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The Antiquary: The Works of Sir Walter Scott Details

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Author : Walter Scott

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F says

It took me two goes - I started, then put it down and when I picked it up, I couldn't remember much about it. So I started again, and it seemed a much more interesting read the second time around. I struggled a bit with the Scots dialect bits - not that there are many of them, nor are they long, but I am someone who likes to know exactly what people are saying. I eventually started writing the translations in in pencil, as I do when reading German, and wished I had done that from the start - it also helps me to remember what words mean, so that I don't endlessly look up the same things.

I do enjoy Walter Scott's novels - he writes a good story, and I can understand why he was so popular in his day. I also enjoy reading a story written so long ago - none of the concerns of the 21st century author to deal with, just a good read!

Peter Pinkney says

John Byrne (the Scottish artist and playwright), a man I greatly admire, said in an interview, that he was glad to read Robert Louis Stevenson, after being made to read Walter Scott at school. He said he found Scott to be turgid and long winded. Unfortunately most people today seem to think that, and they are, in my opinion, totally wrong.

Scott in his day was widely read, and deserves to be today. It is a great tragedy in the world of literature, that he is scarcely read today. Yes some of the archaic language is difficult, but if you persevere, you will find great yarns, adventures and characters.

I think I will spend my years promoting his work amongst my friends and fellow readers. Anyone who names a character, who is a scholar, Doctor Dryasdust deserves our respect!

Patrick Murtha says

A lovable novel that can be strongly recommended to any fan of 19th Century fiction.

Christina Dudley says

IVANHOE is still my favorite of the few Walter Scott books I've read, but I enjoyed the humor of this one. The Antiquary himself is pedantic and always buttonholing people to bore them with landslides of information, but Scott describes these assaults in funny ways. There's a little romance, a little peril, a duel, a long-kept secret, and even a treasure hunt. Quite fun at times.

Cambusken says

Why hadn't I heard of this great book before? It has all the usual Scott hallmarks - brilliant story line, sly humorous observation, terrific set pieces, marvelous writing. Yet it was based in his own lifetime - is this the only one? So there is no long introduction, based on fake documents mysteriously recovered. I guess the narrator is Scott himself. He was a bit of an Antiquary himself (meaning obsessive collector and/or local historian), so it is typical of Scott to pull his own leg in gently mocking this humane old dodderer. It is just great - I imagine the prototype for all subsequent sagas, but strangely unknown (at least to me). Glad to see so many got there before me!

Lynn says

It's been quite some time since I've read a classic novel; I had forgotten what a pleasure it is to become lost in a way of thinking - and writing - that has not survived the advent of television. It took me a bit to get into it, perhaps because I'm out of practice. But the story is charming and Scott's observations on the absurdities of life are laced with humour, and I was soon caught up in the tale. I thoroughly enjoyed this and highly recommend it to anyone who can still enjoy pre-twentieth century literature.

Lucy says

My fifth Scott, and the best by far. It's the first I've read where the characters actually seemed like real people - Edie Ochiltree is so much more credible than Meg Merrilies, for example. And while The Antiquary himself infuriated me, he was all of a piece and really held the story together. I'm on a mission to read all of Scott - I'm more optimistic about the task after this. And the trope of the seal debacle is genuinely funny - never thought I'd write that about this author!

Eleanor M Harris says

My favourite comic novel about history and historians. Regency farce meets Romance, and dances joyfully along a windswept Scottish coastline.

Suzanne says

I re-discovered this book on my bookshelf at home and decided to read it. I've read a few other Waverly novels, so I'm looking forward to this one. The archaic language and phrasing should give my brain a bit of a workout, too. lol The first sentence of the "Introduction" reads: "The present Work completes a series of fictitious narratives, intended to illustrate the manners of Scotland at three different periods, WAVERLY embraced the age of our fathers, GUY MANNERING that of our own youth, and the ANTIQUARY refers to the last ten years of the eighteenth century." Sir Walter Scott is a master story-teller, and I hope to re-acquaint myself with his works. I'm so glad I have the set of novels on my bookshelf so I don't have to search for them!

Rose A says

I felt this novel dragged and I was not engaged by the main character of The Antiquary himself or by the younger hero and heroine who were cyphers even more than usual in Scott novels. However, there are some wonderfully lurid plots and gothic adventure in this novel and interesting digressions on what it means to be an antiquary in the eighteenth century so still worth a read.

Kailey (BooksforMKs) says

I adore Sir Walter Scott's writing! He can be a little long-winded at times, but it is absolutely worth it.

I wish that this story had focused more on Mr. Lovel as the hero, instead of telling nearly everything from the Antiquary's point of view. It is funny and touching though, seeing everything through Oldbuck's eyes. I wish there were more depth to Lovel's character; we don't get to see him nearly enough. Same thing with Miss Mc'Intyre. She seems so sweet and nice, but she barely has any dialogue.

The ending is rather abrupt, but good with all the loose ends nicely tied up to everyone's satisfaction.

All in all, a fantastic story, excellent writing, beautiful characters, and a finely laid plot!

Laura says

From BBC Radio 4 - Drama:

Richard Wilson stars as The Antiquary, a man who hordes secrets as well as treasures. Will his knowledge allow Lovel to marry his secret love? With David Tennant as Walter Scott.

The Antiquary (1816) is a novel by Sir Walter Scott about an amateur historian, archaeologist and collector of items of dubious antiquity. Although he is the eponymous character, he is not necessarily the hero, as many of the characters around him undergo far more significant journeys or change. Instead, he provides a central figure for other more exciting characters and events - on which he provides a sardonic commentary.

This is Scott's gothic novel, redolent with family secrets, stories of hidden treasure and hopeless love, with a mysterious, handsome, young man, benighted aristocracy and a night-time funeral procession to a ruined abbey. The romance and mystery is counterpoised by some of Scott's more down-to-earth characters, and grittily unromantic events.

Scott wrote in an advertisement to the novel that his purpose in writing it, similar to that of his novels Waverley and Guy Mannering, was to document Scottish life and manners of a certain period - in this case the last decade of the 18th century.

*Music by Ross Hughes and Esben Tjulve
Cello played by George Cooke*

*Produced and Directed by Clive Brill
A Brill production for BBC Radio 4.*

Roman Kury says

Let me begin by saying I respect Sir Walter Scott as an author. There are no “but’s” that follow.

Antiquary was a good book and a good story.

Why 2 Stars then?

Characters: 2

I enjoyed the characters, Scott created. There were interesting and very different from anyone you would encounter these days, I felt. Who is an Antiquary, anyways? Is it a person who collects old stuff or is it a historian? Is it both? What is a blue cloak? If they are honored for their service to the king, why are they beggars? Questions like these ran through my head all story long. Each one of them represented a certain kind of a person who lived in England/Scotland during Scott's Times. Each character was unique and different in their own way and provided a good backstory of how people behaved and how social classes worked in an everyday setting.

What I had difficulty with is understanding what they were saying in almost every dialogue piece. Having tried to supplement this book with an audio book when I was on a go, I quickly had to stop the audio book or I was going to get lost in the old language. Or maybe it is Scottish dialect?

Plot: 2

That leads me in the Plot of the book. I felt it was good, engaging and interesting somewhere deep underneath all the fluff, all the dictionary look ups and all the wiki historical browsing. I persevered, I figured out what Scott was saying and then somewhere half way through the book, I also figured out what the ending was going to be. I was hoping I was wrong, but I was not.

Setting: 3

Given the Scott's own point that Waverly novels are meant to show the spirit of his times, I can't help but think of Balzac who did the same with his “Human Comedy”. One huge difference is that I read Balzac translated to English from old French so I can immerse better in the story. Setting as great, Scott does a great job creating a good and immersive images of the old times, it is just very difficult to comprehend. I suppose it is fair to say that his work did not age well and that is my biggest gripe with this Work. I wonder how many years before the books will become unreadable and maybe someone qualified should consider updating the language while somehow preserving the feel of the times so that young people can also enjoy this work.

As it is right now, I cannot imagine anyone who is not a deep DEEP fan of old literary works actually lasting through this story. I'd recommend you stay away from this book, unless you have a reason not to. Use this as a gauge:

1. When was the last time you have finished, let's say, a Charles Dickens novel.

2. Did you flip the back cover and wished it did not have to end?

If 1 is within the last 12 months, proceed to #2. If 2 is a solid yes, give Antiquary a try.

If not...read something else, save your time, you'll thank me later.

Timo says

Wat een wonderbaarlijk boek! Het verhaal krijgt maar erg traag vorm, maar wat voor een personages spelen een rol: een pruikenmaker met nog slechts drie klanten, een Duitse zwendelaar en - natuurlijk - de oudheidkundige uit de titel.

De ontknoping van de al bij al flauwe plot - maar Scott kan bezwaarlijk clichématig worden genoemd! - neemt slechts enkele zinnen in beslag. De ruimte die dat laat, vult de bijzondere Jonathan Oldbuck, Laird of Monkbarns maar al te graag - en dat neem ik hem niet kwalijk.

Bettie? says

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b064xbpk>

Description: *Richard Wilson stars as The Antiquary, a man who hordes secrets as well as treasures. Will his knowledge allow Lovel to marry his secret love? With David Tennant as Walter Scott.*

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3* Waverley

CR The Antiquary (Waverley Novels #3)

4* Ivanhoe

3* Rob Roy

3* The Bride of Lammermoor

4* The Heart of Mid-Lothian

TR The Pirate

Gianni says

One of my new favorite classics. Reminds us to hold on to the past, while venturing into the future. To never forget where you come from, and who fought for the way of life one leads today. Not to mention, the character 'The Antiquary', with his witty shrewdness and staunch passion for the old and ancient, makes him one of the more interesting and engaging people of fiction I've read in a while.

Sean says

Never read anything by Wally Scott before and it was a very mixed experience. A tiresome first third, during which I almost abandoned the book, settled into a very satisfying middle third before the great rush of resolution in the last part. Reading in part like an expanded stage play with character entries and exits overt, held in check by the self-conscious narrative style, this is a precursor to the great 19th century novels of England. Many familiar tropes are to be found; last minute reveals, lost inheritances, mistaken identities, unknown lineages, confessions, all neatly resolved with a flourish in a handful of pages - claims and inheritances restored, the wicked punished, true love rewarded, and so on. You need to battle woeful exposition, thick Scottish brogue, and a primary character given to verbosity and Latin. Throw in some archaic expressions and you have a heady mix of language. To its credit I stayed the distance, and it made me laugh out loud. For 19th Century lit nuts I am afraid.

Boris says

I think the possibility to read Scott in the original was the chief motivation for me to study English. I'll try to learn some Scots, too.

This is a very enjoyable book, quite in Scott's style. Describes many of the customs and habits of the past.

Marsha says

Prolix and meandering like the titular character, The Antiquary seemed often in its earliest pages to lose its way. For quite a while, I was uncertain whether this is a gothic horror tale, comedy, romance, an action-and-adventure tale or a political tract. There's even a folktale thrown in about a certain demonic spirit that seems to have little to do with the story at all (however, it becomes pertinent later so it bears remembrance). Therefore, this reader merely settled back to immerse herself in the characters and dialogue.

The Scottish slang is almost impossible to follow for modern English readers; Scott hewed precisely to the way rural people talked in the 18th century. So this book also comes with a helpful glossary in back as well as copious notes about the various literary references and translations of Latin phrases.

All that aside, Scott's novel delves expertly into the lives of the various beings trotted into this story. The local vernacular, the settings, the people and the plot (which involves a lost heir and an inheritance, among other things) all wind together to create a lively tapestry of a certain part of 18th-century Scotland. Nobles, peasantry, landed gentry and beggars are all represented with a keen eye to their respective places in life. The book both respects and rejects the pedantry of the bombastic title character and soars into nothing less than a sharp-eyed, delightful look into a long-ago past.

Nabilah says

The most difficult book i ever read because of the language. I have to read the summary on Wikipedia to know what was going on and who is who. It took me months to finish too. However, i did not dislike this book at all. It is sort of charming.
