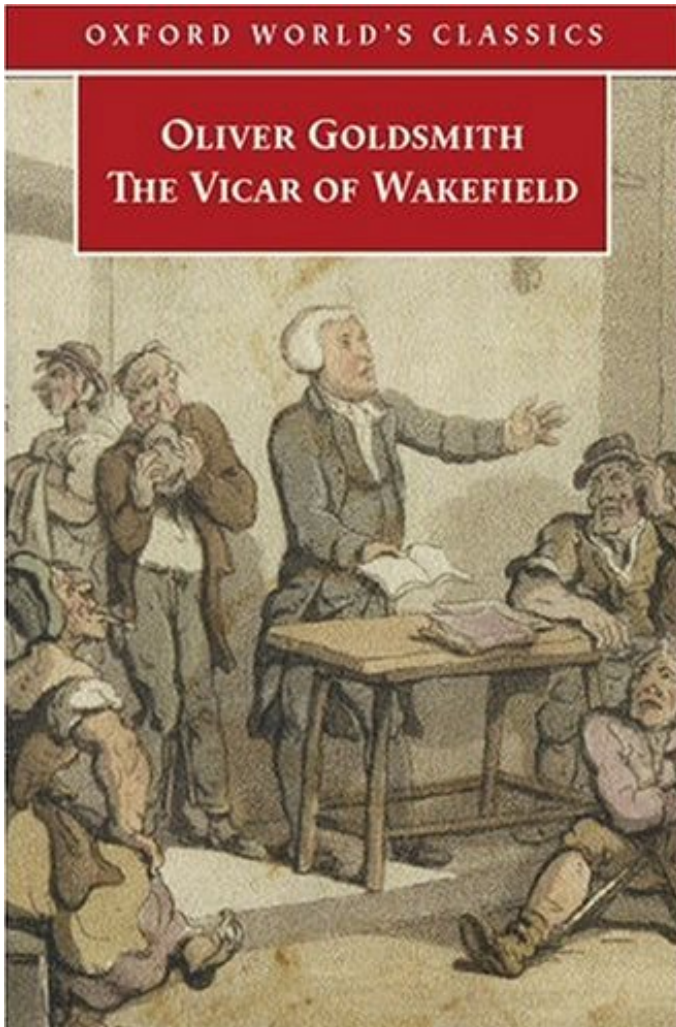

Oliver Goldsmith

The Vicar of Wakefield



Title: The Vicar of Wakefield

Author: Oliver Goldsmith

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Description

Oliver Goldsmith's hugely successful novel of 1766 remained for generations one of the most highly regarded and beloved works of eighteenth-century fiction. It depicts the fall and rise of the Primrose family, presided over by the benevolent vicar, the narrator of a fairy-tale plot of impersonation and deception, the abduction of a beautiful heroine and the machinations of an aristocratic villain. By turns comic and sentimental, the novel's popularity owes much to its recognizable depiction of domestic life and loving family relationships.

New to this edition is an introduction by Robert L. Mack that examines the reasons for the novel's enduring popularity, as well as the critical debates over whether it is a straightforward novel of sentiment or a satire on the social and economic inequalities of the period and the very literary conventions and morality it seems to embody. This edition also includes a new, up-to-date bibliography and expanded notes, and contains reprints of Arthur Friedman's authoritative Oxford English Novels text of the corrected first edition of 1766.

Insightful reviews

Gill: I read *The Vicar of Wakefield* in connection with a group read of [The Novel: A Biography](#). I read the section in Schmidt first, followed by the novel, and then re-read the section in Schmidt. I also read the notes and analysis on www.gradesaver.com after finishing the novel.

The book was first published in 1766, so as I read it I was trying to consider it from the point of view of its readers on first publication, as well as how I found it now.

I can see why it was a very popular novel. It's an easy read, with interesting characters and lots happening in the story. The first half is more comedic, whilst the second half is more melodramatic. The story is told as first person narrative by the Vicar. Some of the events are based on real events in the author, [Oliver Goldsmith's](#) life.

I found the level of coincidences, especially in the second half of the book, very implausible (although at one stage the narrator/Goldsmith tries to make a good case that such coincidences happen).

The novel has a mixture of sentimentality and satire that I quite enjoyed. It tells how the vicar moves from self-satisfied prudence to fortitude.

I'm pleased I read the book, from the point of view of filling in a gap in my knowledge of the tradition of British novels.

K.D. Absolutely: West Yorkshire, England, 1761 and 1762. Oliver Goldsmith wrote *The Vicar of Wakefield*, his one and only novel. Part of the introduction of this book says that Mr. Goldsmith was asked by his landlady to leave his apartment due to unpaid rent. Mr. Goldsmith asked his friend, Mr. Boswell, to sell the manuscript of this novel for him to have money.

According to Wikipedia, this novel was one of the most popular and widely read 18th century

novels among 19th century Victorians. The novel is mentioned in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Jane Austen's *Emma*, Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and *David Copperfield*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. I have read one of these and will be reading all the rest later this year so I decided to read this book first.

The plot revolves around **Reverend Dr. Charles Primrose** who can be likened to Job. Dr. Primrose is a father of 6 children and an Anglican priest. He is loving and good natured but he can also be stubborn and somehow naive (or idiotic if it is not too harsh a word). The reason why I say idiotic is that there are some obvious situations when I would, as a father myself, do or react differently (like letting your children sleep in the jail or gaol in this old English novel) or know right away using common sense (like telling the real intent of the two suitors of his daughter **Olivia**). Anyway, maybe this was how the Victorian readers would like their novels to be. So, it is not for me to judge especially a well-loved 243-year old classic. Just like in American Idol, some songs are not supposed to be changed.

The novel uses first person narrative through Dr. Primrose. Being a priest, the narratives are preachy at times. I normally hate preachy novels but this one is okay since it uses old English and the sentences brought back the memories of my days in college English Literature classes. There are some quotable quotes and I particularly like this part - his monologue - on aging:

"...as we grow older, the days seem to grow shorter, and our intimacy with time, ever lessens the perception of our stay. Then let us take comfort now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end; we shall soon lay down the heavy burthen laid by heaven upon us, and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and like our horizon, still flies before us; yet the time will certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth; when we shall think with pleasure on our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending."

And the Victorian readers seem to like their novels to have happy endings. Just like the Book of Job, this one ends with all Dr. Primrose lost went back to him.

Renee M: I found this delightful. Funny, sappy, thrilling, and sweet. Filled with beautiful innocent young women, separated lovers, a despicable villain, a kindly long suffering vicar father, goodness rewarded, evil punished, secret identities, and an overall appreciation for the charms of a simple life. This created the perfect balance to some of the heavier reading I've been doing lately.

I definitely recommended Librivox Version 2 for audiobook. The reader (Tadhg) has a lovely Irish accent and a genuine talent for his craft.

-Karen-: the great factor approximately novels written mid-eighteenth century is they are so

different, to one another in addition to to what we've come to count on from the practical novels of the nineteenth. The sentimental tale calls for advantage assailed through calamity, yet Goldsmith avoids the lachrymose via the sustained pleased resilience of the Vicar, with out him ever changing into annoying. Calamity succeeds disaster, and in the direction of the tip there is little left that hasn't but occurred, however the calm mild tone prevents an excessive amount of misery within the reader. upload on a couple of essay-like digressions on politics, the penal system, faith and philosophy and you have got a slightly attractive mix, written at a time whilst writers have been nonetheless experimenting with what you may do in a novel, and perhaps including within the essays to aim to counter its recognition as corrupter of the younger and naive, attempting to make it appear extra serious. definitely what you aren't getting is any type of mental grounding for why the villain acts as he does, no clarification as to why the Primrose condo may still all at once burst into flames, no suggestion as to if the older daughter is happy to be married to the fellow who kidnapped her. you'll want to stay up for Jane Austen for that.

Larissa: The Vicar of Wakefield is a charmingly ramshackle book. released to alleviate Goldsmith's debts, for which his landlady attempted to arrest him, it has the free association and abrupt tonal shifts of a piece written in haste. many of the digressions paintings in its favor, though, as round the heart of the radical Goldsmith starts off to provide his wit unfastened reign. The a bit placid tale of a pious vicar turns into a madcap picaresque, and builds to a intentionally preposterous end within which the entire characters seem on the comparable penitentiary on the similar time, to tie up plot threads and be assigned spouses. Interspersed with the satire are chapters that appear to were written in earnest, with strongly worded commentaries upon politics, justice and the tasks of the religious. This booklet much to suggest it, either for its insights into 18th-century English life, and as a piece of literature.

Tony: THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD. (1766). Oliver Goldsmith. ***.When I first learn this novel forty-some years ago, I wasn't really convinced what I had simply read. On moment reading, I'm nonetheless confused. the radical can be a ethical story or a satire on ethical tales. no matter what it was, it used to be immensely well known in its day, and maintains to stay on lists of classics. I liken its plot to the ebook of Job. right here we have now a vicar who believes in all of the correct issues and within the innate goodness of man. he's continually beset, however, by means of males of greed and deceit from all sides. Our Vicar, Mr. Primrose, is married to a girl who's just a little simpler and pragmatic than he. It definitely is helping within the end. The Vicar describes her: "...[I] selected my wife, as she did her marriage ceremony gown, now not for an excellent sleek surface, yet such traits as could put on well. To do her justice, she was once a good-natured amazing woman; and as for breeding, there have been few state women who may perhaps exhibit more...She prided herself additionally upon being an exceptional contriver in housekeeping; even though i'll by no means locate that we grew richer with all her contrivances." the radical is easily written and strikes alongside smoothly, yet i ponder who today's smooth viewers is.

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