



Candide: Or Optimism (Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition)

Francois Voltaire

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"All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds"

It was the indifferent shrug and callous inertia that this "optimism" concealed which so angered Voltaire, who found the "all for the best" approach a patently inadequate response to suffering, to natural disasters, not to mention the questions of illness and man-made war. Moreover, as the rebel whose satiric genius had earned him not only international acclaim, but two stays in the Bastille, flogging, and exile, Voltaire knew personally what suffering entailed. In *Candide* he whisks his young hero and friends through a ludicrous variety of tortures, tragedies, and a reversal of fortune, in the company of Pangloss, a "metaphysico-theologo-comolo-nigologist" of unflinching optimism. The result is one of the glories of eighteenth-century satire.

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