

The Old Curiosity Shop

By: Charles Dickens

Publisher: International Collectors Library

Year: Unknown, printed in the United States of America

First print: the story was printed as a complete book for the first time in 1841.

Title.

Nell and her grandfather live in an old curiosity shop from which the story enrolls.

The Author.

Charles John Huffam Dickens, born February 7 1812, died June 9 1870, was the most popular English novelist of the Victorian era. He was a vigorous social campaigner, both in his own personal endeavours as well as through the recurrent themes of his literary enterprise.

Critics George Gissing and G. K. Chesterton championed Dickens's mastery of prose, his endless invention of unique, clever personalities, and his powerful social sensibilities, but fellow writers such as George Henry Lewes, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf faulted his work for sentimentality, implausible occurrences, and grotesque characterizations.

The popularity of Dickens's novels and short stories has meant that they have never gone out of print. Many of Dickens's novels first appeared in periodicals and magazines in serialised form, a popular format for fiction at the time.

Unlike many other authors who completed entire novels before serial production commenced, Dickens often composed his works in parts, in the order in which they were meant to appear.

Such a practice lent his stories a particular rhythm, punctuated by one minor "cliffhanger" after another, to keep the public looking forward to the next installment

Literature

The book is from the Victorian age.

Genre

It's a fiction novel.

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Summary

The old man lives with his granddaughter in Londen around 1825.

Nell is an orphan who loves the old man dearly, her best friend is Kit who is employed by the old man at the shop.

At night the old man sneaks out to gamble away his money in order to acquire a life with love and luxury for Nell.

The old man takes loans from Quilp an evil midget.

When Quilp finds out that the old man is gambling away his money he takes possession of the shop to get back his money.

The old man falls ill.

In the mean time Nell's brother Frederick suspects the old man has money so he tries to engage Nell and his easy influenced friend Dick Swiveller in to marriage.

When evil Quilp and his solicitor move in the shop to secure the goods Nell and the old man flee to the country to live as beggars.

Her brother still thinks the old man has a fortune and tries to find them.

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Marc Franken

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To do so he joins evil Quilp, together they try to track them down.

Nell and the old man finally settle down in a village far away.

Kit has lost his job at the curiosity shop and is by some strange coincidence employed by a small old man and his wife to live in their house and look after the horses.

When Kit is contacted by a man that works for Quilp, Kit and his mother find out.

Quilp takes care of the matter and excuses Kit to be a thief, Kit is convicted but quitted aging by Dick Swiveller whom at that time is employed by Quilp's solliciter.

Quilp is hunted down and dies in an attempt to flee from his persuers.

Kit and the man that worked for Quilp and turns out to be the old man's younger brother finally find out the whereabouts of Nell and the old man.

By that time Nell is dead, because of the hardship she had to endeavor, the old man sits at her grave unable to accept her death, some time later he dies as well.

Characters

Nell Trent.

The novel's main character, a beautiful girl of around fourteen.

Nell is an orphan and adopted by the old man who senses new life around her.

Nell's grandfather.

Referred to as the old man, we never learn his name.

Christopher 'Kit' Nubbles.

Kit works at the shop, Nell's friend also.

Daniel Quilp.

The evil midget, a money usurer.

Richard 'Dick' Swiveller.

Fredericks easy to influence friend.

The single gentleman.

Is hired by Quilp to find Nell and her grandfather.

Time and order.

The story is acted out around 1825.

It's difficult to say over what period the story evolves, it feels like not more than 6 months.

Place/Space

It al happens in London.

There is a shop still in Londen that carries the name The Old Curiosity Shop.

There is also a shop in Broadstairs and Charles Dickens had a house in Broadstairs.

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Background

Theme

Theme is the life in England in that time, it's hardships, relations and differences between poor and rich.

It shows the struggle people go through, bad and good.

Motto

It is easy to say, one shalt not gamble.

Sure this is true, even an old man who seems in his good mind throws it all away.

It shows his love for Nell and how it can blur other peoples insight, the man had no fortune, no secret pot of gold.

Even the vagabonds they meet take misconceptions about their ways.

Use of language

The book I read was of course translated from old English to a more readable form.

Nevertheless you can still sense the way "old English" was used.

Dickens is also an artist on its own, difficult phrases are formed to tell a simple thing.

It reminds me of politics where everything is formulated in a specific way to cover all.

Perspective

The life in London, for a lot without future, for the young, challenging and full of opportunities.

Opinion/Analysis

So many times I heard about Dicken, seen tv series of Oliver Twist, a Christmas Carol.

I wanted to read a book and found this book on an Old Curiosity Shop in Deventer.

I couldn't withstand to buy it, also because I never heard of this book.

Dickens is known to write with emotion of his characters, the evil are grotesque and the beautiful are amazingly good-looking and kind.

Not a spark of good can be found in Quilp, one has to dig deep to find it.

It's this controversy that makes his books as readable as they are.

People often think black/white.

Oscar Wilde said "You would need to have a heart of stone, not to laugh at the death of Little Nell."

Little Nell can probably be seen as his deceased sister-in-law Mary, writing this book makes his sister-in-law alive again, to live the pain of his loss all over.

The old man should be Dickens in person.

Evaluation

Amazingly how his writing can overcome time and still be an inspiration to read, it's with every good book, the reading is worth while.

You can learn from his books, so much detail is put in to it.

You see that even in the 17th century people had trouble with the change that's coming upon them.

The old man can't survive, he then tries his luck in gambling and loses.

Kit on the other hand has luck at it's hand and by his ways he quickly finds a job position, his fortune is made.

What will happen when he grows old?

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