

# Prohujalo sa vihorom 1-3

Written by Margaret Mitchell

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# Prohujalo sa vihorom 1-3

By Margaret Mitchell

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Knjiga

*Gone with the Wind* is a novel written by Margaret Mitchell, first published in 1936. The story is set in Clayton County, Georgia, and Atlanta during the American Civil War and Reconstruction era. It depicts the struggles of young Scarlett O'Hara, the spoiled daughter of a well-to-do plantation owner, who must use every means at her disposal to claw her way out of the poverty she finds herself in after Sherman's March to the Sea. A historical novel, the story is a Bildungsroman or coming-of-age story, with the title taken from a poem written by Ernest Dowson.

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Imdb

Gone with the Wind was popular with American readers from the onset and was the top American fiction bestseller in the year it was published and in 1937. As of 2014, a Harris poll found it to be the second favorite book of American readers, just behind the Bible. More than 30 million copies have been printed worldwide.

It takes guts to make your main character spoiled, selfish, and stupid, someone without any redeeming qualities, and write an epic novel about her. But it works for two reasons. First of all you wait for justice to fall its merciless blow with one of the most recognized lines in cinema ("frankly my dear, I don't give a damn"), but you end with a broken and somewhat repentant character and you can't be pitiless. Secondly, if you were going to parallel the beautiful, affluent, lazy, spirited South It takes guts to make your main character spoiled, selfish, and stupid, someone without any redeeming qualities, and write an epic novel about her. But it works for two reasons. First of all you wait for justice to fall its merciless blow with one of the most recognized lines in cinema ("frankly my dear, I don't give a damn"), but you end with a broken and somewhat repentant character and you can't be pitiless. Secondly, if you were going to parallel the beautiful, affluent, lazy, spirited South being conquered by the intellectual, industrious North, what better way to do that than with characters who embody those characteristics? You come to feel a level of sadness that the South and Scarlett lost their war and hope that they will rebuild.

I enjoyed the picture of pre-war South outside of what you learn in history class approved by the nation that won the war. If the South had won, we would have an entirely different picture painted. A story of lush lands and prosperity abounding with chivalry and gentility by a (too) passionate people. If you visit the South today, you can see that all these generations later the wounds of the war and the regret at losing the way of life are still fresh. But if it had not been the civil war, it would have been by other means that the lazy sprawled out way of life would have been conquered by our efficient, compact, modern lives.

I enjoyed the picture of plantations that did not abuse slaves to the extent that you read about in many memoirs. There was still a disrespect in that they viewed "darkies" as ignorant and childish and worthy of being owned, but there were those who cared for those in their trust. And the North who came down riling up the lowest of the slaves to flip the oppression did not want any contact with a race they feared. Prejudice takes many faces. Slavery is such an important part of American history, but I don't know that I agree with the format in which it is taught (at least the way it was taught to me). We take young, tolerant children and feed them stories of racism and abuse and then tell them the world is naturally prejudice (that they are prejudice) so don't be. White children start feeling awkward and aware and black children start feeling mistreated and aware. We manage to teach children about Indian and Holocaust history without the same enthusiasm to end racism by breeding racism. There has to be a better way. But I digress.

I also enjoyed Mitchell showing the volatile formula in which the KKK was aroused, that it wasn't just a disdain for free darkies but a need to protect their women and children from the rash anger now imposed on them through this new regime. Not that there are any redeeming qualities in the KKK, or even the Southern rash justice by pistol shot to curb wounded pride, but it was interesting to learn the wider circumstances in which it arose. The entire picture of the Southern perspective from the hierarchy of slaves to the disdain of the reconstruction was enlightening. The post-war difficulties, that sometimes it's harder to survive than die, were some of my favorite epiphanies of the story. What everyone in the South went through, both white and black, after everything was deconstructed and they didn't know how to rebuild. It wasn't just about freeing slaves but about rebuilding an entire way of life and sometimes change, even good change, can be this scary and destructive.

My one complaint about the book was at times the description was lengthy. I'd get a grasp for the emotions of Scarlett that are supposed to describe the emotions of all Southerners or the description of the land at Tara as a representation of the rich red soil all Southerners love and then Mitchell would go on for paragraphs or pages rehashing that feeling to pull the most emotion out of you. It worked, but sometimes I think she could have done so in fewer words.

I view Scarlett as a representation of the South in which she loved. She did not care from whence the wealth came or believed that it would ever end. Because she was rich and important, she would conquer. As the Yankees attempted to rebuild the South, fresh in their embitterment at a war they did not want to fight, you can both see their reasoning and feel for the Southerners who were licked and then stomped on in their attempts to gain back of their life. You see that in Scarlett. On one hand you don't pity her and think she needs a lesson in poverty and on the other hand you want her to survive. Either she can lie down and cling to her old ways or she can debase herself and rebuild. Survival, not morality, is her strongest drive.

Oh Scarlett. We all know people like her. People who unscrupulously use their womanly charms to get ahead and carry a deep disdain for those bound by concepts of kindness, morals, or intelligence and most especially for those who see them for what they are instead of being manipulated. People who care for nobody but themselves and who find enjoyment in life not in what they have, but in conquering the unattainable that is only desirable because it is out of reach. I loved how Mitchell showed Scarlett's decline from a religious albeit not believing girl who allowed her rationalization and avoidance to carry her from one sin to the next of intensifying degree. An excellent portrait of the degradation of character.

Initially I thought she was the only character who wasn't growing, actually digressing. But by the end she does grow up. In no regard is this greater than in her eventual desire to be a mother. Turning from her ravenous post-war desire to survive to her acceptance of life and the people around her as the way they are, eventually Scarlett grows into the person she was meant to be. As did the South. Prideful and resentful, eventually they had to accept that they lost the war and take what was given them and try to make it work.

Scarlett realizes that Melanie is not the weak, cowardly girl she always assumed but the most courageous character in the book and one who gets her means by influence and persuasion instead of Scarlett's uncivil ways. It is Melly, not Scarlett, who could get anything she desires and her heart is not her weakness but her greatest strength. Finally Scarlett values the importance of love and sees that it does not make one weak but deep to possess it. OK, I won't go that far. She's not intelligent enough to analyze love, but she grows up enough to fall for it anyway, to realize she needs people.

She sees Ashley not as the strong, honorable character she had always esteemed but the weakest and least honorable character in the book. Anyone who would tease another woman with confessions of love just so he could keep her heart and devotion at arm's length is not truly honoring his marriage vows. The greatest gift he could give his wife was the knowledge that he loved her. And we all know that like any pretty toy, once Scarlett had taken him, she would have discarded him. The debasing knowledge that he is not fit for a rougher way of life doesn't endear him. For all his intelligence, he could have picked himself up by the bootstraps and made something of himself if he wanted to survive. He is a representation of the Old South that had to die but many couldn't let go of, even today. That's the sadness of the loss of the Southern way, still longing for the past instead of moving forward.

Then we come to Rhett, the only character with the ability to conquer Scarlett, who was quite the devil. Just like the ladies in old Atlanta I found myself at times entranced by his charms, but often I did not like or trust him. I was often torn about the way he constantly encouraged Scarlett to fall another wrung on her morality ladder and mocked her emotions, mocked all of Southern civility. What annoyed me most about him was that he showed love by coddling his wife and child until they were spoiled, dependent, but not grateful, and this was his idea of being a good father and husband. And yet I sympathized with him and was often amused by him. More than anything I enjoyed his intelligence as a way for Mitchell to introduce the Yankee viewpoint, using his sarcasm as satire. I loved the whole discussion of his not being a gentleman and her no lady.

More than anything I saw his slow conquering of Scarlett's heart as a parallel to the slow enveloping of the South by the North until they realized they were dependent on their conquerors but could still maintain their fierce spirit, a marriage of North and South. The fact that she could never fully understand him shows the divide between two philosophies. But does the South lose in this blending? Can't they adopt the intellectual ways of the North and still maintain their civility? Just like Ashley, they would rather have dreamt and remembered than changed.

The characters in the book are so vivid that like or dislike you cannot get them out of your head. There are no more vibrant characters in the history of literature that Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler. There is a reason this book is a classic. Everyone should read it at least once in their life to appreciate the civil war and understand the sadness and loss that enveloped the country. ...more

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Citati

I honestly do not know whether to give this book 5 stars for being one of the most completely engrossing, shocking, and emotionally absorbing pieces of literature ever written, or to give it 0 stars for being the most tragic, unendingly upsetting, disturbing book I've ever read. I read the last 50 pages or so literally with my mouth wide open, unable to believe that it was really going to be THAT tragically sad. When I finally finished, I walked downstairs in a daze, handed the book to my husband. I honestly do not know whether to give this book 5 stars for being one of the most completely engrossing, shocking, and emotionally absorbing pieces of literature ever written, or to give it 0 stars for being the most tragic, unendingly upsetting, disturbing book I've ever read. I read the last 50 pages or so literally with my mouth wide open, unable to believe that it was really going to be THAT tragically sad. When I finally finished, I walked downstairs in a daze, handed the book to my husband, and told him to burn it and never let me see it again. Throughout the book, I frantically kept reading, often until 2am or later, just to see when it would turn around and start getting happy, but there was never any redemption - it NEVER got happy or uplifting. It just kept spiraling down, down, into despair. Maybe after a few days I will be able to step back and give it a proper rating (I just finished it last night, and am still reeling from it)....

UPDATE: After about a week, I have decided to give this book a 5, because any piece of fiction that can have that strong an effect on a reader deserves the highest ranking possible! Besides, I've found that, no matter how tragic and sometimes unlikeable the characters were, I am still thinking about them days after I finished reading. I almost miss them! They have truly come alive for me. Besides, who doesn't love a good emotional roller coaster every once in a while?! ...more

Another epic story complete! This was a very good one!

I have read a few huge books in my life. Some are a struggle to get through and others are so captivating they read easier than a 300 page novel. Gone With The Wind falls in the "captivating" category. At no point was I bored with the story or wondering if it was ever going to end. I was fully invested every step of the way - invested to the point that my wife was amused that I spent a lot of time talking back to the book or exclaiming when something big or shocking happened. Another epic story complete! This was a very good one!

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Before I go further, I will address the uncomfortable part of the book: the depiction of race, dialect, and other Civil War era activities in the South. At times I felt like maybe I shouldn't be enjoying a book featuring a sympathetic view of the South or feeling bad for those who struggled in their losses to the

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North. However, the story was really interesting and I have seen a lot of people from a wide variety of races give this book 5 stars, so I believe it is generally acceptable to enjoy it for what it is with an understanding of the time period it was written.

The writing: so great! How is it that Margaret Mitchell is only known for this book. I will have to look it up and see if she wrote any others. To write such a large book with a great story, symbolism, character development, etc. like this is pure genius.

The story: I had seen the movie but was not sure if I should expect it to be the same (seems like Hollywood used to stick closer to the source material than they do now.) From what I remember of the movie, it is a pretty fair adaptation of the book. I thought the combination of fictional characters and events along side and intertwined with ones that actually occurred was very well done. Because of that I am sure this is a novel that historians enjoy as well.

The characters: Great character studies and development. Watching where everyone starts compared to where the finish was very interesting. It is not often you get to go along on what seems like an almost daily journey with the characters from youth through adulthood. None of these characters have it easy. Seeing how each character handles the struggles of drastic life changes is the heart and soul of this book.

Gone With The Wind lives up to its reputation as a classic. If you have the time for a 900+ page book, you really should check it out.

Side note: finished this while in Greenville, South Carolina - pretty close to Atlanta. Seems appropriate!  
...more

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Glumci

I've said it some time ago: GWTW the novel is like watching the ten hour director's cut of GWTW the movie! Hell yeah! All the memorable scenes are there, & the spotlight romance is considerably widened in scope, as is the sturdy social studies lesson on the almighty American Civil War. I mean, everyone has the basic idea correct: the South took a tremendous thrashing. But having the loser's POV take the forefront, even to the extent of exalting the KKK-- this, more than Scarlett O'Hara's infamous bitchiness but overall fierceness as the antihero of this fantastic tale-- is what I fell in love with. The stars all aligned and for the first time in a long time the general reading audience had it correct. GWTW is a remarkable, unique reading experience.

A reader simply isn't one unless he or she has faced a behemoth like this one. This, "The Odyssey," "The 1001 Arabian Nights," "Don Quixote," "Lord of the Rings"... are all Musts. All epic & so awesome, THE primordial blockbusters. You have enough time to live with the book, to form a relationship with it, to think about your future together... (It becomes an integral part of yourself!)

Now, what do we get on this journey that is sadly missing in its technicolored, titanic doppelganger? The atrocities shown here of the war are not apt for a rated G film.

The following questions are thoroughly answered... (mild SPOILER ALERT!) In what way did Gerald O'Hara gain ownership of Tara? What invisible connection exists between women and horses? How did the siege of Atlanta take place? Why Atlanta? What is Southern hospitality, really? (Priceless is the mentioning of several ostentatious Atlanta parties with only the Yankee army 22 miles away! Priceless is the POV of the woman that stayed behind while all men are off to war! Priceless the interconnections between folks [of course the world population was nil back then!]) And, How has the idea of masculinity changed from the 19th century? What is true sisterhood? What's Post-traumatic stress syndrome?

The townships are fully described. GWTW has many protagonists, as they all add authenticity to the incredibly narrative. If there ever existed a valentine for a city in the elusive form of an epic historical romance, then it is this, for Atlanta! There are additional love stories which parallel Rhett's and Scarlett's & several romantic dates between the central lovers. Everyone, it seems, has fallen in love, which adds the hues of Romanticism to the epic Southern Myth. Too, there is sympathy for the devil, scorn for the overly dandified Yankees (They desecrated graves! Raped, and pillaged!), amazement at the aftereffects of the Civil War, including Reconstruction (which takes up many more pages than the war itself!).

Missing from the silver screen? The characters of Wade and Ella, Scarlett's first- and second-borns. They do nothing but highlight the main character's flaws and selfishness. Frank Kennedy, also known as Mr. Scarlett O'Hara, the Second. And Will Benteen, the overseer at Tara would be one too many males within Scarlett's (Vivien Leigh's) periphery on film. Also: Scarlett almost getting attacked and raped; GWTW's racy social commentary, all of the men partaking in early KKK activities. I will admit, GWTW is gee-wow! oh-so feminist... but also downright racist!

Scarlett's consciousness evolves. She turns from spoiled brat teen to fiery, materialistic bitch!! In her brain is the constant battle to get Ashley Wilkes, to get Tara. It is only here that I perceive similarities to "Twilight": yearnings & adolescent ambivalence. These things, it seems, never change. Also, that Gotterdammerung, or, the dusk of the gods, the end of civilization, is apt to occur in our times, and soon: this is a prophecy waiting to be fulfilled!!

The British have "Wuthering Heights," "Pride and Prejudice"; We got "Gone With the Wind", an epic so incredible, so full of wuthering heights and perplexing downfalls, so jam packed with southern pride and arrogance, of prejudice and passion, that it is simply sad that its sole detriment is (not its length, nor its melodrama, but) its racist edge. GWTW is the s\*\*t in many respects, but it is the dialogue between the star-crossed lovers (positively Wilde in its cleverness, in its tongue-in-cheekness) which elevates it to a plane higher than its sturdy, more lauded colleagues. Unlike that once-glorious South in the war, with "Gone With the Wind" you, the reader, will not lose...! ...more

One of my reading themes for 2016 is reading at least ten classic books. It seems only fitting that on the Fourth of July I completed Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, an epic masterpiece that many view as the definitive great American novel.

I feel that the two halves of the book mirror the southern United States before and after the Civil War. The first half of the book occurs primarily at Tara Plantation. We meet our main protagonist Scarlett O'Hara, the belle of the south, who epitomizes One of my reading themes for 2016 is reading at least ten classic books. It seems only fitting that on the Fourth of July I completed Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, an epic masterpiece that many view as the definitive great American novel.

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Next, there is the fated barbecue at neighboring Twelve Oaks plantation. We meet mainstays Ashley and Melanie Wilkes who are to be married. Scarlett grew up with Ashley and desires him yet this is a teenage fantasy, unfortunately one that will plague her for the rest of her life. Witnessing her

declaration of love for Ashley is the mysterious Rhett Butler, an unreceived gentleman with a past. Instantly smitten with Scarlett's looks and personality, he begins a lifelong quest to have her as his own. And then the Great War hits and shatters all these dreams.

Scarlett reduced to nothing rebuilds. She is a modern woman who goes into business despite an entire city of Atlanta giving her nasty looks. She does this at the cost of her children's upbringing so she can rebuild Tara and her Atlanta life from the rubble of the war. Although many people in their reviews state that they dislike Scarlett and her selfish motives, I view her character with determination as she tried to better her place in society in order to leave her children with more than she started with. Mitchell is writing from a 20th century perspective and had witnessed the modern woman and inserts some of these modern traits into Scarlett. Combine that with her Irish blood, and we have one of the most determined protagonists of all time.

Of course as in any epic, we have a sketch of the time period. I learned much about the reconstruction south because growing up in the north, we only had what was in the history books. I knew the basics but not the intimate look at how southerners rebuilt following the war. There were two views to the new south- there was Ashley Wilkes who pined for Twelve Oaks and the way of life before the war and Rhett Butler who symbolizes the modern south and how Atlanta and the south rose again. The second half of the book focuses on these two men and how they coped and succeeded in reconstruction, yet it all came back to Scarlett and which of the two paths she would choose, which man's dreams she would decide to follow.

Behind Scarlett, Rhett, and Ashley and their dreams, we have Melanie Wilkes. She was the only character who knew all the principal players for who they were, and held them together through good times and bad. Whereas Scarlett was the new south, the new woman, Melanie was the south and the picture of the south I have always had- a strong woman, rallying soldiers, rallying for every cause after reconstruction, holding together an entire city, selfless. Even Scarlett with all her selfishness turned to Melanie in times of greatest need, even though Melanie is the one who viewed Scarlett as the pillar of strength. And yet, both women were strength, Melanie in her antiquated ways and Scarlett as the new woman who would bring this country forward while still remembering Tara, where she came from.

As I finish this epic on America's birthday I feel a sadness as I leave behind Mitchell's well drawn characters that earned her a Pulitzer Prize 80 years ago. Scarlett's determination, Rhett's swarthy brashness, Ashley's love of time gone by, Melanie's heart. I look forward to seeing the epic film for the first time and witnessing Scarlett and Rhett and Tara on screen. I am glad I let myself be drawn into this slice of Americana from bygone eras, and believe that every American should attempt to read Mitchell's masterpiece at least once in their lives. ...more

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Delfi

Margaret Mitchell was a racist and in 1936, 70 years after the Civil War, she whined for a thousand pages about how much she missed slavery. If you'd like to hear why slavery was terrific and black people are inferior to whites and they liked being slaves, here is your epic. If that sounds unpleasant, you're not going to like *Gone With the Wind*.

A non-racist book can have racist characters, and all the characters in this book are racist. Is the book itself necessarily racist? Yes. It has an omniscient narrator, and many long, racist passages that are clearly not from any character's perspective; they feel like the nonfiction interludes in *War & Peace*. Is it possible Mitchell means for us to disagree with her omniscient narrator? No. There's no evidence whatsoever of that, and the passages that defend the South and slavery are written with passion and supported by racist scenes in the story. This book intends to be racist; Margaret Mitchell believes what she says; she was a racist person who wrote a hateful book. I can prove it and I'm about to.

We start off in the glory days of the Old South, as a young, callow, beautiful Scarlett O'Hara flirts with everyone's boyfriends. Happy slaves bustle around: "The house negroes of the County considered themselves superior to white trash...they were well-fed, well-clothed and looked after in sickness and old age. They were proud of the good names of their owners and, for the most part, proud to belong to people who were quality." We meet some of them, Scarlett's "small white hand disappearing into their huge black paws and the four capered with delight at the meeting and with pride at displaying before their comrades what a pretty Young Miss they had."

Faithful slave Mammy is introduced, with her "kind face, sad with the uncomprehending sadness of a monkey's face" - "the mottled wise old eyes saw deeply, saw clearly, with the directness of the savage and the child, undeterred by conscience when danger threatened her pet." Mammy is one of the few morally pure characters in the book, but it's always that noble savage quality.

Luckily Scarlett stays away from the slave quarters, where "the faint niggery smell which crept from the cabin increased her nausea."

But then war comes. Here's noble and boring Ashley, the limpest point of the oncoming love triangle, describing what the war is about. Notice that his vision of the South is indivisible from slavery: I hear the darkies coming home across the fields at dusk, tired and singing and ready for supper, and

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the sound of the windlass as the bucket goes down into the cool well. And there's the long view down the road to the river, across the cotton fields, and the mist rising from the bottom lands in the twilight. And that is why I'm here who have no love of death or misery or glory and no hatred for anyone. Perhaps that is what is called patriotism.

After the War and during Reconstruction, things get really dark (get it? lol) as Northerners ruin black people: "Some of the free negroes were getting quite insolent. This last [Scarlett] could hardly believe, for she had never seen an insolent negro in her life."

But "The [Freedmen's] Bureau fed them while they loafed and poisoned their minds against their former masters." And here's much more from the omniscient narrator:

[They] furthermore told the negroes they were as good as the whites in every way and soon white and negro marriages would be permitted, soon the estates of their former owners would be divided and every negro would be given forty acres and a mule for his own. They kept the negroes stirred up with tales of cruelty perpetrated by the whites and, in a section long famed for the affectionate relations between slaves and slave owners, hate and suspicion began to grow.

[Now Southerners] were looking on the state they loved, seeing it trampled by the enemy, rascals making a mock of the law, their former slaves a menace, their men disenfranchised, their women insulted.

This eventually leads to the formation of the noble Ku Klux Klan, who merely attempt to protect Southern women from being raped by uppity former slaves. Here's a Klan member now:

"Wilkerson had gone a bit too far with his nigger-equality business. Oh yes, he talks it to those black fools by the hour. He had the gall - the - ' Tony sputtered helplessly, 'to say niggers had a right to - to - white women.'"

"The negroes were on top and behind them were the Yankee bayonets," thinks Scarlett: "She could be killed, she could be raped and, very probably, nothing would ever be done about it."

And here's the omniscient narrator summing it up:

It was the large number of outrages on women and the ever-present fear for the safety of their wives and daughters that drove Southern men to cold and trembling fury and caused the Ku Klux Klan to spring up overnight. And it was against this nocturnal organization that the newspapers of the North cried out most loudly, never realizing the tragic necessity that brought it into being.

This is all demonstrated in the action. Scarlett O'Hara's headstrong ways nearly get every man in town hung. (view spoiler)[Her foolish habit of driving alone through the worst parts of town almost gets her raped by a freed slave, forcing the Klan to take action and lynch him, and they all almost get caught. Her second husband is killed. (hide spoiler)] Divorced from its context, this is a brilliant scene. It's done entirely from Scarlett's point of view, so the actual gun fight is totally off page. What we see instead is the wives, with Northern soldiers in their living rooms waiting for the men to return - surrounded by enemies, their faces frozen into nonchalant expressions, desperately and silently scheming to save their husbands' lives. It's great stuff, as long as you can forget that you're being asked to root for the KKK to

get away with lynching a man.

And here's a pretty long series of quotes. Again, they're all from the omniscient narrator - that is, from the book itself.

The South had been tilted as by a giant malicious hand, and those who had once ruled were now more helpless than their former slaves had ever been.

The former slaves were now the lords of creation and, with the aid of the Yankees, the lowest and most ignorant ones were on top. The better class of them, scorning freedom, were suffering as severely as their white masters...Many loyal field hands also refused to avail themselves of the new freedom, but the hordes of 'trashy free issue niggers,' who were causing most of the trouble, were drawn largely from the field-hand class.

In slave days, these lowly blacks had been despised by the house negroes and yard negroes as creatures of small worth...Plantation mistresses had put the pickaninnies through courses of training and elimination to select the best of them for the positions of greater responsibility. Those consigned to the fields were the ones least willing or able to learn, the least energetic, the least honest and trustworthy, the most vicious and brutish...[but now] the former field hands found themselves suddenly elevated to the seats of the mighty. There they conducted themselves as creatures of small intelligence might naturally be expected to do. Like monkeys or small children turned loose among treasured objects whose value is beyond their comprehension, they ran wild - either from perverse pleasure in destruction or simply because of their ignorance.

To the credit of the negroes, including the least intelligent of them, few were actuated by malice and those few had usually been "mean niggers" even in slave days. But they were, as a class, childlike in mentality, easily led and from long habit accustomed to taking orders.

...

Here was the astonishing spectacle of half a nation attempting, at the point of bayonet, to force upon the other half the rule of negroes, many of them scarcely one generation out of the African jungles.

...

Thanks to the negro vote, the Republicans and their allies were firmly entrenched and they were riding roughshod over the powerless but still protesting minority.

Man, just read that last sentence again. Wow.

Anyway, this is all very difficult for poor Scarlett: "The more I see of emancipation the more criminal I think it is. It's just ruined the darkies. Thousands of them aren't working at all and the ones we can get to work at the mill are so lazy and shiftless they aren't worth having. and if you so much as swear at them, much less hit them a few licks for the good of their souls, the Freedmen's Bureau is down on you like a duck on a June bug."

She complains that Northerners "Did not know that negroes had to be handled gently, as though they

were children, directed, praised, petted, scolded...How could anyone get any work done with free niggers quitting all the time?...[It's] too dear a homeland to be turned over to ignorant negroes drunk with whiskey and freedom."

And with the final word, here's a former slave himself, Big Sam, who "galloped over to the buggy, his eyes rolling with joy and his white teeth flashing, and clutched her outstretched hand with two big hands as big as hams. His watermelon-pink tongue lapped out, his whole body wiggled and his joyful contortions were as ludicrous as the gambolings of a mastiff. ... 'Ah done had nuff freedom. Ah wants somebody ter eed me good vittles reg'lar, and tell me whut ter do an' whut not ter do.'"

Okay, is that enough? That was gross to type out. And don't think I'm cherry-picking the only racist passages; this book is soaked in racism. God's nightgown, this book is fuckin' racist. Pat Conroy, in a despicably fawning introduction, sees fit to mention that "No black man or woman can read this book and be sorry that this particular wind is gone," and what the hell kind of thing is that to say? "White people, on the other hand...you gotta be a little bummed out, right?" Is that what you meant, Pat?

And look, yes, it's too bad that this book has destroyed itself with hatred, because it's got a lot going for it. It certainly has Scarlett O'Hara going for it. She's fuckin' terrific, a towering antiheroine, amoral, selfish and brave - somewhat like the South itself. Rhett Butler, her swarthy and cynical love interest, is pretty good too, although he can't stop mansplaining amorality and he might have some kind of social learning disability. (He's also a murderer, by the way: "I did kill the nigger. He was uppity to a lady, and what else could a Southern gentleman do?") They have sort of a proto-50 Shades thing going on, including a fairly kinky love scene that's not explicitly described but Scarlett was definitely into it. Third love triangle corner Ashley sucks, no one cares about him.

It also taught me the phrase "God's nightgown!" which is certainly a great thing to yell.

But it is totally, irredeemably ruined by its racism. Look, I'm not trying to be "politically correct" here. That's not even a thing; it's a term made up by haters to excuse hate. *Gone With The Wind* angered me. I don't like hearing black people described as stupid monkeys over and over again. I didn't enjoy reading the book because I was constantly pissed off by how ignorant and hateful it is. It was racist at the time it was written; it's racist now; racism is the point and the message, and to ignore it is to disrespect its author's intentions, which were racist.

Books matter. We use stories to describe and define society. If we allow this book to become part of the foundation of our past - if we call it a classic, as some people have - we're basing our past on a terrible lie. And it is a terrible lie, in case we need to say that out loud: Slavery was bad, black people didn't like it, almost everyone else didn't either, and the South were the bad guys in the Civil War.

And books are also our companions. When we choose to read, we're spending significant amounts of time - hours and hours - deep in their worlds. This companion is full of hate. These hours and hours will be spent listening to her yell about insolent niggers. If you find it unpleasant to hang out with viciously

hateful racists, you won't like this book. It's the most racist book I've ever read. I didn't like it. ...more

This review has been hidden because it contains spoilers. To view it, [click here](#).

So much has been said in praise of this book it feels redundant to add more. In terms of the slave-holding society, the film actually toned-down the pro-South view of Reconstruction (Scarlett's second husband joined the KKK in the book) and Mammy remains probably one of the most fully-developed and likeable African-American characters from 1930 you'll read.

Rhett Butler is the consummate alpha male. This book is definitely the timeless classic reputation it has earned, and though at times it see So much has been said in praise of this book it feels redundant to add more. In terms of the slave-holding society, the film actually toned-down the pro-South view of Reconstruction (Scarlett's second husband joined the KKK in the book) and Mammy remains probably one of the most fully-developed and likeable African-American characters from 1930 you'll read.

Rhett Butler is the consummate alpha male. This book is definitely the timeless classic reputation it has earned, and though at times it seemed like the longest book ever, it is all worth it in the end. It touches on many misunderstood aspects of the civil war and its afterwords. What many people do not realize is how horrible it really was for Southerners after the war, mostly because they cannot get past the racism of the times (which it wasn't as if the North was full of equality and peace, either). If you can accept the times for what they were, you will see how well this book was written. I appreciate it for the well built characters, smooth flow, and albeit romanticized- depiction of the Antebellum South.

As far as being politically incorrect or the modern charges that the book is "racist," remember that this book was written in the 1930s. Not to mention, the time period is the Civil War era! To be completely unracist would not have depicted the era correctly. As if it represents anything more than the way people thought when it was made. Of course, it's racist. America is and has been a racist society since the beginning. This book mirrors the opinions held by the people alive and working at the time, no more and certainly no less. Have opinions changed since then? Of course, as society evolves so does the writing. All this aside, the character of "Mammy" is one of the most likeable and respected characters in the book. Rhett Butler treats her very well, and tries to win her approval. She's the one person throughout the novel who sees through everyone's follies and foibles, but remains forgiving of them anyway. There's a reason this book won so many awards and still endures! It is a timeless classic that everyone should enjoy and read in context.

...more

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Radnja

I received my copy of *Gone With the Wind* in 1991 and never got past the first 50 or 100 pages in any of my annual attempts at this books until 2004, at which point I decided to defeat the book one and for all. I FINALLY FINISHED READING THE DAMN BOOK.

I want my time back.

There was a reason I never before read past the first 50 or 100 pages - Scarlet is a raging evil snarky miserable bitch and I hate her. None of the other characters were particularly likable - ranging from sniveling, whiny sissie I received my copy of *Gone With the Wind* in 1991 and never got past the first 50 or 100 pages in any of my annual attempts at this books until 2004, at which point I decided to defeat the book one and for all. I FINALLY FINISHED READING THE DAMN BOOK.

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I don't care if it *is* some great story about surviving in a war zone or some bullshit line like that. None of these characters really expressed the complexities or debated the moral dilemmas involved in surviving the Civil War. Scarlet was a whiny, conniving miserable human being and I don't give a crap if she "only did what she had to do as a woman." She didn't have to treat Ashley or Rhett or ANYONE the way she did, or she could have at least felt bad about it or something.

I disliked every single character and their miserable lives. I want my time back.

But by God did it feel good when Rhett tells her "My dear, I don't give a damn" because neither do I.

(PS: I am, in fact, allowed to dislike this book. You don't need to reply to my review by calling me names. I'm perfectly happy to hear about why you did like it, or why you didn't like it, but I'm tired of people coming to MY review and calling me names because I don't like this "classic" book.)

(PPS: This book is also a racist & sexist glorification of a racist & sexist past. It's the literary equivalent of the Confederate Flag.) ...more

My mother wouldn't let me read "Gone With the Wind" until I was 16. A few years ago I was at a cocktail party and they asked the trivia question "What was the first line of GWtW?" I knew the answer. My husband asked, "How did you know that?" (He'd lived with me how many decades?) I told him about my mom's restriction and how, when I finally opened the book, I was stunned by the first sentence. I had

seen the movie and Scarlett was beautiful, if a bitch. I also remember it because everyone always My mother wouldn't let me read "Gone With the Wind" until I was 16. A few years ago I was at a cocktail party and they asked the trivia question "What was the first line of GWtW?" I knew the answer. My husband asked, "How did you know that?" (He'd lived with me how many decades?) I told him about my mom's restriction and how, when I finally opened the book, I was stunned by the first sentence. I had seen the movie and Scarlett was beautiful, if a bitch. I also remember it because everyone always talked about how hard it was to cast the role for the movie and how beautiful I thought Vivian Leigh was. In the book Scarlett is not so much a "supreme bitch of the universe" as a survivor and she drags her family along (kicking and screaming) with her. She is presented slightly different and more complex in the book. The whole incident with Scarlett stealing her sister's beau? In the book you just knew that her sister would only use Hamilton's money for herself where Scarlett wanted it to save Tara because Tara means 'dirt/land/earth' in Ireland. If you had land, you were rich and self-sufficient. I wouldn't have minded being on a deserted island with her if I was part of her family...Or even in the middle of a civil war. LOL. (In the movie they also left out a couple of marriages and kids which gave her more depth.)

We all know this war torn families apart. Years ago I had a cousin who traced our family tree. I had a great-great-great-grandfather who lived in the South and went to fight for the North. I also had another who lived in the North and went to fight for the South. No wonder I always want to play a devil's advocate. It's in my DNA.

I could go off on a whole tangent about the characters in GWTW and what each of them represented with regard to the South. If Scarlett represented a segment of the South the way it was when the Civil War started, it was as a progressive segment that knew where it was headed: strong, determined, attractive, young, rich, bored (complacent), spoiled, unable to love those who truly understood her and loved her anyway (i.e. the North not wanting the South to leave, the South not loving the Union), doing anything to get her way or survive (even enslave a people or take advantage of chained-gang prison-workers) but ever so slowly changing, showing bravery, but learning too late how to change in time. Well then, the first sentence takes on a whole new meaning. (view spoiler) [Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful, but men seldom realized it when caught by her charm as the Tarleton twins were. (hide spoiler)] Slavery is not beautiful, it's ugly.

But the wealth it provided? Well, as I learned in my economics class in college, if the war had been fought five years later the South would have won. It was that wealthy. It was also this book that told me that the North was not blameless in the whole thing as many of the slave sellers/captors and slave ship owners were from the North. They never told me THAT in high school. And Scarlett? Like our forefathers chose to do while writing the constitution, she was going to think about all of it (slavery) tomorrow. Scarlett is, in this story, the eyes of the progressive South at that time and she fails to see the world around her in time. Maybe because she's too busy batting her lashes to get her way. And yet we feel for her when she pulls that carrot out of the ground, eats it and throws up. We grieve so for her heartbreak at the end of the book. How did Mitchell pull that off? We are right there with her when she's lost in the fog and can't see before she goes home to Tara.

Rhett is the New South, charming, lustful, innovative, an investor. Cynicism (a trait he shares with Scarlett) hides his compassion (a trait he shares with Melanie), and he won't fight or take a side in the war until he must. But Mitchell makes him and all her characters extremely complex, for she gives him a sense of honor for honor's sake. (Is he then a gentleman like Ashley?) Rhett's almost downfall? His deep and abiding love for Scarlett (he - like Melanie - sees her for who and what she is, the good as well as the bad); nevertheless, he eventually leaves her ideology behind in disgust. He has the work-ethic and is the muscle, but only flexes it when his devastating charm won't work. In the end he walks out.

Ashley and Melanie? Two different, complex aspects of the Old South - one lost without the other - and their antiquated way of life. Remember, Ashley doesn't love Scarlett and he detests slavery. But he didn't know how to survive without it. He's painted himself into a corner. Ashley wants to marry Melanie because he believes he has more in common with her than Scarlett. He's wrong. He's the intellect of the Old South, struggling to hang on to his gentlemanly behavior and failing totally. As Annalisa says in her Goodreads review: "Scarlett sees Ashley not as the strong, honorable character she had always esteemed but the weakest and least honorable character in the book. Anyone who would tease another woman with confessions of love just so he could keep her heart and devotion at arm's length is not truly honoring his marriage vows." There's a reason he is in a prison during the war. He doesn't want to/can't change some aspects of his life/nature, and in the end can't conceive of a life without his heart, for that is where courage lives. For all our deep philosophical ideals do not reside in the brain but in our heart.

The heart? That would be Melanie, a gentle southern belle, a "great lady" and one of the few true "purely good" people in Mitchell's epic. She was sickly due to so many generations of inbreeding within an educated, affluent family. She is the heart and courage of the Old South, not its eyes. She refuses to believe the "ugliness" of Scarlett when she witnesses her in Ashley's arms (and for once Scarlett is innocent). Melanie is the only one who sees Rhett cry and soon after she dies.

Mammy? She has it all and sees all. The all-knowing mother with eyes in the back of her head. The work-ethic. The conscience. An inner strength, and a loving, forgiving nature.

I told you I was sixteen when I read this. In my naiveté I asked my mother if Rhett and Scarlett got back together and she told me, "It's like a beautiful tea cup. Once it's broken, you can glue it back together, but it is never as beautiful to the eyes as it once was." Scarlett really represents a "might have been." What might have been if slavery had been abolished in 1776? Or even anytime before 1862? Was she truly blind, wearing rose-tinted glasses, or did she let pride and hubris get in her way?

You do remember your history lessons? Don't expect a happy ending.

...more

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Film

6/29/16 UPDATE: I have since watched the movie and although I really liked the movie, it doesn't hold a candle to the book. But you can imagine that a book this size can't be put into one movie sitting. And where the book made me cry a lot, the movie didn't.

I spent over 12 hours today finishing this book. 1037 pages! 1. Because I wanted to know what was going to happen! 2. I have no sort of life so I can do this from time to time.

I can not believe it took me so long to read this book! I didn't t 6/29/16 UPDATE: I have since watched the movie and although I really liked the movie, it doesn't hold a candle to the book. But you can imagine that a book this size can't be put into one movie sitting. And where the book made me cry a lot, the movie didn't.

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I can not believe it took me so long to read this book! I didn't think it would be my kind of book and I have never watched the movie &lt;---I did order the blu-ray on Amazon today because I have to see it soon! I must say that GOODREADS has been a blessing and a curse in this department. I have broadened my horizons since being on GOODREADS from reading books my friends are reading or have read and this is one of them. I would have missed out on this book!

This book has so many feels for me:

Disgust

Sadness

Rage

Shock

I invested so much into so many characters. So many characters that died, that I loved... ones that didn't even have much of a role in the story, I loved them. I thought this was just a love story around the war, but it's so much more. Dear God, Margaret Mitchell knew how to write a book about it all. No holds barred!

I have to make a small mention that I was born in Tennessee and it was so weird reading a bit part about Chattanooga (where I live now) in the book. I guess the biggest part was reading about the battle at Chickamauga, GA. I live 20 minutes from the Chickamauga Battlefield in Ga and used to hike it for

many years with my dog and my father until things in my life went wrong. I have to say it's a most beautiful place with all of the land, wildlife, monuments, store, a lot of things. It's a lot nicer now that I would think back then during the war.

I had this love/hate relationship with Scarlett. I thought she was a spoiled, selfish person and the way she treated people and her own children were appalling. I loved that she was a crude business woman and just got it done. One of her slaves named Pork (who I loved) told her if she was as nice to white people as she was to black folk that the world might like her. But Scarlett didn't care, she said what she wanted and did what she wanted.

She didn't want to take care of Melanie when the soldiers were coming. She hated Melanie because she was married to Ashley, the man she always wanted. It was off the rails with all of that with him. Scarlet jumped right on the crazy train with that one and it cost her in the end. But Scarlet stayed with Melanie when she had her baby and got her to safety at Scarlett's home Tara. She took care of everyone in the family.. say what you want.. but -SHE.DID.NOT.LET.THEM.STARVE.

---&gt;EXCERPT&lt;---

Hunger gnawed at her empty stomach again and she said aloud: "As God is my witness, as God is my witness, the Yankees aren't going to lick me. I'm going to live through this, and when it's over, I'm never going to be hungry again. No, nor any of my folks. If I have to steal or kill--as God is my witness, I'm never going to be hungry again."

Scarlett hated every moment of taking care of her family. Of worrying about others, but she did it. In a war that was senseless.

Margaret Mitchell told everything like it is, laid it out bare for us to cringe and hate and cry. So many things were so wrong, but it was what it was...

My favorite character was Melanie. She was such a kind soul, but she had her moments when she got her backbone on and told people like it was, and they respected her because of this kindness. She was married to Ashley and I thought she was going to die in childbirth but she lived through it. It wasn't her time yet.

I loved Scarlett's dad a lot - Gerald O'Hara. This is where Scarlett got her temper. But he was a funny man, a good man to his family and people and animals. I loved Mrs. Tarleton, Grandma Fontaine, Mammy, Uncle Peter.. there are so many I can't even name them all and like I said before some were only in the book a few times.

Scarlett married twice and had two children. She didn't care for children and she didn't care for her

husbands, she just did what she did to get what she needed.

I had a love/hate relationship with Rhett too. Back in those days it was okay but he was a way older man taking up or trying to take up with a younger girl in Scarlett. But it wasn't just that he just got on my nerves with his comings and goings. I think if he really loved Scarlett for that long he should have told her and wooed her and then maybe things would have turned out differently. I have no idea.

Scarlett did have a child with Rhett as well. Things were all good in the home for a while and then things went way down hill..... It was sad to read, hard to read. I wish the ending was different, but it wasn't. It was an extremely sad ending for two different reasons and I won't give those away. I know most people have probably read the book or watched the movie a million times and already know but still. I cried and cried! :-)

This is a tremendously heartbreaking book, but I'm so, so glad that I read it!

MY BLOG: Melissa Martin's Reading List ...more

There's an episode of The Simpsons where Apu, the Indian owner of the Kwik-E-Mart, takes the American citizenship test. Apu, who throughout the episode has demonstrated a much stronger grasp of American history than any of the American-born characters, is at the oral exam stage of the test. His examiner, a bored white guy, is asking the questions, and the following exchange occurs:

"BORED WHITE GUY: Okay, last question - what was the cause of the Civil War?

APU: Actually, there were numerous causes. There's an episode of The Simpsons where Apu, the Indian owner of the Kwik-E-Mart, takes the American citizenship test. Apu, who throughout the episode has demonstrated a much stronger grasp of American history than any of the American-born characters, is at the oral exam stage of the test. His examiner, a bored white guy, is asking the questions, and the following exchange occurs:

"BORED WHITE GUY: Okay, last question - what was the cause of the Civil War?

APU: Actually, there were numerous causes. Aside from the obvious schism between abolitionists and anti-abolitionists, economic factors both domestic and international contributed -

BORED WHITE GUY: Just say slavery, okay?

APU: Slavery it is, sir!"

That series of quotes, I think, perfectly reflects my experience leading up to reading Gone With the

Wind. Like most children who attended a public school above the Mason-Dixon line, my first exposure to the Civil War was basically, "The South wanted to keep slaves, and the North knew that was wrong, so we went to war to free the slaves. And then we won, and everything was happy." At the other end of the spectrum is Margaret Mitchell, who grew up listening to Confederate veterans tell stories about the war, but she didn't learn that the South had actually lost until she was ten years old. So obviously, her epic story about the Civil War was going to paint a very different picture than the one I had grown up thinking was correct.

Going into the book, I was steeling myself for lots of good old fashioned racism, and was surprised at what I found. Yes, the characters are racist. But they're all racist - black and white - and what interested me most was that class, rather than race, seemed to matter most. Scarlett and the other white characters hate lower-class whites a hell of a lot more than they hate blacks, and the blacks themselves draw very distinct class lines. Pork, the O'Hara's butler, looks down not only on poor whites but also on black characters of a lower social standing than himself. During the war, when only a few loyal slaves have remained at Tara, Scarlett has to farm the land herself and wants Pork to help plow. He refuses, stating angrily that plowing is field hand's work and he has never been a field hand. It is important to note that at this point they are starving, and farming is their only chance at food.

There's a lot of starving going on in this book, and a lot of fear and unhappiness. When I started the book, I got a little frustrated with how it seemed to be dragging - it takes over 100 pages for the O'Hara's to arrive at the Twelve Oaks barbecue - but as I kept reading, and the novel plunged deeper and deeper into war-torn despair, I realized why Mitchell had spent so much time introducing these characters and their happy, easy pre-war lives: once the war starts, there is not a single truly happy moment for the rest of the book. Once all the men ride away from the barbecue to volunteer to fight, all that comes next is 800 pages of starvation and fear and death and sadness. We need those detailed descriptions of the plantations, the clothes, the food, the luxury, so we can understand how much Scarlett and her friends have lost. Near the middle of the book, when Scarlett is going barefoot and stealing food to keep from starving, we understand her longing when she thinks back to her life before the war, because we remember reading this description of the Twelve Oaks barbecue:

"The long trestled picnic table, covered with the finest of the Wilkes' linen, always stood under the thickest shade, with the backless benches on either side; and chairs, hassocks and cushions from the house were scattered about the glade for those who did not fancy the benches. At a distance great enough to keep the smoke away from the guests were the long pits where the meat cooked and the huge iron wash-pots from which the succulent odors of barbecue sauce and Brunswick stew floated."

We get only this brief, wonderful glimpse of the luxurious life these people were living, and then the war starts and everything goes straight to hell, like an 1800's version of *The Road*:

"The gray troops passed by empty mansions, deserted farms, lonely cabins with doors ajar. Here and there some lone woman remained with a few frightened slaves, and they came to the road to cheer the soldiers, to bring buckets of water for the thirsty men, to bind up the wounds and bury their dead in

their own family burying ground. But for the most part the sunny valley was abandoned and desolate and the untended crops stood in parching fields."

The war destroyed not only a region, but an entire way of life for thousands of people, and you can see Margaret Mitchell's mourning for this lost era in every page.

"They looked the same but different. What was it? Was it only that they were five years older? No, it was something more than the passing of time. Something had gone out of them, out of their world. Five years ago, a feeling of security had wrapped them all around so gently they were not even aware of it. In its shelter they had flowered. Now it was gone and with it had gone the old thrill, the old sense of something delightful and exciting just around the corner, the old glamour of their way of living. ...An ageless dignity, a timeless gallantry still clung about them and would cling until they died but they would carry undying bitterness to their graves, a bitterness too deep for words. They were a soft-spoken, fierce, tired people who were defeated and would not know defeat, broken yet still standing determinedly erect."

This review is getting long-winded, and I've only started to explain everything about this book that makes it 5 stars. Aside from the history, the tone, the description, the general epic-ness of this epic, there are also the characters. And good lord. I could write another review entirely devoted to all the characters and why they are awesome despite being the last people you'd want to be in stuck in a room with, but I'll shorten it to a few characters.

Scarlett: Her transformation alone, from innocent flirt to flinty miser, is amazing in itself, but she's a powerful character no matter what stage she happens to be in. That being said, I hate hate hated her - I hated her shallowness, I hated her "unanalytical" mind, I hated her stupid crush on stupid useless Ashely, and she was so astoundingly unobservant throughout the book that it was all I could do not to scream at the pages. She was a great character, but that doesn't mean I have to like her.

Ashely: Christ, what a schmuck.

Mammy: The only character in the book I'd actually enjoy sitting down with. She had all the other character's best qualities, and none of their glaring faults. She had Melanie's grace, Ashely's kindness, Scarlett's strength, and Rhett's survival instincts. Mammy rocked my world.

Melanie: I kept going back and forth, switching between "she's the dumbest person ever" to "she's the best person in this book." I still can't really be sure where I stand on Melanie. I would want her on my side, but like Scarlett, I might want to slap her every now and then.

Rhett: Oh, Rhett. I so wanted to like him. And I did, when he was telling off the Confederates or Scarlett, when he was putting people in their place, and when he was being the only sensible character in the goddamn book. But then he would talk to Scarlett, and I would be drowned in wave after wave of smirking condescension. He was rude and selfish and had that attitude of "silly woman, your anger is so

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Prohujalo sa vihorom 1-3

amusing" that is an instant dealbreaker for me. I suffer from PTTD (Post-Traumatic Twilight Disorder) so whenever I encounter a male character who exhibits even a little bit of condescension and protective instincts towards the womenfolk, I start twitching and picturing Robert Pattinson's ugly face simpering "I like to watch you sleep", and then I have to watch old episodes of Buffy the Vampire Slayer until the shakes stop. S ultimately, my verdict on Rhett was that he could go fuck himself and wipe that stupid smirk off his face. ...more

## Prohujalo Sa Vihorom Knjiga Pdf

Gone with the Wind is a masterpiece of creative writing on every level. In its 1400 pages (or 49 hours on audio) there is not a single wasted line or insignificant moment. From a purely technical perspective, it is awe-inducing how flawlessly Mitchell utilizes characterization, setting, research, conflict, point of view, narrative voice, symbolism, foreshadowing, allusion, and every other literary device in the handbook. Even more amazing, she can juggle all this and deliver a plot that is relen

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The closest novel I've read to this quality is Les Miserables, which was clearly the template for Gone with the Wind. In case there is any doubt, Melanie goes so far as to read directly from its pages during a moment of high tension. Even in Les Miserables, however, there are hundreds of pages of dully written history that is disjunctive and awkward in the flow of narration. Mitchell, following Hugo's formula, also includes segments of war history. Her historical segments work much better, however, because they are short and play a more direct role in the action. Les Miserables is commonly read in an abridged format, but it would be impossible to abridge Gone with the Wind. Every word has a purpose, everything a cause and reaction.

Writers seeking examples of superb characterization should also look no further. Scarlett, Rhett, Ashley and Melanie (among others) are so finely drawn as to boggle the mind. How is it possible for such flawed individuals to be so absorbing? How can fiction feel this real? Even stronger than each individual character is Mitchell's handling of relationships. The way these characters mold to one another, influence one another, speak in subtext and interact creates a world so vivid that real life begins to feel dull.

Despite its long-running popularity, I feel Gone with the Wind (the novel) is perhaps the most underrated classic of all time. There should be no contest. Any list of classic literature that doesn't include Gone with the Wind in the Top 10 is simply wrong. I suspect part of why it gets forgotten as a novel is the iconic movie. I'm so thankful to have mostly avoided the movie thus far, so I could fully enjoy the novel's many surprises on its own. For those who are already well-versed with the movie, I suspect the novel will still blow you away. I just can't imagine how they could efficiently cram 49 hours of book into a 4 hour movie.

Although it was intimidating to devote so much time to a behemoth like this, I never regretted it for a second. Gone with the Wind is one of those masterpieces that is an actual shame if you never get to it.

**\*\*SIDE NOTE:** The unabridged audio version narrated by Linda Stephens is the best audio performance

I've ever encountered. Her performance might very well have elevated my opinion of the novel. I recommend listening to it if you can. ...more

“Lying in the pitiless sun, shoulder to shoulder, head to feet, were hundreds of wounded men, lining the tracks, the sidewalks, stretched out in endless rows under the hot sun, moaning. Everywhere, swarms of flies hovered over the men, crawling and buzzing in their faces, everywhere was blood, dirty bandages, groans, screamed curses of pain as stretcher bearers lifted men. The smell of sweat, of blood, of unwashed bodies, of excrement rose up in waves of blistering heat until the fetid stench almost nauseated her. The ambulance men hurrying here and there among the prostrate forms frequently stepped on wounded men, so thickly packed were the rows, and those trodden upon stared stolidly up, waiting their turn. She shrank back, clapping her hand to her mouth feeling that she was going to vomit. She couldn’t go on!”

-Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*

As Scarlett would say: God’s nightgown! What a book!

This is an all-time memorable reading experience.

I loved it! I hated it! It gave me chills. It led me to the brink of tears. It caused me to stress-eat (cheese, handful after handful of shredded cheese). It made me laugh out loud on public transportation. At times, it revolted me. This is 959 pages (in my paperback anniversary edition) that, for better or worse, absolutely creates a world. Not a real world. Not a world that ever existed, per se. But a fully-realized place nonetheless, filled to every corner with memorable characters.

Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* lives up to its reputation, every bit of it, both the good and the bad.

The plot is America’s urtext. Everybody knows the highlights, at least as captured by the classic film rendition. In case you’ve entirely managed to avoid *Gone with the Wind*, it suffices to say that it’s the story of Katie Scarlett O’Hara, the young (but eldest) child of Gerald and Ellen, who lives on the Georgia plantation known as Tara. The tale opens shortly after secession has threatened imminent civil war. The coquettish, boy-crazy Scarlett has just found out that her one true love, Ashley Wilkes, is about to marry his cousin Melanie.

(Aside: In all honesty, I found Scarlett’s love for Ashley to be one of the harder pills to swallow. I was never convinced that a woman of Scarlett’s native intelligence and natural fierceness could ever fall under the sway of such a wet noodle. As with other aspects of *GWTW*, I held my nose and plunged

forward).

We continue to follow Scarlett through the Civil War and Reconstruction – a roughly decade-long period – as she attempts to rebuild her life from the ashes, while advancing her undying (ugh) love for Ashley.

Scarlett has to be one of the greatest literary creations in American history. Mitchell deserves kudos for the willingness to make her so fascinatingly multi-dimensional. Scarlett has many fine qualities. She is, in a way, a proto-feminist. She refuses to follow patriarchal strictures. She is ambitious. She is driven and pragmatic and an outside-the-box thinker. She can do math. (The scene where she does sums in her head, to the befuddlement of the men-folk, is so modern it could have been written last week). Scarlett has a bracing clarity when it comes to the conventions and dogmas of her day.

She is also a fully terrible human being. Spiteful. Wicked. A terrible mother. Unconscionably spoiled and selfish and conceited. As I read these 959 pages, I thought of Scarlett as a plane that has lost propulsion. In contravention to the typical redemption arc, in which a bad character becomes better through hard experience, Scarlett kept losing altitude. Mitchell never quite lets her nosedive, but every time she pulls Scarlett out of a tailspin, she remains lower to the ground. By the end, I had given up on Scarlett completely. It is a testament to the sheer momentum of the plot that Mitchell manages even that much. She convinces you to stick with Scarlett long after we probably should have written her off.

Mitchell writes from a roving, yet restrained, omniscient third-person perspective. Most of the time, we are tethered to Scarlett, privy to every one of her noxious thoughts and amoral schemes. Every so often, though, and usually with powerful effect, Mitchell will dip into one of the many unforgettable side characters.

There is Ashley Wilkes, of course, a wishy-washy milquetoast that Mitchell manages to make into the most dynamic wishy-washy milquetoast you’ve ever met. There is Melanie, who at first seems like she was created in the Charles Dickens School of Bland Female Protagonists. Her angelic, saintly presence brought back bad memories of Bleak House’s Esther Summerson. Again, though, Mitchell refuses to let any major character get pegged. By the end, I was utterly sold on Melanie. And of course, there is Rhett Butler, the debonair blockade runner, who arrives on every scene like a Greek Chorus to ridicule and puncture the Lost Cause myths that, ironically, Mitchell was helping to cement.

For me, the chief joys come not from the iconic major players, but from the memorable supporting actors. This is a novel that is consistently generous in its cameo appearances. From the comic relief of faint-prone Aunt Pittypat, to the straight-shooting advice of Grandma Fontaine, to the darkly taciturn hillbilly Archie, Mitchell gives almost every single person in this world a minute in the spotlight, a grace note, a funny one-liner, or a piece of wisdom. It is absolutely extraordinary how real Mitchell’s story feels. Men we barely meet go off to war and don’t return, and we feel for them, because Mitchell evokes their spirits, their lingering presence, their gaping absences, so well.

The writing is beautiful, the prose superb. She lands her one-liners with effortlessness (â€œshe was twenty-five and looked itâ€•). Her sense of place is amazing:

It was a savagely red land, blood-colored after rains, brick dust in droughts, the best cotton land in the world. It was a pleasant land of white houses, peaceful plowed fields and sluggish yellow rivers, but a land of contrasts, of brightest sun glare and densest shade. The plantation clearings and miles of cotton smiled up to a warm sun, placid, complacent. At their edges rose the virgin forests, dark and cool even in the hottest noons, mysterious, a little sinister, the sighing pines seeming to wait with an age-old patience, to threaten with soft sighs: â€œBe careful! Be careful! We had you once. We can take you back again.â€•

The dialogue is excellent. During the exchanges between Rhett and Scarlett it can be as snappy as the best romantic comedies. And the monologues! Oh, the monologues. They are Shakespearian. Rhettâ€™s final summation to Scarlett, cutting bone deep and brutal. Will Benteenâ€™s beautiful funeral eulogy.

When I think of how good GWTW is, I think of Mitchellâ€™s execution of the Grandma Fontaine speech. She gives a spellbinding peroration about surviving the Creek massacre of Fort Mims, of facing the worst in the world, capping it all with her hushed advice: â€œScarlett, always save something to fear â€œ even as you save something to love.â€•

As I finished the passage, I actually stopped reading, looked up, looked around, took a deep breath, mesmerized. Then I looked back down, where Mitchell delivers the deadpan and hilarious kicker:

Scarlett moved impatiently. She had thought Grandma was going to understand and perhaps show her some way to solve her problems. But like all old people, sheâ€™d gotten to talking about things that happened before anyone was born, things no one was interested in.

I have studied the American Civil War all my life. I despise Lost Cause mythologizing. Here, though, for the first time, I get it. I still donâ€™t like it, but I understand it.

The Civil War is remembered very differently between North and South. Thatâ€™s a consequence of losing. With a few Lee-inspired exceptions, the war never came into northern territory. That is not true with the South. Mitchell evokes the ravages of the war with incredible detail and emotion. There is a breathtaking scene set after Gettysburg, where everyone in Atlanta is gathering to see who lived and died. There are countless moments of terror, upheaval, hunger, and dislocation. There is a line about a mother whose soldier-children were gone, along with the future: â€œ[She] said she never wanted a home again, for what was a home without children and grandchildren in itâ€•.

This is extremely potent stuff. It moved me, and Iâ€™m typically pretty unmovable when it comes to the distortions of Civil War history.

And there are distortions.

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“Tomorrow is another day.”

Scarlett’s famous motto, repeated like a mantra whenever things get tough.

Let’s play with that line. Let’s toy with the meaning. Tomorrow is another day.

What does that mean if you are an enslaved person, working on a cotton plantation like Tara, part of the gang-system, meaning you are up at dawn and work till dusk, and you have a quota that keeps rising, and you do this every day until you are too old to stoop? In such a marvelous triumph of the imagination, that thought never seems to have crossed Mitchell’s mind.

Tomorrow is another day, indeed.

Though for an enslaved person, it’ll be a lot like yesterday.

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That’s my pivot to the thing we need to talk about when we talk about *Gone with the Wind*.

Early on, the racism is about what you’d expect from a book published in the 1930s. The field hands are entirely ignored, while the house servants are the stereotypical “happy slave,” proud to serve their white masters. Blacks speak in eye dialect, which is not only racist but frustratingly difficult to comprehend. The good white folk, of course, speak the Queen’s.

Nevertheless, Mitchell demonstrates interesting glints of comprehension. Scarlett and Rhett, for instance, are very forthcoming that slavery was the cause of the Civil War, which is something I can’t say for a lot of people I’ve met in the 21st century. This, I think, is a function of Mitchell’s time. She was close enough to the original Lost Causers that she didn’t need to pretend the war started over state’s rights. It was okay to say it was about slavery, because slavery wasn’t a moral wrong to her. It was an institution worth defending.

Certain characters, such as Mammy, Pork, and Uncle Peter, are even given their dignity. They exist only to serve, but at least they are nominally treated as human. That’s more than any other black person in *GWTW* can say. The rest are referred to as trash, as loafers, as predators. Also, every time one of the characters exclaims that they have to “work as hard a field hand,” she is, perhaps unconsciously, acknowledging the cruelties of slavery.

There is always a question in fiction between the content and the message. A book’s content can be horrible without that being the message. Thomas Harris, for example, is not condoning cannibalism,

just because he created Hannibal Lecter. When I read John Jakes's North and South trilogy, which covers the same time period, I never worried (despite some questionable narrative choices) that Jakes was defending a system that legally removed the natural rights of four million men, women, and children. Here, though, I never trusted Mitchell's moral compass. To the contrary, I think she endorses most of the questionable messages that *Gone with the Wind* propounds.

Specifically, things take a dark turn around the 600-page mark. This is the start of the Reconstruction sections, which last till the final page. Periodically, Mitchell inserts what I call intercalary passages, similar to what Steinbeck did in *Grapes of Wrath*. These passages are written as objective fact. In reality, they are a funhouse mirror distortion of the tragic Reconstruction Era.

In Mitchell's telling, the northerners and the blacks are the terrorists, rampaging across the defeated south, lynching, raping, stealing. Decent southern whites are rightly horrified by such things as: blacks getting to vote; blacks serving in the legislature; and horror of all horrors, miscegenation. The Ku Klux Klan is the heroic party, here. In his forward to my edition, the novelist Pat Conroy gently chides Mitchell for making the KKK into a "benign combination of the Elks Club and a men's equestrian society." That's putting it too lightly. She makes them into the *La Résistance* (long before the French Resistance became its own tangled mythology). Mitchell's inversion of history is stomach curdling. It was like reading Soviet or North Korean propaganda, where you witness a worldview tethered to nothing save a sick ideology.

One of the defining features of Ms. Mitchell's bizarre Reconstruction is the murder of blacks for being "uppity." This happens with frightening frequency, and is not only condoned, but celebrated. At one point, one of the novel's most beloved characters casually admits to slaughtering another human being for the crime of effrontery while black.

This was published in 1936. Emmett Till wouldn't be born for another five years. It would be 14 years before the teenager was beaten, shot, mutilated, and thrown into the Tallahatchie for the crime of speaking to a white woman. The jury deliberated just over an hour in acquitting the killers. It only took that long, one juror said, because they "stopped to drink pop." Mitchell died before Till, meaning she had no way of knowing how her novel's ugly leitmotif would manifest in real life. However, reading it today, the ghost of Emmett Till hovers over this rancid perversion of the historical record. The Reconstruction period removed the mask of "benign slavery" and showed it for what it was: a system built on race-hatred. A system built upon the specific premise that blacks were subhuman. After fighting black equality for a decade, Reconstruction ended, and the South unleashed 100 years of viciously unreconstructed apartheid.

As Brutus might say, I have come to contextualize *Gone with the Wind*, not to burn it. I'm not here to lecture GWTW-lovers about why they are wrong, because I'm one of the GWTW-lovers. That said, this is fiction, and it should be treated like fiction. More than that, it should be read alongside honest portrayals of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

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Gone with the Wind is often discussed as a contender for that illusive title: the Great American Novel.

Iâ€™m not going there. I have gone on too long already. Instead Iâ€™ll finish with this:

Gone with the Wind is America, the sublime and the terrible in eternal, irreconcilable conflict.

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