

# Candide synopsis

Based on Voltaire's 1759 novella of the same name, Candide takes the audience on a round-the-world romp of idealistic optimism as it clashes with a series of absurdly unfortunate events. The fable opens in Westphalia, at the castle of Thunder-ten-Tronck.

The young and naïve title character is betrothed to the Baron of Westphalia's beautiful daughter Cunégonde, and along with the maid Paquette and Cunégonde's brother Maximilian, they all subscribe firmly to the doctrine that has been instilled in them by their teacher Dr. Pangloss: that everything that occurs is for the best, no matter what. Their existence seems to be perfect, and Candide and Cunégonde announce they wish to be married. The Baron and Maximilian are outraged, considering Candide is their social inferior. The young man is expelled from the castle and wanders alone, still retaining his ingrained optimism. Though he has lost his love he consoles himself with the thought that it must be for a reason.

Candide is press-ganged into the Bulgar army, which attacks and destroys the [Schloss](#). The inhabitants are killed, including Cunégonde. Full of sadness, Candide roams on until he comes across the ever-optimistic Pangloss. With no money, they sail to Lisbon, where they witness a [catastrophic earthquake](#). They are then arrested as heretics and brought before the [Auto-de-Fé](#): Pangloss is hanged and Candide flogged. But, still hopeful, Candide travels on.

In Paris, a mysterious beauty has great men fighting over her. Candide recognises Cunégonde who brushes aside her apparent rebirth. Killing the two men who dominate her life, Cunégonde flees to Cadiz with her jewels, Candide and her companion, a game Old Lady. They are robbed and the Old Lady sings for money, telling her listeners how easily she can swap nationalities. Accepting a commission to fight for the [Jesuits](#) in South America, the companions set sail.

In the New World, we discover Maximilian and Paquette, both apparently risen from the dead and both being sold as slaves. The local Governor of Buenos Aires falls for Cunégonde as Candide sets off to find the Jesuits. Here he meets both Paquette and his foster brother. Maximilian deems Candide unfit for his sister and inadvertently, Candide kills Maximilian and flees into the forest. After many adventures, including discovering [Eldorado](#), he sends a slave Cacambo to buy Cunégonde back from the Governor, and to a message for her to meet him in Venice.

Working his way to Italy, in the Dutch colony of Surinam, Candide meets Martin, a professional pessimist. But even Martin's arguments cannot dent the young man's hopeful outlook. To get to Cunégonde, Candide buys a ship from the trader Vanderdendur. The vessel sinks, but Candide is rescued. Reaching Venice at last, he finds Cunégonde and the Old Lady who are slaving day and

night in the casino of the evil Prince Ragotski. His hopes shattered, Candide finally sees the self-seeking Cunégonde for what she is.

Together they buy a small farm to start afresh. He is reconciled to Cunégonde but his love for her is now on a new, mature basis. They will 'Make their garden grow'.

