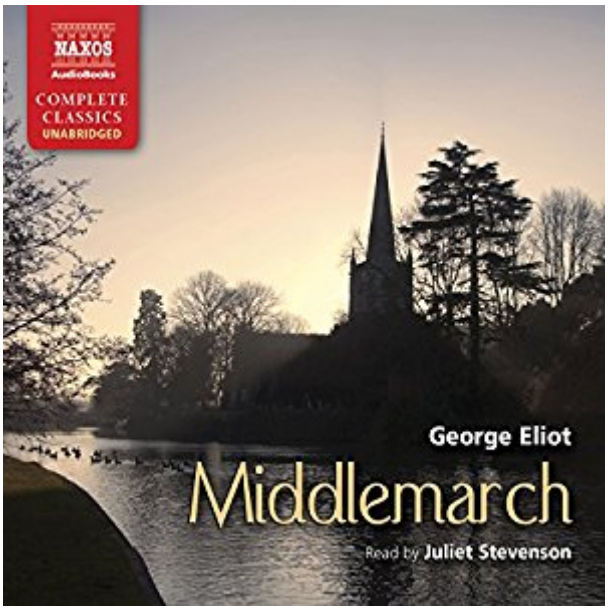
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Middlemarch



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Synopsis

Dorothea Brooke is an ardent idealist who represses her vivacity and intelligence for the cold, theological pedant Casaubon. One man understands her true nature: the artist Will Ladislaw. But how can love triumph against her sense of duty and Casaubon’s mean spirit? Meanwhile, in the little world of Middlemarch, the broader world is mirrored: the world of politics, social change, and reforms, as well as betrayal, greed, blackmail, ambition, and disappointment. Dorothea Brooke is an outstanding heroine; Middlemarch is filled with characters that are vivid and true, comic and moving. It is one of the greatest novels in the English language.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read The Mill on the Floss by George Eliot when I was about 17 years old. I remember the experience because I almost literally could not put the book down. I read for 14 hours straight until I finished the book. I even remember cooking pork chops with one hand while holding the book in the other hand so that I could read while I cooked. I cannot tell you now what the book was about (that was almost 40 years ago), just that I loved it and devoured it, along with the pork chops:-). After reading Middlemarch, I plan to reread The Mill on the Floss and read all her other novels as well.I loved Middlemarch, but I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t devour it. I chewed it slowly - the writing too beautiful to swallow whole. It grabbed me right from the start and I knew I was in for a sublime reading experience.In many of the reviews I have read people have mentioned that EliotÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s narrative voice was not to their liking, finding it too didactic or distracting. I

found her narrative to be one of the things I liked best. It was through this technique that most of the wisdom and life lessons were imparted. The narrative became another character for me, seamlessly blended with the rest of the characters.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“We mortals, men and women, devour many a disappointment between breakfast and dinner-time; keep back the tears and look a little pale about the lips, and in answer to inquiries say, "Oh, nothing!" Pride helps us; and pride is not a bad thing when it only urges us to hide our own hurts--not to hurt others."Her ability to sum up a character in one beautifully written paragraph is remarkable.In describing Mr. Casaubon, one of the main characters, Eliot writes. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“It is an uneasy lot at best, to be what we call highly taught and yet not to enjoy: to be present at this great spectacle of life and never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self-- never to be fully possessed by the glory we behold, never to have our consciousness rapturously transformed into the vividness of a thought, the ardor of a passion, the energy of an action, but always to be scholarly and uninspired, ambitious and timid, scrupulous and dim-sighted.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•In talking about another character, Dr. Lydgate, she says. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Only those who know the supremacy of the intellectual life-- the life which has a seed of ennobling thought and purpose within it-- can understand the grief of one who falls from that serene activity into the absorbing soul- wasting struggle with worldly annoyances.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•Her dry wit and humor are scattered throughout the book like sparkling gems.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Miserliness is a capital quality to run in families; it's the safe side for madness to dip onÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•."He has got no good red blood in his body," said Sir James. "No. Somebody put a drop under a magnifying-glass and it was all semicolons and parentheses," said Mrs. Cadwallader."Oh, tallish, dark, clever--talks well--rather a prig, I think." "I never can make out what you mean by a prig," said Rosamond. "A fellow who wants to show that he has opinions." "Why, my dear, doctors must have opinions," said Mrs. Vincy. "What are they there for else?" "Yes, mother, the opinions they are paid for. But a prig is a fellow who is always making you a present of his opinions."ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“But Duty has a trick of behaving unexpectedly--something like a heavy friend whom we have amiably asked to visit us, and who breaks his leg within our gates.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•Eliot is sympathetic to her characters, showing the good and bad in all, even the characters who would be despised if written by most authors. There is no black and white here, and yet the story is still compelling without the devise of writing purely lovable or despicable characters. We are shown what motivates the most hateful figures as well as those we are drawn to, and as a result there is no one in this book with whom you cannot empathize in some way. Her writing is infused with penetrating insights into human nature without ever losing compassion and understanding for their frailties. This empathy for her characters, perhaps more than anything else,

differentiates her writing from Dickens and Austen.I now look forward to reading all her other novels, starting with her first one, Adam Bede. It should be interesting to see her progression from first novel to last. I had very few preconceived notions about Middlemarch before I read it and maybe that helped me to enjoy it all the more, but enjoy it I certainly did!

I took up this book because it was on a booklist of the 100 best books written, and I have to agree. It took awhile to get into it because there's a great deal of expository writing at the beginning, but stick with it and you'll be introduced to some fascinating characters in the town of Middlemarch.Dorothea Brooke is a young woman about to take a much older husband, determined to find purpose in her life by assisting him with his life's work, a book which is to a definitive guide to all the mythologies of the world. When she begins to suspect her husband's work is little more than empty piffle, how will she find her way?Mr. Lydgate is a hotshot young physician determined to do great works from the small town of Middlemarch. Thwarted by small town suspicion and politics, and increasingly saddled by debt incurred by a pretty young wife, how will he cope as his life's dream slips away?Fred Vincy is the son of a town merchant determined to see him made a gentleman. He's paid for Fred to recieve a gentleman's education at Oxford with the intention that Fred will join the Church. Fred knows the Church isn't for him, but isn't sure what else to do, nor how to tell his father his education was for naught.These are just three of a huge cast of characters, all of them fascinating in their own way as their lives intersect. The book feels more like a documentary than a novel, and you grow to feel as if the characters could be your own friends and neighbors. Highly recommended, I know this is going to be one of my favorite books.

A splendid story about the life and times of the English people who lived in Middlemarch around 1850's. The characters are well developed and the reader is pulled through at a steady pace. Written from her own experience this volume might have been called historical-fiction except for the fact that the characters are entirely fictional; otherwise the full description of the surrounding countryside, the religious, political and economic issues is entirely authentic.

I "get" this story, which comes as a pleasant surprise after finding the preface Impossible. Why is that a surprise you may well ask. It's because I have a huge personal brick wall in front of me whenever I attempt to read a "classic". My brain seems to switch off and after a few pages, I put the book aside. I'm pleased to say, I didn't put this one aside. I'm really enjoying the story and the characters. It's a bit wordy but it doesn't matter. I'm reading the story mainly because I want to know

why so many people refer to it as being one of their favourite books of all time. And it’s part of my "List of Betterment". I haven’t worked out yet, how knowing the story will make me a better person, but hey, it’s fun musing on the subject. I’ve developed my List of Betterment from an idea, a big idea, put by Andy Miller in his book, A Year of Reading Dangerously. He talks about Middlemarch in his second chapter after conquering The Master and Margarita; I don’t think I’ll try that one. Reading Middlemarch was really important to me, like a badge of honour. I’m not sure which "classic" I’ll tackle next. I’ll wait till my muse leads the way.

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