

# CANDIDE: Or, The Death of Optimism

A philosophical journey through the “Best of All Possible Worlds”



Based on the 1759 satire by Voltaire

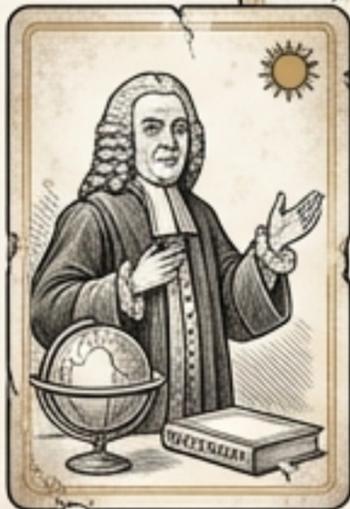
# THE PREMISE: METAPHYSICO-THEOLOGICO-COSMOLO-NIGOLOGY



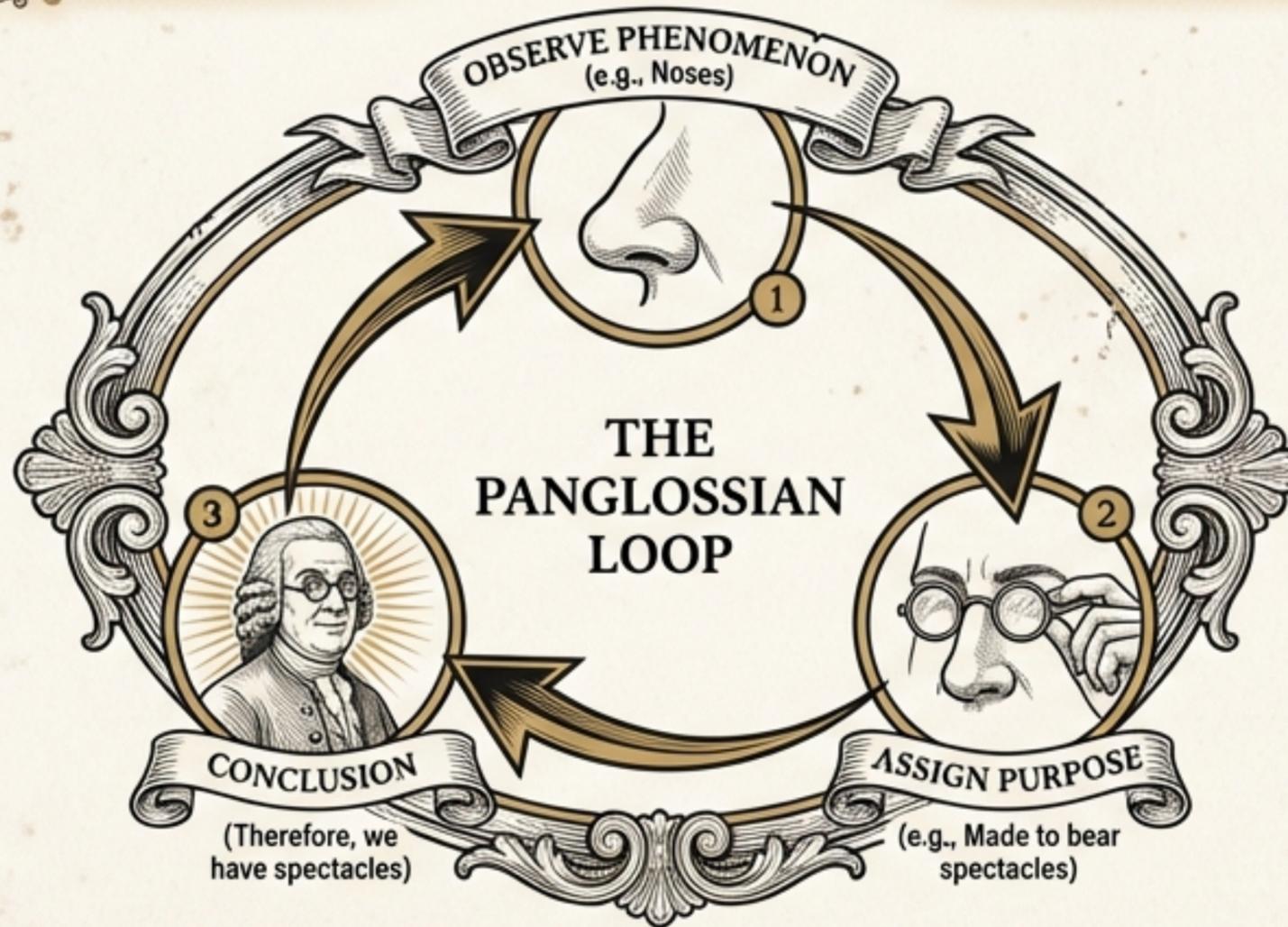
**Candide:**  
The Blank Slate.  
Gentle, simple  
judgment.

In the castle of Westphalia, young Candide is taught a single, irrefutable truth by his tutor, Master Pangloss: "Things cannot be otherwise than as they are; for all being created for an end, all is necessarily for the best end."

**Cunegonde:**  
The Desire.  
Fresh-colored,  
plump, and 17.



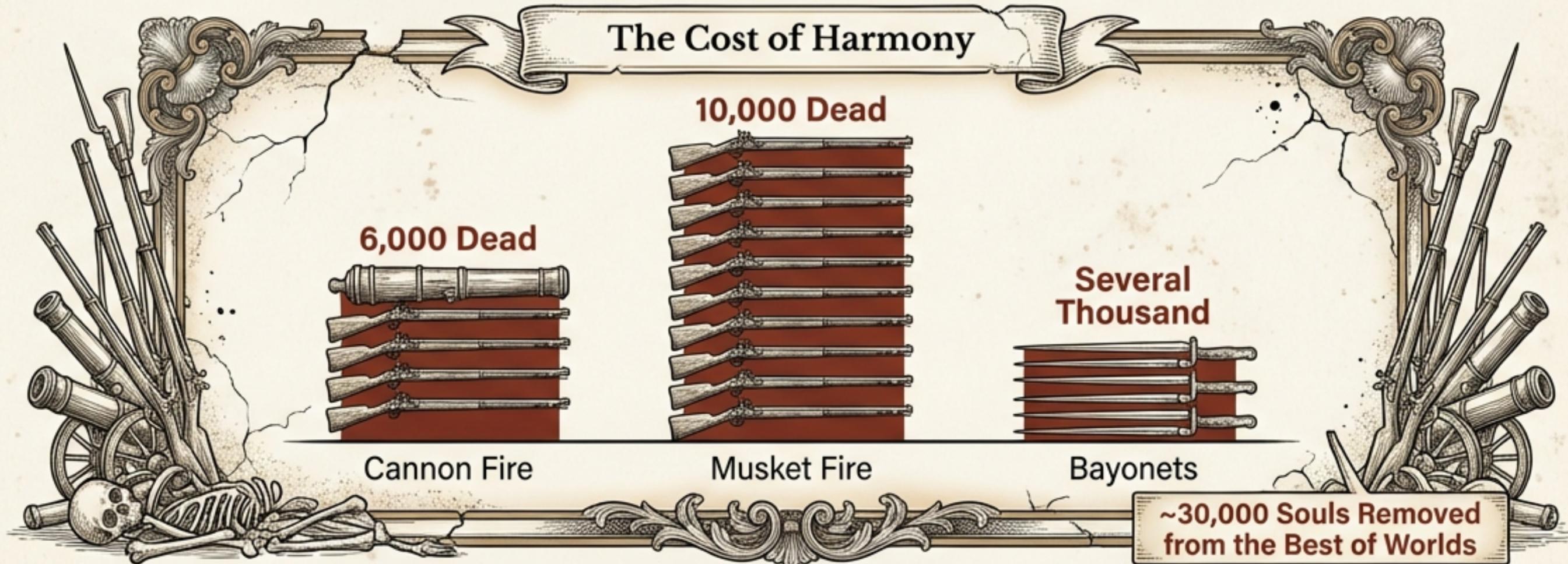
**Pangloss:**  
The Oracle.  
Proves the  
Baron's castle  
is the greatest  
on earth.



# Heroic Butchery and the Laws of War

*Map Location: The fields between the Bulgarians and the Abares*

Candide is conscripted into the Bulgarian army. The battle is described not as a tragedy, but as a harmonious display of trumpets, fifes, hautboys, drums, and cannon.

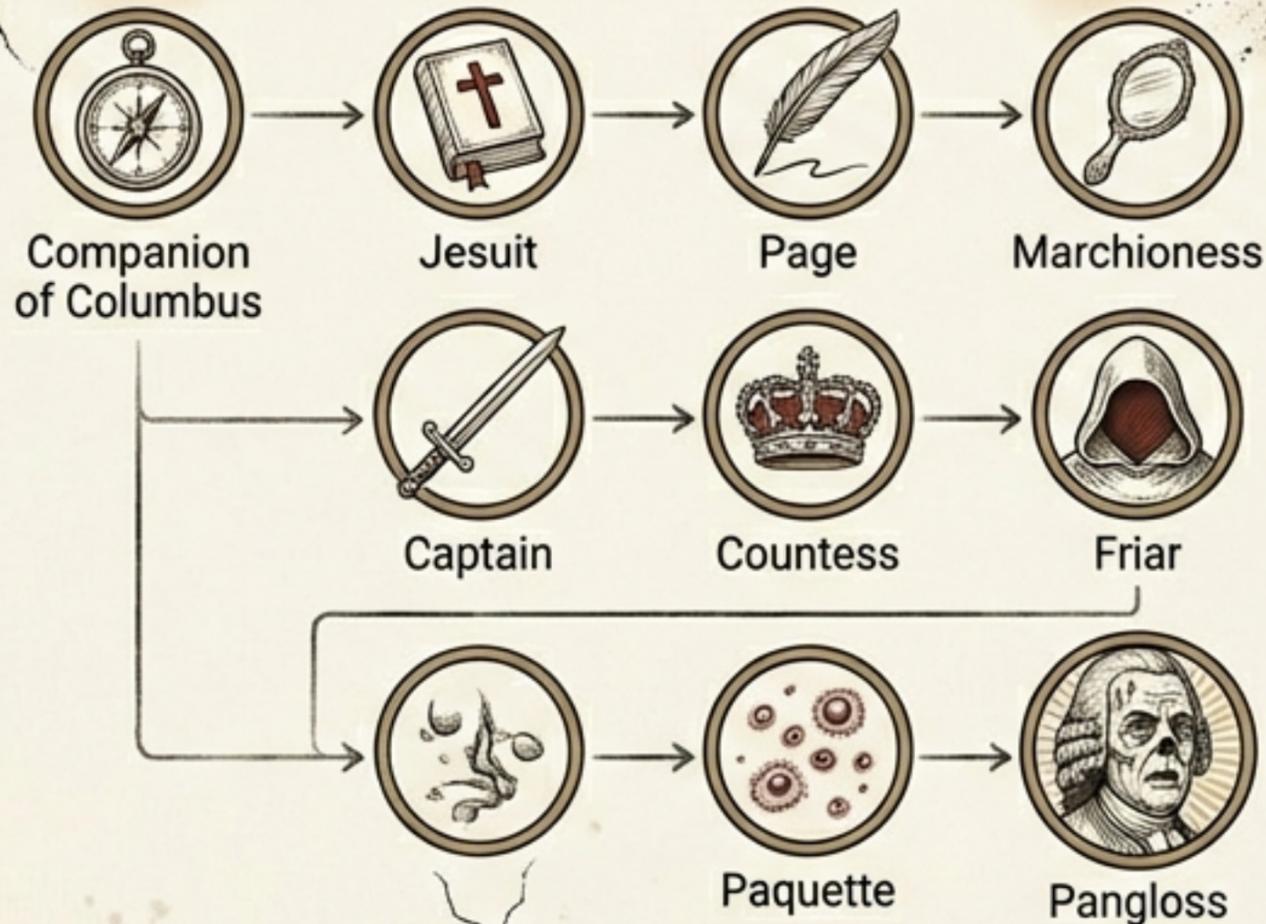


*“While the two kings were causing Te Deum to be sung each in his own camp, Candide passed over heaps of dead and dying.”*

# The Genealogy of Disease

Candide reunites with Pangloss, who is now a beggar, covered in scabs, with the end of his nose eaten away.

## The Genealogy of Misery



## The Pangloss Filter

The Argument: "It was a thing unavoidable, a necessary ingredient in the best of worlds."

The Benefit: "If Columbus had not caught this disease, which contaminates the source of life, we should have neither chocolate nor cochineal."



# The Earth Swallows the Just and Unjust Alike

Map Location: Port of Lisbon, November 1, 1755

## The Tempest.



The honest Anabaptist James saves a sailor, but is drowned by the same sailor. Pangloss prevents rescue, claiming the bay was made for James to drown in.

## The Quake.



Fires, falling roofs, 30,000 crushed.

## The Aftermath.



The sailor loots the ruins and buys favors from a woman amidst the dead.

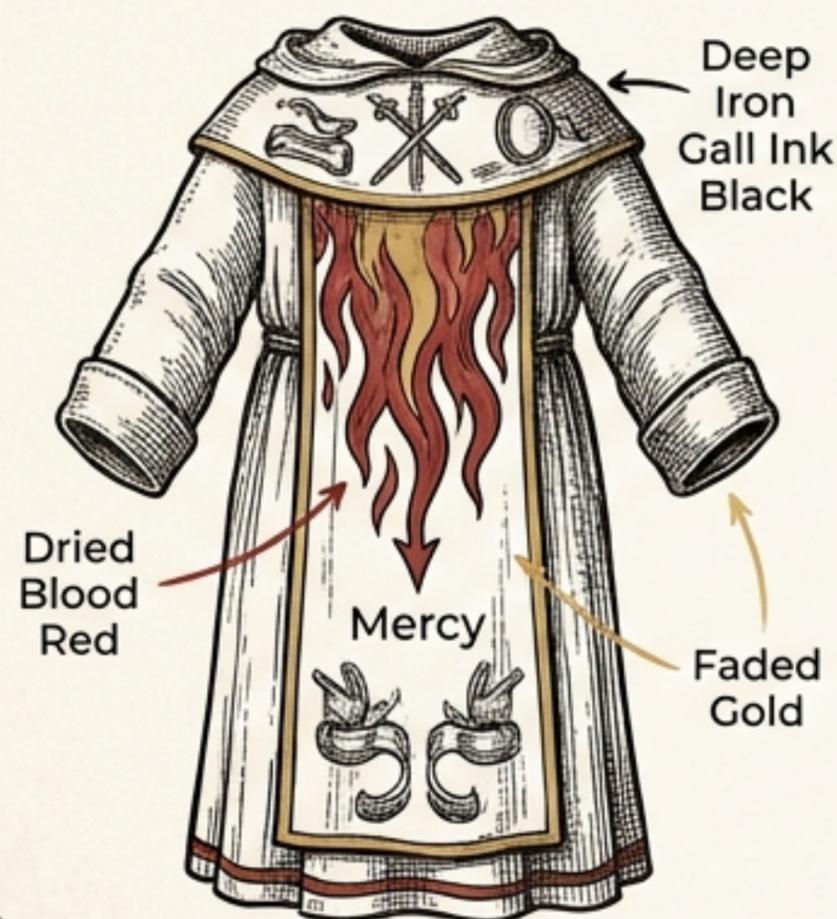
**Candide:** "This is the Last Day!"

**Pangloss:** "Impossible that things should be other than they are. If there is a volcano at Lisbon it cannot be elsewhere."

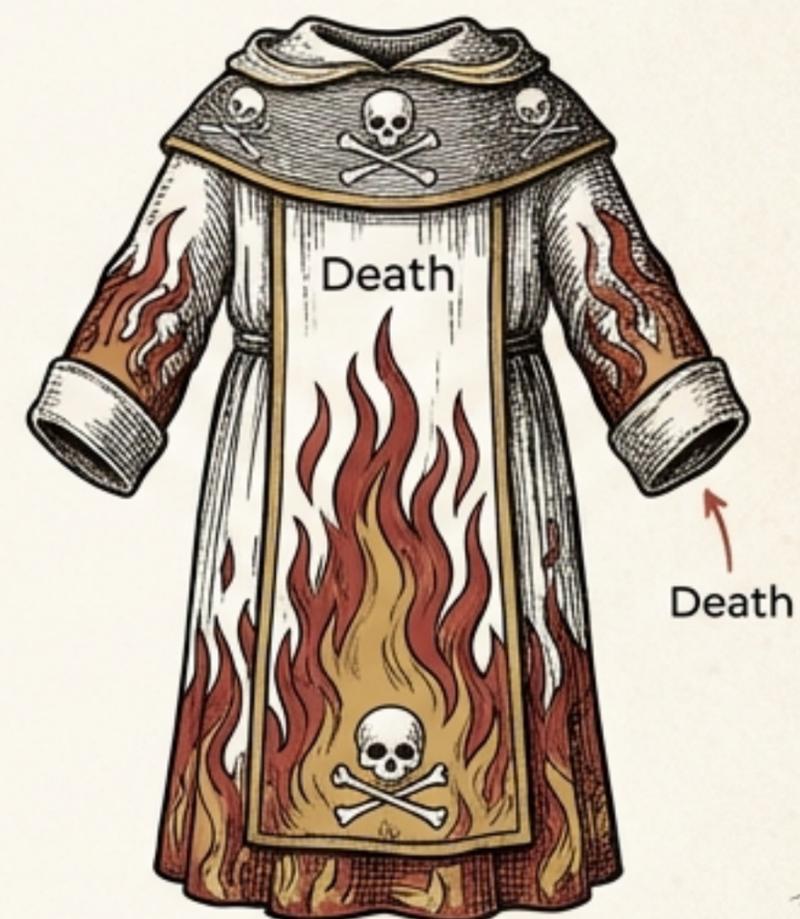
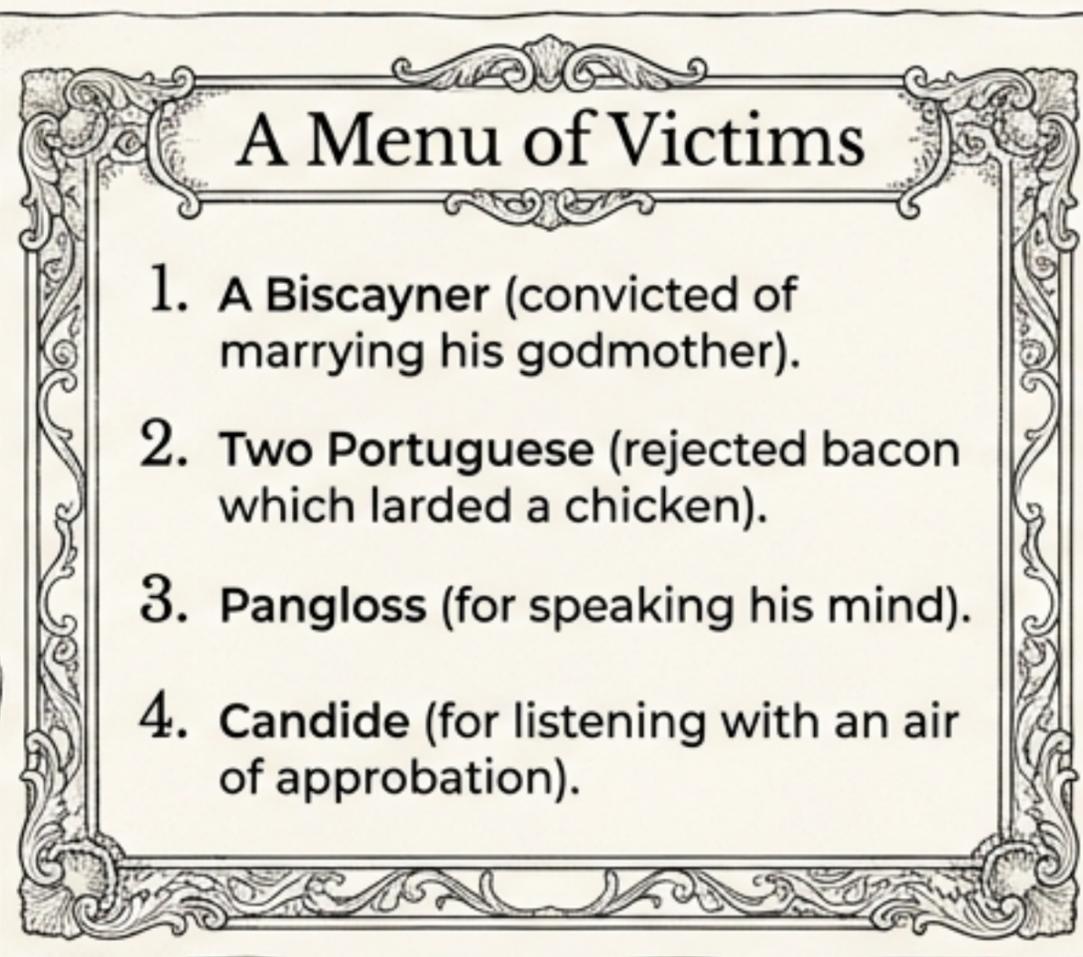


# An Infallible Secret to Stop Earthquakes

The University of Coimbra decides the best way to prevent further shocks is a “beautiful auto-da-fé” (Act of Faith).



San-benito



Pangloss

**Result:** Pangloss hanged. Candide whipped.  
The earth shakes again immediately.

# The Commodification of Cunegonde

Candide finds Cunegonde alive. She was not killed, merely “ripped open” (accidents are not always mortal).



Don Issachar  
(The Jew)

Mon, Wed, Sat



The Grand  
Inquisitor

Tue, Thu, Fri, Sun



**Resolution:** Candide, the gentle Westphalian, kills both the Jew and the Inquisitor in two minutes.

“When one is a lover, jealous and whipped by the Inquisition, one stops at nothing.”

# A Buttock for a Buttock

## Character Profile: The Old Woman



**Origin:** Daughter of Pope Urban X and the Princess of Palestrina.



**Trajectory:** From palace luxury to Moroccan slavery. Witnessed her mother drawn in quarters by four men.

**Hierarchy of Msight**  
**Hierarchy of Misery:**  
Despite being a servant, one-buttocked, and destitute, she—like almost everyone—refuses to kill herself.



**The Siege of Azof:** Starving Janissaries are convinced by an Iman not to kill the women, but to “cut off a buttock of each” for food.

“I have not known... one who has not cursed his life many a time, that has not frequently looked upon himself as the unhappiest of mortals.”

# The Kingdom of Paraguay

Map Location: Jesuit Territory

Candide and Cacambo arrive to find the Jesuits at war with Spain and Portugal.

## The Jesuit Irony

In Europe

Jesuits confess Kings.

The Economic System

In America

Jesuits kill the King's troops.

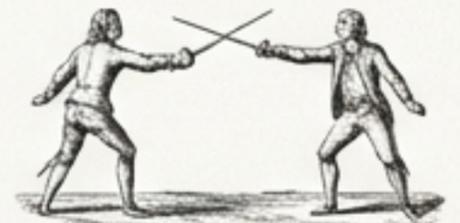
The Fathers possess everything;  
the people possess nothing.



**The Reunion:** The Reverend Father Commandant is Cunegonde's brother.

**The Conflict:** He refuses to let a 'mongrel' like Candide marry his sister (72 quarterings).

**The Outcome:** Candide **runs him through.** (Priest/Official **kill count: 3**).



# The Oreillons: Nature Unfiltered

A brief stop in "Pure Nature" to satirize the idea of the Noble Savage



## The Rescue

Candide shooting two monkeys chasing two girls.



## The Twist

They were lovers.



## The Chant

Natives preparing a boiling pot.

## Resolution

Cacambo proves Candide isn't a Jesuit (because he just killed one). The savages release them.

## Lesson

Pure nature is good, provided you haven't taken holy orders.

# El Dorado: The Impossible Ideal



## Characteristics of Utopia

1. Religion: Worship God, ask for nothing. No monks, no inquisitions.
2. Law: No lawsuits, no prisons.
3. Science: A palace of sciences with a gallery 2,000 feet long.

In El Dorado, gold is dirt. In Europe, it is the motive for **murder**.

## Why Leave?

1. Cunegonde is not there.
2. The desire to be rich *among* men.

# The Price of Sugar

Map Location: Surinam (Dutch Colony)

## The Transaction

**The Mill:** Caught the finger  
(Hand cut off).

**The Escape:** Attempted to run  
(Leg cut off).



*“It is at this price that you eat sugar in Europe.”*

## The Renunciation

Candide defines Optimism negatively for the first time:  
“The madness of maintaining that everything is right  
when it is wrong.”

# The Manichean Alternative

Candide hires Martin, a scholar chosen for being the most disgusted man in the province.

## Martin's Philosophy

God has abandoned the world to a malignant being. Hawks have always eaten pigeons; men have always been liars and brigands.

## The Sea Battle



## Dialogue Overlay

**Candide:** **Crime is punished.** The Dutch pirate sank.

**Martin:** But the passengers were doomed also. **The devil drowned** the rest.

# Paris: A Chaos of Wits and Knaves

Martin observes Parisians as a confused multitude seeking pleasure and finding none.

Doctors force cures on Candide until he is nearly dead.



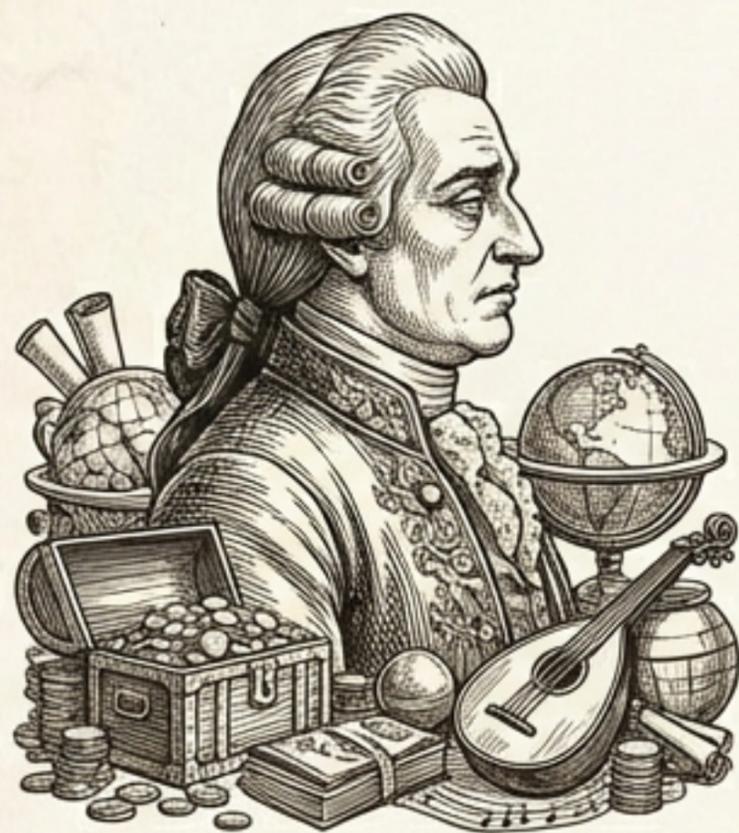
Critics hate the play because the author doesn't believe in innate ideas.

A supper where silence reigns ("The card-table face").  
Candide cheated by the Abbé.

*"A place where monkeys provoke tigers."*

# The Misery of Possession

Venice: Lord Pococurante's Palace



Pococurante:  
Rich, handsome,  
possesses  
everything,  
enjoys nothing.



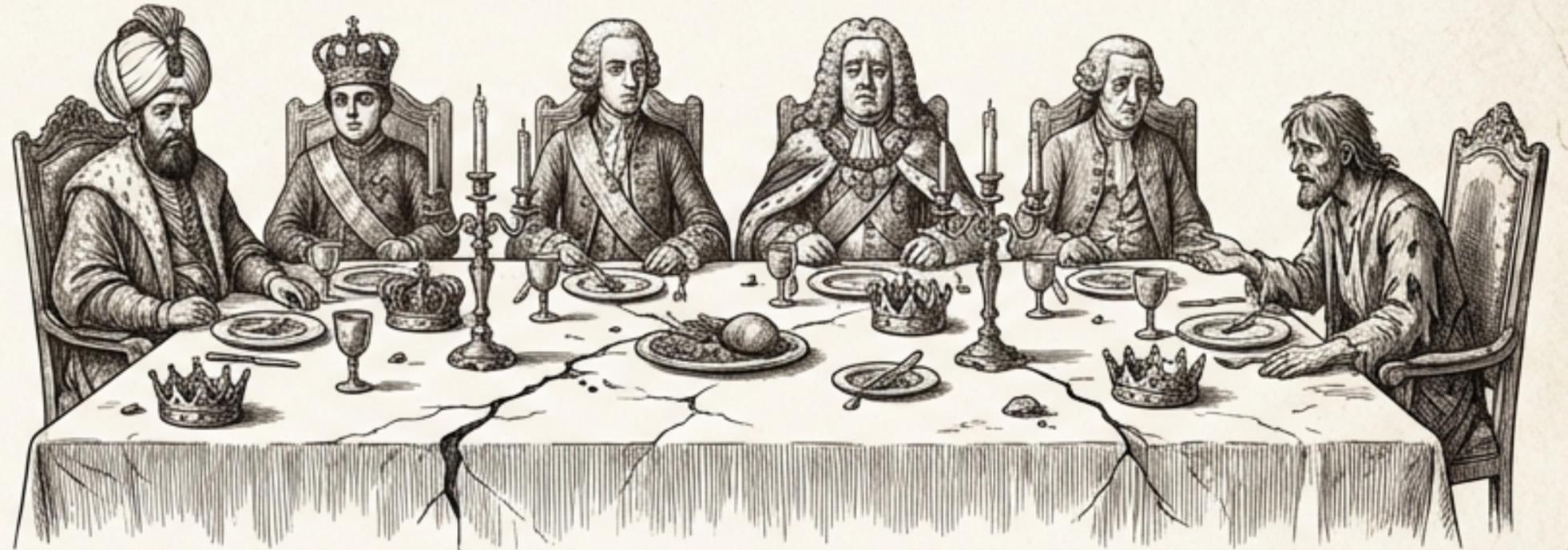
Dialogue Overlay

**Candide:** He is a genius  
for disliking everything.

**Martin:** There is some pleasure  
in having no pleasure.

# The Carnival of Dethroned Kings

1. Achmet III  
(Grand Sultan)
2. Ivan VI  
(Emperor of  
Russia)
3. Charles Edward  
(King of England)
4. Augustus III  
(King of Poland)
4. Augustus III  
(King of Poland)
5. Stanislaus  
(King of Poland)
6. Theodore  
(King of  
Corsica -  
begging for  
charity)



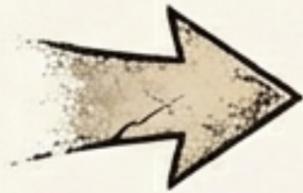
**Candide**, a private citizen with a few diamonds, is **richer** and **more secure** than six anointed sovereigns.

# The Reunion at Constantinople

Candide finds Cunegonde hanging towels to dry.



Beautiful Cunegonde



Embrowned, blood-shot eyes, withered neck, rough red arms.

Candide recoils  
in **horror** but  
ransoms her.

The Baron is still arrogant.  
He refuses to let Candide  
marry his sister.



They ship the Baron back to the **galleys**.

# The Three Great Evils

The group lives on a small farm. Money is **gone**. They argue about **metaphysics**.

Which is worse? The physical tortures of the past, or having **nothing to do**?



Pangloss: "Why was **man** made?"

**Dervish**: "What does it matter? When His Highness sends a ship to Egypt, does he worry if the **mice** on board are at ease?"

# The Old Turk's Secret

They meet an old man  
under an orange bower  
who ignores politics.



Work keeps at bay three great evils:  
**BOREDOM, VICE, and WANT.**

Grandeur is dangerous. Practical, local labor is the only sanctuary.

# Conclusion: Il faut cultiver notre jardin

Pangloss continues to argue that all events were necessary. Candide cuts him off.

## The Misery Meter



**Westphalia**  
(Ignorance)



**The World**  
(Suffering/Experience)



**The Garden**  
(Work/Sanity)

“Let us work without disputing; it is the only way to render life tolerable.”