



Candide

Voltaire (1694 - 1778)

Read by:	Paul Adams	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Is this the best of all possible worlds? The title character in Voltaire's classic novel, *Candide*, doesn't ask the question so much as he's force fed the answer. Raised in a sheltered environment with the words of Leibnizian positivism dropped into his mouth by his tutor, Dr. Pangloss, Candide accepts that all is for the best. Armed with this sunny belief, he leaves the comfort of home and hits the big bad world only to duck and cover as the big bad world hits back again and again. He begins to think that "If this is the best of all possible worlds, then the Creator is an under-achiever". Subjected to trial after trial and witnessing the many injustices that are the fact and fabric of the world of experience, Candide, as per Voltaire, learns that perhaps the best that one can do is to tend one's own garden. Written over the course of three days in the middle of the 18th Century (the Age of Enlightenment), this brilliant satire delivers an eloquent argument in a matter of fact voice bathed in the humor that stings with the barb of truth.

Voltaire (November 21, 1694 – May 30, 1778) was the nom de plume of French writer, philosopher and historian François-Marie Arouet. Voltaire was a prolific and versatile writer, producing over 2,000 poems, plays, pamphlets, essays, novels, and historical and scientific non-fiction works. He was famous for his wit and his outspoken advocacy of freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the separation of church and state. His critiques of government and religion resulted in numerous exiles and imprisonments in a time of strict censorship laws. His life was eventful and colorful: his books were banned and burned; he carried on a long-lasting relationship with a married noblewoman before marrying his niece; he maintained friendships with notables as diverse as Frederic the Great, Adam Smith, Casanova, Edward Gibbon, and James Boswell. His wit and defiance stayed with him until his dying day, when he reportedly responded to a priest at bedside asking him to renounce Satan with the last words, "Now is not the time for making new enemies."