles and nerves, from the nape of his neck quite down to his rump. As they were going to proceed to a third whipping, Candide, able to bear no more, begged as a favor that they would be so good as to shoot him. He obtained this favor; they bandaged his eyes, and bade him kneel down. The King of the Bulgarians passed at this moment and ascertained the nature of the crime. As he had great talent, he understood from all that he learned of Candide that he was a young metaphysician, extremely ignorant of the things of this world, and he accorded him his pardon<sup>†</sup> with a clemency which will bring him praise in all the journals, and throughout all ages.

An able surgeon cured Candide in three weeks by means of emollients taught by Dioscorides.<sup>†</sup> He had already a little skin, and was able to march when the King of the Bulgarians gave battle to the King of the Abares.<sup>†</sup>

## GLOSSARY

Chapter I

**Candide** – The full title is *Candide, or Optimism*.

**“only seventy-one quarterings”** – the number of divisions on a coat of arms; this indicates the degree, or lack thereof, of a person’s worthiness in terms of aspiring to the highest station in society. Interestingly, the maximum number of divisions was usually sixty-four. Voltaire’s stab at the class of lords shows his satirical intent from the beginning.

**“The Baron was...a gate, but windows.”** – Highlighting the features of the Baron’s castle, is said, by many critics, to parody Jonathan Swift’s emperor in Lilliput because the measure of the emperor’s power and authority was emphasized by his height—the emperor was nearly a thumbnail taller than the population of the empire.

**Pangloss** – This name is derived from two Greek words: “all” and “language”; “all tongues”

**“He proved...for the best end.”** – Pangloss’s philosophy mirrors that of many during the Enlightenment, especially G.W. von Leibniz [Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz] (1646 – 1716). Leibniz’s philosophy was very optimistic, based on a strong faith in God and predestination. Its optimism stems from God because He knows what is best; God also has a predestined plan, which makes our world the best of all possible worlds. This philosophy is seen and exaggerated through Pangloss’s character.

**sufficient reason** – another element to von Leibniz’s philosophy, which declared that *sufficient reason* was essential for the existence of everything

Chapter II

**Bulgarians** – the Prussians who were at war with the French during the time Voltaire was writing; this chapter is devoted to expressing Voltaire’s anti-war beliefs. The King of the Bulgarians is believed to represent Frederick the Great, leader of the Prussians in the Seven Years’ War against the French (1756 – 1763).

**four others, heroes** – The four soldiers in this scene are just like the other soldiers in Frederick the Great’s army—they are machines, programmed by Frederick to do as they are told, without an opportunity to think freely.

**“...at this moment...accorded him his pardon...”** – The irony of Candide’s pardon shows how Enlightened philosophies were viewed by society at that time. Candide is pardoned for his innocence and ignorance.

**Dioscorides** – Pedanius Dioscorides (c. 40 – 90), a Greek physician and traveling surgeon for the Roman army

**Abares** – Voltaire’s representation of the French

## VOCABULARY

Chapter I

**almoner** – one who officially distributes charity for someone else (an individual, a monarch, or a religious organization)  
**consternation** – astonishment; dread  
**curate** – one in charge of a parish; a member of the clergy; one who oversees  
**vivacity** – liveliness, spirit

Chapter II

**ascertained** – discovered; examined  
**clemency** – a kind act, mercy  
**cudgel** – a club  
**emollients** – soothing lotions or medications  
**fettered** – shackled or chained by the ankles or feet  
**prodigy** – a person showing remarkable powers or talents  
**rammer** – a weapon used to crush or batter by using force; a battering ram  
**reckoning** – a bill, an account

Chapter III

**alms** – charity (money or goods) given to the less fortunate  
**biped** – a two-footed animal  
**brethren** – the male members of a religious order; plural of *brother*  
**concatenated** – connected, linked  
**disemboweled** – having the internal organs removed  
**fifes** – small, high-pitched flute-like instruments  
**florins** – European coins  
**haranguing** – lecturing, speaking publicly, addressing  
**hautboys** – oboes  
**ignominious** – shameful, disgraceful  
**orator** – a speaker  
**palpating** – throbbing, trembling, quivering  
**provisions** – supplies, necessities