SOFTWARE & TECH

Around The World In Eighty Days By Jules Verne

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Introduction: The Timeless Appeal of a Daring Wager

Few novels capture the imagination quite like **Around The World In Eighty Days By Jules Verne** . First published in 1872, this masterpiece of adventure literature follows the meticulous English gentleman Phileas Fogg and his loyal French valet, Passepartout, as they attempt to circumnavigate the globe in just eighty days. The story begins with a bold wager at London's Reform Club and unfolds into a breathless race against time, filled with exotic locales, unexpected obstacles, and a relentless detective on their trail. More than a simple travelogue, Verne's novel is a celebration of human ingenuity, a critique of Victorian society, and a prescient glimpse into a world being shrunk by steam, rail, and telegraph. Over a century later, the book remains a beloved classic, inspiring countless adaptations and reminding readers that with determination and a bit of luck, the impossible can become possible.

Jules Verne: The Visionary Behind the Voyage

Jules Verne (1828–1905) is often called the "Father of Science Fiction," but his genius extended far beyond predicting submarines and space travel. Writing at a time when European explorers were mapping the last unknown corners of the globe, Verne combined meticulous research with vivid storytelling. **Around The World In Eighty Days**was born from Verne's fascination with the new possibilities of transportation. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in the United States made a rapid global journey theoretically possible. Verne seized on this concept and wove it into a narrative that is both a thrilling adventure and a subtle commentary on colonialism, time, and fate.

Publication and Immediate Success

The novel was first serialized in the French newspaper *Le Temps* from November to December 1872, and published in book form the following year. It became an instant sensation, not only in France but across Europe and America. The public was captivated by the race, and Verne cleverly incorporated real-world travel times and technological details to make the story feel plausible. The success of the novel cemented Verne's reputation and allowed him to continue his *Voyages Extraordinaires*series, of which this book remains the most famous entry.

Plot Summary: A Race Against the Clock

The story begins in London, 1872. Phileas Fogg, a wealthy bachelor of precise habits, is a member of the Reform Club. After reading a newspaper article stating that a person could now travel around the world in eighty days, he calmly accepts a wager of £20,000 from his fellow club members. Without any hesitation, he packs a carpet bag, takes his newly hired servant Passepartout, and departs that very evening.

The Journey Begins

Fogg and Passepartout travel by train to Dover, cross the English Channel by steamer, and then race by train across Europe to Brindisi, Italy, where they board a steamer for Suez. In Suez, they are spotted by Detective Fix, a Scotland Yard officer who believes Fogg is the perpetrator of a recent bank robbery in London. Fix decides to follow Fogg around the world, hoping to arrest him once they are back on British soil.

Perils and Delays

The journey takes Fogg and Passepartout from Suez to Bombay (now Mumbai), then across India by train and, when a segment of track is missing, by elephant. In the Indian jungle, they rescue a young Parsee widow named Aouda from a forced sati ceremony. Fogg decides to bring her along. From Calcutta, they take a steamer to Hong Kong, but Fix has been working to delay Fogg. Meanwhile, Passepartout becomes separated from his master when he mistakenly boards a ship to Shanghai.

In Yokohama, Fogg and Passepartout are reunited after a series of misadventures. From Japan, they cross the Pacific to San Francisco, where they encounter a political rally, a train robbery, and a spectacular encounter with a herd of buffalo. Their progress is nearly thwarted by a storm on the Atlantic, but Fogg buys a steamer and burns part of the ship’s superstructure to keep the boilers going.

The Twist of Time

When Fogg finally returns to London, he believes he has lost his bet—he arrives at the Reform Club five minutes late. Despondent, he prepares to forfeit his fortune. However, the next day he discovers that because he traveled eastward, he had gained a day due to crossing the International Date Line. In reality, he had arrived a day early, and he still had one day left to win the wager. He rushes to the club just in time to claim his £20,000. He also marries Aouda, and the story ends with everyone satisfied.

Key Characters: A Motley Crew of Adventurers

Verne populates his globe-spanning tale with memorable characters, each representing different aspects of Victorian society.

Phileas Fogg

Fogg is the quintessential English gentleman: calm, methodical, and seemingly emotionless. He is described as “exact” in everything, and his every move is calculated. Yet beneath this stoic exterior lies a compassionate man, as shown by his rescue of Aouda and his unwavering loyalty to Passepartout. Fogg represents the triumph of reason and discipline over chaos.

Passepartout

Passepartout, whose name means “skeleton key,” is the comic relief and the heart of the story. He is a resourceful, good-natured Frenchman who often blunders but ultimately helps his master succeed. His mishaps—getting locked in a temple, losing his shoes, boarding the wrong ship—provide much of the tension and humor.

Detective Fix

Fix is the persistent antagonist who believes Fogg is a thief. His relentless pursuit forces Fogg to take detours and adds an element of suspense. Yet Fix is not a villain; he is merely an overzealous policeman. His role highlights the theme of mistaken identity and the flaws of the legal system.

Aouda

Aouda, the Parsee widow saved by Fogg, embodies grace and intelligence. She becomes a partner to Fogg, and their eventual marriage suggests that even the most rigid man can be softened by love. Aouda also offers a

glimpse into Victorian views of India, though Verne treats her with more respect than many of his contemporaries.

Themes That Resonate Across Generations

Around The World In Eighty Days is far more than a travel adventure. It is a rich exploration of themes that still speak to modern readers.

Time and Punctuality

The novel is obsessed with time. Fogg's entire existence is governed by schedules and timetables. The wager itself depends on the precise measurement of days and hours. Verne uses time as a device to explore the tension between human ambition and the uncontrollable nature of the universe. The famous twist—the gain of a day—is a brilliant reminder that human-made systems of time are arbitrary.

The Power of Technology and Globalization

Verne celebrates the rapid technological advances of the Industrial Revolution: steam engines, railways, steamships, telegraphs, and the Suez Canal. These innovations make Fogg's journey possible, but they also carry risks—broken rails, storms, and delays. The novel anticipates a globalized world where distances shrink, but it does not ignore the fragility of that progress.

Imperialism and Colonialism

Fogg's journey takes him through British India, Hong Kong, and other colonial territories. Verne's portrayal of these lands is a product of his time—he often presents them as exotic backdrops for European adventure. However, the rescue of Aouda from a forced ritual and moments of genuine cultural observation show an awareness of the darker side of colonialism. Modern readers may find these sections dated, but they offer a valuable historical perspective.

Perseverance Against All Odds

At its core, the novel is an ode to human determination. Fogg never wavers from his goal, even when all seems lost. His calm acceptance of setbacks—a missing railway, a storm at sea, a false arrest—inspires readers to face their own challenges with similar resolve. The book suggests that luck and perseverance are often intertwined.

Literary Significance and Influence

Around The World In Eighty Days is a cornerstone of adventure literature. It influenced later writers like H.G. Wells and Arthur Conan Doyle, and it helped popularize the genre of the "race against time." Verne's meticulous research set a new standard for scientific plausibility in fiction. The novel also contributed to the public's fascination with global travel; in the years following its publication, several real-life attempts were made to replicate Fogg's journey.

Adaptations: From Stage to Screen

No other Verne novel has been adapted as frequently. The most famous is the 1956 film starring David Niven as Fogg, a lavish production that won five Academy Awards. A 1972 television series featured Paul Frees, and more recently, the story has been reimagined in animated films, a BBC miniseries (2021), and even a stage musical. Each adaptation brings its own interpretation, but the core appeal remains the same: the thrill of the race and the joy of discovery.

Modern Relevance

In an age of instant air travel and digital connectivity, reading **Around The World In Eighty Days** offers a nostalgic look at a world that was still large and mysterious. The novel's themes of resilience and the value of

time are more relevant than ever. It also encourages readers to consider how much the world has changed—and how much it has stayed the same.

Lessons for Today's Reader

What can we learn from a 150-year-old novel? First, that the journey itself is as important as the destination. Fogg gains a wife, a loyal friend, and a deeper understanding of the world. Second, that small, disciplined actions can lead to extraordinary achievements. Fogg's patience and methodical nature are the real secrets to his success. Finally, the novel reminds us that appearance can be deceiving—the coldest exterior may hide a warm heart.

Conclusion: A Voyage That Never Grows Old

Around The World In Eighty Days By Jules Verne remains a masterpiece of adventure and imagination. It has captivated readers for over a century with its blend of scientific curiosity, thrilling escapades, and timeless human themes. Whether you are reading it for the first time or revisiting it after many years, Fogg's journey never loses its power to inspire. In a world that often seems too fast and too small, this classic novel reminds us of the joy of slowing down—and of the incredible feats we can accomplish when we keep moving forward. So pack your carpet bag, bring your sense of wonder, and join Phileas Fogg on the adventure of a lifetime.

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