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CANDIDE

by Mark Ravenhill

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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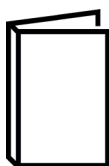
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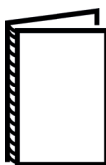


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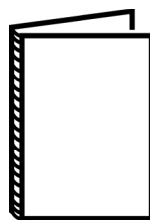
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mark Ravenhill was born in Haywards Heath, West Sussex in 1966. He studied Drama and English at Bristol University. His first play *Shopping and Fucking* was produced by Out of Joint and the Royal Court Theatre in 1996. Subsequent plays include *Faust Is Dead* and *Handbag* (both Actors Touring Company), *Some Explicit Polaroids* (Out of Joint at the Ambassadors Theatre), *Mother Clap's Molly House* and *Citizenship* (both National Theatre), *Pool (No Water)* (Frantic Assembly at the Lyric Theatre), *The Cut* (Donmar Theatre), *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* (Paines Plough) and *Over There* (Royal Court). From 2012 to 2014, Mark was playwright in residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company, producing a new version of Brecht's *Galileo* and *Candide* inspired by Voltaire (both Swan Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon). Mark's work in music theatre includes a new English version of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* with additional material by Michael Nyman (King's Head); *Ten Plagues*, a song cycle for Marc Almond with composer Connor Mitchell (Traverse Theatre) and *Elysium* with composer Rolf Wallin for the Norwegian Opera. Mark is the co-creator of the ITV sitcom *Vicious*.

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FIRST PERFORMANCE INFO

Candide was commissioned and presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company and first performed in the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, on 29 August 2013.

CHARACTERS

COUNTESS

PLAYWRIGHT

CANDIDE

PROLOGUE

CANDIDE

PANGLOSS

CUNEGONDE

BARON

BARONESS

BULGARIAN RECRUITING OFFICER

BULGARIAN RECRUITING SERGEANT

ABARIAN SOLDIER

JACQUES

SAILOR

WOMAN

ROSA

SOPHIE

SARAH

TED

BEN

ADAM

MIKE

EMMA

EVA

VOLTAIRE

TIM

SCREENWRITER

HANNAH

CACOMBO

MARTINA

TETUAN

PADRES

TUCAMON

OREILLON

NURSE

Pangloss

Cunegonde

**SOLDIERS, INHABITANTS OF EL DORADO, WEALTHY VISITORS TO THE
PANGLOSS INSTITUTE ETC.**

ONE

Enter the COUNTESS and PLAYWRIGHT.

COUNTESS You're sure Candide can be revived?

PLAYWRIGHT I believe he can, Countess.

COUNTESS He must.

When he first arrived in Venice

And I found him – (beautiful boy) – lost outside my palace

Candide was weary, melancholy.

But I hoped with new clothes, fine food

Jewels, music and my own beauty

He would revive

And return the passion that I felt for him.

But the weeks have passed

And despite my enticements he falls deeper and deeper

Into lethargy

He sleeps night and day

Mumbling in his troubled dreams a name – whose?

I fear if he's not soon revived

Candide will waste to death.

PLAYWRIGHT I took – (a small and I hope forgivable act of theft) –

Candide's journal from beside his bed

As he slept. Here it is.

It seems that Candide was raised with a philosophy called
Optimism

The belief that everything is for the best.

I have used this to write a biographical play

Which will present all Candide's wanderings and troubles

And will conclude with a scene which proves

That here in your palace, in your arms

Candide is in the best of all possible worlds.

COUNTESS Excellent invention. He comes.

Enter CANDIDE.

CANDIDE What? Is it night or day?

I dream. And now a dream so terrible

I wake and rise shouting at the air.

I thought I saw – I saw –

But the image fades

And I remember nothing.

COUNTESS Candide

I have a surprise for you.

CANDIDE What? Another madrigal? More finery to dress me in?

Countess, I am grateful for your gifts but they—

COUNTESS A play written especially for you.

CANDIDE A play? I never saw a play before.

COUNTESS Then come – sit and watch one now. Send in the
players.

PROLOGUE *appears (Note: names of all the characters in
the play within the play are shown in italic upper case).*

PROLOGUE Each man has just one mission:

To better know himself.

So sit and listen to:

“Candide – Life of a Young Optimist”.

CANDIDE What? Will they play my life?

COUNTESS They will.

Enter CANDIDE.

CANDIDE Who is this person enters here?

PLAYWRIGHT He plays you, Candide.

CANDIDE Me? Ah. Me? Well. I like him. Yes. Bravo, Candide!

COUNTESS (*aside*) See how he cheers already. The healing begins.

Enter PANGLOSS.

PANGLOSS Candide: time for your lesson.

CANDIDE And this is Pangloss. Hello old friend. (*hugs him*)

PANGLOSS Sir, I must play the scene—

COUNTESS Candide, we can clasp the players once they’ve played.

Best now to sit and watch.

(Oh the colour in his face

Maybe tonight he’ll –

But my body races ahead).

PANGLOSS Optimism: the belief that this is the optimal existence.

Firstly, Candide, understand there is a great Maker Supreme architect

Who considered every possible universe before finally

Resolving that this was the best of all possible worlds,

In which his greatest creation – Man – should live.

Do you grasp the general principle, Candide?

CANDIDE Not exactly.

PANGLOSS Then allow me to give some

Illustrations.

First – here, upon my face,

What do you see?

CANDIDE A nose.

PANGLOSS And why did the Maker give me a nose?

CANDIDE I—

PANGLOSS So that it might carry spectacles. You see how perfect is His design?

Everything connected.

Legs were made so they could bear breeches, cows so they could offer up their hides as leather for our shoes—

CANDIDE And stones were made so we could build castles.

And the best castle of all is the one in which we're living

Here in the best kingdom of Westphalia

With Monsieur the Baron von Thunder-Ten-Tronckh – the best guardian I could possibly have

And his best possible wife

And their best possible daughter Cunegonde.

CANDIDE Cunegonde? Will she come upon the stage?

PLAYWRIGHT She's ready for her entrance now.

PANGLOSS Candide:

You're an optimist.

BOTH (*sing*)

IF ONLY MAN COULD SEE

WITH TOTAL RATIONALITY

TRUST OUR MAKER'S GRAND DESIGN
EVERYTHING WILL TURN OUT FINE
FOR THIS IS THE BEST
THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS.

PANGLOSS Lesson finished for today.

Clear your books away.

Exit PANGLOSS. CANDIDE clears his books. Enter CUNEGONDE.

COUNTESS Candide! Why do you start from your chair?

CANDIDE Cunegonde – standing there.

I must speak with her.

Cunegonde, so many years apart and yet still you—

CUNEGONDE Sir, I am an actress. Painted. Don't you understand the laws of the drama?

CANDIDE But still "Actress" so like Cunegonde

If I might kiss you—

CUNEGONDE Oh, sir. *(goes to kiss him)*

COUNTESS Sit, Candide.

You must not kiss an actress. A creature of poverty, easy with her body, probably infected.

CANDIDE But so like my Cunegonde.

COUNTESS *(aside)* Is the name he utters in his dreams? Has Cunegonde already claimed his heart?

CANDIDE Forgive me. The laws of the drama are new to me but I'm beginning to understand.

CUNEGONDE Candide, we've known each other since we were children

But lately

Our bodies have changed.

Yesterday, while in the castle grounds
My attention was drawn by a cry.
It was Doctor Pangloss with the chambermaid Pacquette.
They were – Pangloss explained –
Exploring the laws of physics.
Pacquette was performing an action
So that he might experience a reaction.
A study
Which I thought you and I might also conduct.
First an action. I drop my handkerchief – so
And now I ask you “Pick” it up’.

*CANDIDE moves to pick up the handkerchief but
CUNEGONDE steps so that her skirts cover it up.*

CANDIDE Oh.

CUNEGONDE An observation?

CANDIDE I can’t pick up the handkerchief.

CUNEGONDE No?

The scientist must pursue his researches

However hard his task.

CANDIDE I could go—

CUNEGONDE Yes?

CANDIDE goes under the skirt.

An excellent reaction. Candide:

Wanting to explore what would happen in certain controlled
conditions

I’ve removed my undergarments.

COUNTESS Is this as it really happened? This Cunegonde's a somewhat—

CANDIDE Speak no ill of her. I forbid it.

CUNEGONDE That's it, Candide. Every point mass attracts every other point mass by a force pointing along the line intersecting both points and the force is proportional to the product of the two masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them.

CUNEGONDE has an orgasm.

CANDIDE Well played, Candide! Well played, Cunegonde!

COUNTESS (*aside*) And now I know: it is "Cunegonde" he mutters in his dreams. He has a lover.

Enter BARON and BARONESS.

BARONESS What is the meaning of this outrage?

BARON Sir, some eighteen years ago

(Although I was under no obligation)

I took you as my ward.

Seeing that your nature was all innocence

I christened you "Candide".

You have enjoyed the best of lives.

But you are – I see –

An animal.

CUNEGONDE Candide was conducting – no outrage – a scientific experiment.

BARONESS "Science". Foolish girl.

BARON I take the only course of action that I can:

You are banished from my castle.

You will never see Cunegonde again.

CANDIDE No!

CANDIDE Cunegonde:

No other

Cluster of atoms, viz. my person

Is meant to be with such another cluster of atoms, viz.
your person.

That is, I believe, an unchanging natural law.

CANDIDE Wait for me, Cunegonde.

CANDIDE We'll be reunited.

CANDIDE For this is the best of all possible worlds.

CANDIDE (*at the same time as the above*) For this is the best of
all possible worlds.

COUNTESS Is not his longing for Cunegonde then the cause
of his melancholy? And won't this play remind him that
she waits?

PLAYWRIGHT Wait for him? Impossible. For very soon
Cunegonde is – but I will not spoil the story.

CANDIDE Baron, Baroness, if I might be allowed a last kiss
from—?

BARON What, sir?

BARONESS How, sir?

BOTH No, sir.

Exit BARON, BARONESS and CUNEGONDE.

CANDIDE My own life to the letter. How could you know such
things?

PLAYWRIGHT The artist has a particular capacity for sympathetic
imagination.

CANDIDE The reminder is too painful. I'll return to sleep.

PLAYWRIGHT The play, sir, like the world, has a grand design and will show – I promise you – that all is for the best.

CANDIDE collapses exhausted. Enter BULGARIAN RECRUITING OFFICER following BULGARIAN RECRUITING SERGEANT.

CANDIDE I remember these men. Villains.

SERGEANT See? Just as I told you, sleeping where I first spotted him – young, six feet tall,
Limbs intact, no sign of anything venereal,
His own teeth.

OFFICER A rare commodity after so many years of war.
We'll recruit him and have him in uniform before
Tomorrow's charge. Wake him.
I'll be the good man, you the tough.

SERGEANT blows his trumpet and wakes CANDIDE.

CANDIDE Who are you? I've seen no other men but those who live in the Baron's estate in Westphalia.

CANDIDE This Candide's a fool.

PLAYWRIGHT But are these not your thoughts, words, deeds?

CANDIDE Still – a fool. He'll allow himself to be pressed in to the army. Watch.

OFFICER We're new friends. A sip of schnapps?

The SERGEANT offers the drink.

SERGEANT Very reasonable price:

Three ecus.

CANDIDE Oh

I thought you were offering – then I must decline. I have no coin.

OFFICER I see that you are a man of nobility—

CANDIDE Candide.

OFFICER Candide. So here. I'll give you an ecu.

And I'll ask you a question.

Do you love devotedly the Bulgarian king?

CANDIDE I don't know him. I know Mademoiselle Cunegonde,
who I truly—

SERGEANT Not know – infidel, revolutionary –

A man of such power and will

That he'll lead his people through the fires of hell until

Until all Europe is in his grasp.

CANDIDE You've convinced me:

The King of the Bulgars is truly the greatest of men.

OFFICER Hold this sabre – so.

Take the schnapps, raise it high and

Repeat:

My life for the King of the Bulgars!

SERGEANT He hesitates! An insurrection!

CANDIDE My life for the King of the Bulgars!

OFFICER Louder.

CANDIDE My life for the King of the Bulgars!

SERGEANT Yes!

***SERGEANT** bangs loudly on a drum. Enter rapidly a
large number of **BULGARIAN SOLDIERS**, all very wounded.*

OFFICER Men, stand tall and offer a salute

To our – thank Heaven – new recruit.

Send him Hercules' strength, Mercury's speed.

Three cheers for our hero soon to be: Candide!

SOLDIERS Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

*CANDIDE is rapidly dressed in a uniform and helmet,
and a gun put in his hand.*

CANDIDE Stop. A terrible mistake.

I'm a philosopher, lover not a soldier.

OFFICER It's simple: follow orders and when you see the enemy,
shoot.

CANDIDE I'll have no part in war.

OFFICER Are you aware, Candide,

Of a deserter's punishment?

SERGEANT A choice:

Be whipped by every member of the regiment

(That's two thousand men, times thirty-six lashes)

Or twelve lead bullets shot directly in your head.

OFFICER My advice?

The first takes hours of bloody pain

The second –

Which will it be?

CANDIDE It must be for the best that I swore the oath.

I'll find – I'm sure – honour and lasting glory

In war.

(sings)

IF ONLY MAN COULD SEE

WITH TOTAL RATIONALITY

TRUST OUR MAKER'S GRAND DESIGN

EVERYTHING WILL TURN OUT FINE

FOR THIS IS THE BEST

THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS.
I'LL FIGHT.

SOLDIERS *cheer.*

COUNTESS Oh, brave Candide!

A bullet shot. One of the SOLDIERS' heads is blown open.

SOLDIER (*Dying*) A wolf is biting in my head

I taste red milk

Did night fall so fast? (*dies*)

OFFICER The enemy's arrived! To arms!

*The BULGARIAN ARMY run off. The ABARIAN ARMY run on.
They both run off and on. There are several skirmishes
between the soldiers. An ABARIAN SOLDIER confronts
CANDIDE.*

ABARIAN Are you a Bulgar?

(*aside*) Looks like a man. Bulgar uniform.

Bulgars, we are told, have more hair than apes.

Fangs like a dog, feed on babies' blood, rape

Indiscriminately.

Was it lies?

CANDIDE He hasn't killed me yet. What's this? A trick? Surprise

And destroy?

ABARIAN Now I realise: war's a lie.

I'll embrace our brotherhood.

Clasp him to my chest.

CANDIDE Keep back. I've killed a thousand men.

ABARIAN I greet you as a—

CANDIDE Dog!

CANDIDE kills the ABARIAN, who falls at his feet.

ABARIAN Dog, is it? Dog?

ABARIAN barks and whines until he dies.

CANDIDE Oh, Candide! How could you commit such an atrocity?

CANDIDE This must all be part of my education.

But how

Is butchery part of the Grand Design?

The BULGARIAN ARMY cross the stage.

BULGARS Give thanks to God

Our victory

Abaria defeated

The men we lost died not in vain

Home and health and wealth again

In all the world no land as civilised

Bulgaria! Bulgaria! Bulgaria!

The ABARIAN ARMY cross the stage.

ABARIANS Give thanks to God

Our victory

Bulgaria defeated

The men we lost died not in vain

Home and health and wealth again

In all the world no land as civilised

Abaria! Abaria! Abaria!

Enter JACQUES.

JACQUES Friend—

CANDIDE Jacques. My dear old friend. To see you again –

But I've learnt. You are an imitation of the original.

CANDIDE If I must I'll kill again. Are you Abarian or Bulgar?

JACQUES I am neither. What is Abarian? Bulgar?

I invite you to join my Anabaptist brotherhood.

We believe the greatest good

Is trade and industry.

I offer you an apprenticeship.

Holland, a business importing textiles from Baghdad.

CANDIDE Pangloss was right. Everything is for the best. I happily accept.

JACQUES All thought must turn to sadness

From idleness comes misery

The man who makes the chair on which he sits

The man who bakes the bread he eats

The man who earns his pay from labour

Knows happiness

All nations come to battle

Each churchman lives on cruelty

The man who trades with his neighbour

The man who invests to increase his share

The man whose stocks yield a good return

Knows happiness.

***CANDIDE** is now a prosperous young merchant. He crosses the stage but his path is blocked by a **BEGGAR (PANGLOSS)**.*

BEGGAR See a man who life has tried harshly.

Spare a coin.

CANDIDE Thanks to several years of industry

I am able to answer your plea.

CANDIDE gives BEGGAR a florin.

BEGGAR Have you done so well, Candide?

Proof. This is the best—

CANDIDE You know my name? How?

BEGGAR Am I so changed?

Beneath these sores that burn my skin,
Beneath this nose half lost, this almost toothless grin,
Beneath the eyes with sight so dim
That the world is all shadow now,
Is there not left enough of that cluster of atoms that we once
called
“Pangloss”?

CANDIDE Pangloss. But how...?

PANGLOSS Some time ago

I conducted a certain scientific experiment
With a chambermaid.
In Pacquette’s embrace I found heaven and yet...
She was poor, her only inheritance she gave to me:
A progressive venereal disease.
In just a few months I’ll die – and horribly –
But I praise that syphilitic girl.
All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.
How so? I have discovered a new philosophical principle:
An individual’s suffering is outnumbered by the general good.
As I will now demonstrate.

How did Europe come to have this sickness?

Christopher Columbus sailed the Atlantic

And brought from the Americas

Pox, yes.

But also tobacco,

Chocolate, cochineal

Thus vastly increasing our trading

Opportunities.

Ergo: outweighing the pain of venereal disease

Is the profit of globalised commodities.

CANDIDE Pangloss. You're right.

PANGLOSS (*sings*

IF ONLY MAN COULD SEE

WITH TOTAL—

CANDIDE But one question.

I have to know the fate of Cunegonde.

PANGLOSS Oh, Candide

CANDIDE And now a second time I'll hear him say:

PANGLOSS Cunegonde is dead.

CANDIDE Ah!

CANDIDE Ah!

COUNTESS Oh!

PANGLOSS The day that you were banished

The Bulgar hordes invaded Westphalia.

Monsieur the Baron von Thunder-ten-Tronckh was chopped
in pieces,

The Baroness' skull smashed.

CANDIDE And Cunegonde?

PANGLOSS Was raped by the entire Bulgarian army,

Torn, broken

And with a sabre, disemboweled.

CANDIDE How will I stand it?

PLAYWRIGHT It happened and so it must be written.

CANDIDE (*falling to his knees*) Pangloss, I cannot see

That any Maker would plan

Such—

PANGLOSS Remember: one person's suffering is outnumbered
by the general—

CANDIDE Pangloss – you are a blind, cruel, chattering idiot.

Your optimism—

PANGLOSS My optimism?

Sir. I am an actor.

I simply mouth the words which the play dictates.

CANDIDE Ignoble man.

Who'll cry

Real tears when you're lying in real blood?

PLAYWRIGHT Sir,

These actors are shadows who imitate

Your experience –

The things you saw yourself and know are true.

Will you attack this man for mere repetition?

CANDIDE To live it all again you'll drive me mad.

Oh Cunegonde! Oh Cunegonde!

COUNTESS I believe, Candide, if you'll allow them to complete their play the day will end in happiness.

CANDIDE There can be no happiness without Cunegonde.

COUNTESS There can – somehow.

I have lived twice as long in this world as you

I've seen two husbands die

A baby which stopped breathing in my arms

I thought – like you – that the world would be darkness
always

But

Melancholy – however deep – will pass.

CANDIDE Please: make me sane.

(What?

Is my simple lust for Candide now turned to love? It is.

Keep him safe.)

JACQUES Pangloss – yes I know your name, heard everything

That you told Candide.

I will make all well again.

There are doctors can cure you of your pox.

PANGLOSS But at what price?

I'm a beggar

In this world even an enema costs –

JACQUES I have profit enough from trade to invest

In your cure.

Business requires

(When it's practically applied) philosophy.

I need a book-keeper – the job is yours.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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