Around the World in Eighty Days

by Jules Verne · Language: EN

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Overview

Jules Verne's "Around the World in Eighty Days" is a classic adventure novel that chronicles the extraordinary journey of Phileas Fogg, an eccentric and fastidious English gentleman, and his newly hired French valet, Jean Passepartout. The story begins in London in 1872 when Fogg, a member of the exclusive Reform Club, makes a wager of £20,000 with his fellow club members that he can circumnavigate the globe in precisely eighty days. Driven by his unwavering precision and a desire to prove his point, Fogg immediately sets off with Passepartout on a meticulously planned itinerary, utilizing the latest advancements in transportation, including railways and steamships.

The narrative unfolds as a thrilling race against time, fraught with unexpected obstacles and thrilling escapades. Unbeknownst to Fogg, they are pursued by Detective Fix, who mistakenly believes Fogg is a bank robber who has absconded with a large sum of money from the Bank of England. This misunderstanding adds a layer of suspense, as Fix attempts to delay Fogg at every turn, hoping to receive a warrant for his arrest. From rescuing an Indian princess, Aouda, from a ritualistic sacrifice, to navigating treacherous American landscapes and outwitting various delays, Fogg's journey is a testament to human ingenuity, determination, and the spirit of adventure. The novel culminates in a dramatic twist, revealing the true nature of Fogg's victory and the profound impact of his journey on his own life and those around him.

Key Takeaways

- Embrace the unexpected, as even the most meticulously planned journeys can be altered by unforeseen circumstances.
- Perseverance and unwavering determination are crucial for overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles.
- Cultural differences and encounters with diverse peoples enrich the experience of travel and broaden one's perspective.
- The pursuit of a goal can lead to personal transformation and the discovery of unexpected relationships.
- Sometimes, the greatest victories come not just from achieving a goal, but from the journey and what is gained along the way.
- Time is a relative concept, and understanding its nuances can sometimes lead to surprising advantages.

• Trust in others, even those you've just met, can be essential for navigating difficult situations.

Chapter Summaries

Chapters 1-4: The Wager and Departure from London

Phileas Fogg, a meticulous and enigmatic English gentleman, lives a life of precise routine in London. He dismisses his former valet for a minor error and hires Jean Passepartout, a Frenchman seeking a quiet life. Fogg is a member of the Reform Club, where he engages in a discussion about a recent bank robbery and the possibility of traveling around the world quickly. Challenged by his fellow club members, Fogg wagers half his fortune, £20,000, that he can circumnavigate the globe in exactly eighty days. He immediately prepares for departure, astonishing Passepartout with the suddenness of their journey. They leave London by train at 8:45 PM on October 2, 1872, beginning their incredible race against time.

Chapters 5-8: Detective Fix's Pursuit in Suez and Bombay

As Fogg and Passepartout travel through Europe, Detective Fix, a Scotland Yard detective, is introduced. He is awaiting a description of the bank robber in Suez, Egypt, and mistakenly believes Phileas Fogg matches the description. Fix obtains Passepartout's passport for Fogg, noting the unusual speed of their journey. Unable to get an arrest warrant in Suez, Fix decides to follow Fogg to Bombay, India, hoping to receive the warrant there. Meanwhile, Passepartout, unaware of Fix's suspicions, explores Bombay and inadvertently desecrates a Hindu temple by entering with his shoes on, leading to a warrant for his arrest and Fogg's. Fix sees this as an opportunity to delay Fogg.

Chapters 9-12: Across India and the Rescue of Aouda

Fogg and Passepartout board a train for Calcutta, only to discover a 50-mile gap in the railway line near Kholby. Fogg promptly purchases an elephant named Kiouni and hires a guide, continuing their journey. During their trek, they encounter a Sati procession, where a young Indian woman, Aouda, is about to be forced onto her deceased husband's funeral pyre. Fogg, driven by a sense of justice, orchestrates her daring rescue with Passepartout's help. They bring Aouda with them to Calcutta. Upon arrival, Fix has Fogg and Passepartout arrested for the temple incident in Bombay. Fogg pays a hefty bail, and they depart for Hong Kong, now accompanied by Aouda.

Chapters 13-15: Hong Kong and Passepartout's Misfortune

The journey on the steamer Rangoon to Hong Kong is uneventful, with Fix continuing his surveillance and growing increasingly frustrated by the lack of an arrest warrant. In Hong Kong, Fogg intends to find Aouda's distant relative, but discovers he has moved away. Fogg decides to take Aouda with him to Europe. Fix, desperate to delay Fogg until a warrant arrives, confides in

Passepartout about his suspicions regarding Fogg. Passepartout, loyal to Fogg, dismisses Fix's claims. Fix then drugs Passepartout in an opium den, preventing him from informing Fogg about the change in the Carnatic's departure time. Consequently, Fogg and Aouda miss their scheduled ship.

Chapters 16-18: The Pacific Crossing and a Storm at Sea

Passepartout, recovering from the opium, wakes up to find himself alone on the Carnatic, which has sailed without Fogg. He realizes his mistake and is filled with remorse. Meanwhile, Fogg, having missed the Carnatic, frantically searches for an alternative. He charters a small pilot boat, the Tankadere, to take him, Aouda, and Fix (who secretly hopes to delay Fogg further) to Shanghai, where they might catch a steamer to Yokohama. They endure a perilous storm at sea, but Fogg's unwavering determination and the captain's skill see them through. They arrive in Shanghai just in time to board the General Grant, bound for America, much to Fix's dismay.

Chapters 19-21: Reunion in Yokohama and Journey to America

Passepartout, having arrived in Yokohama, Japan, with no money, is forced to join a Japanese circus troupe as an acrobat to earn passage back to Europe. He performs a human pyramid act, much to his chagrin. Fogg and Aouda, having arrived in Yokohama on the General Grant, attend the circus and, to their astonishment, spot Passepartout among the performers. A joyful reunion ensues, and Passepartout, relieved to be back with his master, is chastised for his earlier misadventure. The group, now complete, boards the General Grant once more, setting sail across the Pacific Ocean for San Francisco, the next major leg of their incredible journey.

Chapters 22-25: Across the American Wilderness

The travelers arrive in San Francisco, California, amidst a chaotic political rally. They quickly board a transcontinental train heading east. The journey across the American wilderness is fraught with challenges. The train encounters a massive herd of buffalo, causing a significant delay. Later, the train is attacked by a band of Sioux warriors. Passepartout bravely uncouples the locomotive from the rest of the train, preventing further harm to the passengers, but he is captured by the Sioux. Fogg, demonstrating his deep loyalty, risks his precious schedule to lead a rescue party, successfully retrieving Passepartout after a tense confrontation.

Chapters 26-28: From Omaha to New York and a Desperate Purchase

Following Passepartout's rescue, Fogg and his companions are significantly behind schedule. To make up for lost time, Fogg charters a wind-powered sledge across the snowy plains to Omaha, Nebraska, where they can rejoin the railway network. They continue their journey by train through Chicago, finally arriving in New York City. However, they discover that their intended steamer, the Henrietta, has already sailed for Liverpool, leaving them with seemingly no options. Undeterred, Fogg, with his characteristic resourcefulness, finds the Henrietta still in port, preparing for a different voyage. He purchases the steamer outright from its captain at an exorbitant price.

Chapters 29-31: The Henrietta's Unconventional Voyage

Fogg takes command of the Henrietta, much to the initial dismay of its original captain, Andrew Speedy. Fogg immediately orders the ship to set course for Liverpool, despite Speedy's protests that the coal supply is insufficient for such a long voyage. As the coal runs out, Fogg, with his characteristic pragmatism, decides to burn the ship's wooden parts – masts, spars, and even the deck – as fuel to maintain speed. The crew, initially bewildered, follows his orders, driven by the substantial bonuses Fogg offers. The Henrietta, a mere hulk by the end, finally reaches Queenstown, Ireland. From there, they take a train to Dublin and then a swift steamer to Liverpool.

Chapters 32-34: Arrest, Release, and Apparent Failure

Upon their arrival in Liverpool, England, Fix, finally armed with an official arrest warrant, apprehends Phileas Fogg, accusing him of the bank robbery. Fogg is taken to the custom house, seemingly at the very last moment of his journey. However, a short time later, Fix rushes in to announce that the real bank robber, James Strand, has been apprehended three days prior. Fogg is immediately released, but the delay has cost him precious time. He charters a special train to London, arriving five minutes late according to his calculations, believing he has lost the wager and is ruined. He returns to his home on Savile Row, defeated.

Chapters 35-37: The Triumph and the Wedding

Back in London, Fogg is despondent, believing he has failed. He and Aouda discuss their future, and Fogg proposes marriage, which Aouda accepts. Passepartout is sent to arrange the wedding for the following day. While at the Reverend's office, Passepartout discovers a crucial detail: by traveling eastward, they had gained a day, and it is actually Saturday, October 5th, not Sunday, October 6th. They are not late! Passepartout races back to inform Fogg, who, with only minutes to spare, rushes to the Reform Club. He arrives just in time, winning the wager. Fogg marries Aouda, and he realizes that his true prize was not the money, but the love and companionship he found.

Themes

- Adventure and Exploration
- Time and Precision
- Cultural Encounters
- Determination and Perseverance
- Chance vs. Planning

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Around the World in Eighty Days about?

The book is about Phileas Fogg, an English gentleman, who makes a bet that he can travel around the world in 80 days. Accompanied by his valet, Passepartout, he embarks on a thrilling journey, encountering various obstacles and being pursued by a detective who mistakenly believes Fogg is a bank robber. It's a tale of adventure, precision, and the unexpected.

Is Around the World in Eighty Days worth reading?

Yes, it is highly worth reading for its engaging plot, memorable characters, and imaginative depiction of global travel in the 19th century. It's a fast-paced adventure that explores themes of determination, cultural encounters, and the nature of time, making it a timeless classic enjoyed by readers of all ages.

How does Around the World in Eighty Days end?

Spoiler: Phileas Fogg arrives back in London believing he has lost his wager by five minutes. However, Passepartout realizes that by traveling eastward and crossing the International Date Line, they gained a day. Fogg rushes to the Reform Club, arriving just in time to win the bet. He then marries Aouda, the Indian princess he rescued during his journey.

Who should read Around the World in Eighty Days?

This book is ideal for readers who enjoy classic adventure stories, tales of travel and exploration, and narratives with a strong sense of urgency and mystery. It's suitable for young adults and adults alike, offering both excitement and a glimpse into the technological marvels of the Victorian era.

How long does it take to read Around the World in Eighty Days?

On average, it takes about 3 to 5 hours to read "Around the World in Eighty Days." This can vary depending on individual reading speed and the edition of the book, but its relatively concise length makes it a quick and enjoyable read.

Best Quotes

“The earth is a small place, after all.”

I

Spoken by Phileas Fogg early in the book, this line encapsulates his calm, logical perspective on the world and his confidence in the feasibility of his journey. It highlights his detached, almost scientific view of geography, setting the stage for his audacious wager.

“As for me, I have no wife and no children; I have no relatives, living or dead.”

II

Phileas Fogg states this to his fellow Reform Club members when discussing his lack of personal ties. It explains his willingness to undertake such a risky and solitary journey, emphasizing his self-contained nature and the absence of emotional anchors that might deter others.

“I will bet twenty thousand pounds against anyone who wishes to take it up, that I will make the tour of the world in eighty days or less.”

III

This is Phileas Fogg's audacious challenge to his Reform Club colleagues, initiating the entire adventure. It establishes the central conflict and the high stakes of the journey, driven by Fogg's unwavering confidence and precise calculations.

“The unforeseen does not exist.”

V

This is Phileas Fogg's philosophical declaration, reflecting his belief in meticulous planning and the predictability of events. It underscores his stoic and rational approach to life, even as he faces numerous unexpected obstacles throughout his journey.

“Mr. Fogg is not travelling, he is describing a circumference.”

VIII

Passepartout makes this observation, highlighting his master's methodical and almost abstract approach to the journey. It emphasizes Fogg's focus on the mathematical completion of the circuit rather than experiencing the places themselves, contrasting with Passepartout's own curiosity.

“I am an Englishman, and I never jest about a serious thing like a wager.”

III

Phileas Fogg utters this to his companions, reinforcing his unwavering commitment to his word and the seriousness with which he approaches the bet. It reflects a quintessential Victorian English trait of honor and adherence to agreements, central to his character.

“He was a man of habit, and he had a habit of being exact.”

I

This descriptive line introduces Phileas Fogg, immediately establishing his defining characteristics: meticulousness, precision, and an unyielding adherence to routine. It sets the stage for his extraordinary journey, which is undertaken with the same rigorous exactitude.

“We have gained a day!”

XXXVII

Passepartout exclaims this at the very end of the journey, realizing their crucial error in calculation due to traveling eastward across the International Date Line. This discovery is the pivotal moment that saves Fogg's wager, revealing the unexpected consequence of their global circumnavigation.

“Because I thought it was Sunday.”

XXXVII

Passepartout's simple explanation for his mistake in believing it was Sunday, when it was actually Saturday, reveals the critical misunderstanding about the date. This single error, when corrected, allows Phileas Fogg to win his wager, highlighting the importance of precise timing.

“You are a man of heart, Mr. Fogg.”

XXVI

Aouda says this to Phileas Fogg, acknowledging his compassion and humanity despite his outwardly stoic demeanor. It comes after Fogg has saved her life and shown genuine care, revealing a deeper, more emotional side to his character than initially perceived.

“I have lost the wager by five minutes.”

XXXVII

Phileas Fogg's somber declaration upon arriving at the Reform Club, believing he is too late. This moment of apparent defeat underscores the immense pressure and the razor-thin margins of his journey, setting up the dramatic twist of the final resolution.

“I have still twenty thousand pounds left. I shall not lose it. I will divide it with you, Passepartout.”

XXXVII

Fogg says this to Passepartout after believing he has lost the wager, demonstrating his generosity and loyalty. Despite his own financial loss, he prioritizes his faithful servant's well-being, showcasing his underlying moral character and appreciation for companionship.

Questions & Answers

What is the central premise of "Around the World in Eighty Days"?

The central premise revolves around the eccentric and meticulous English gentleman, Phileas Fogg, who makes a wager at the Reform Club that he can circumnavigate the globe in exactly eighty days. Accompanied by his new French valet, Passepartout, Fogg embarks on a precise, timed journey, facing numerous obstacles, including a persistent detective who mistakes him for a bank robber, and unexpected delays that challenge his strict schedule. The story explores themes of adventure, precision, and the human spirit.

Who are the main characters in the book?

The main characters are Phileas Fogg, the stoic and precise English gentleman; Jean Passepartout, Fogg's loyal and more emotional French valet; Detective Fix, the Scotland Yard detective who pursues Fogg, believing him to be a bank robber; and Aouda, an Indian princess rescued by Fogg and Passepartout, who later accompanies them and eventually marries Fogg. Each character brings a distinct personality and motivation to the adventure.

What is the significance of the wager Phileas Fogg makes?

The wager of £20,000 (half of Fogg's fortune) is the catalyst for the entire adventure. It establishes the central conflict and the strict time constraint that drives the plot. More than just a financial gamble, it represents Fogg's unwavering confidence in his calculations and his belief in the triumph of human ingenuity and precision over geographical distances. It also serves as a test of his character and resilience.

How does Detective Fix complicate Fogg's journey?

Detective Fix complicates Fogg's journey by constantly pursuing him, convinced that Fogg is the bank robber he is tasked to apprehend. Fix delays Fogg at various points, tries to get him arrested, and even physically obstructs his progress, particularly in Liverpool. His actions create suspense and add significant challenges to Fogg's already tight schedule, making the successful completion of the journey seem even more improbable.

What role does Passepartout play in the story?

Passepartout serves as Fogg's loyal, if sometimes bumbling, valet. He provides comic relief and a more human, emotional perspective compared to Fogg's stoicism. Despite his occasional missteps, Passepartout often proves resourceful, saving Fogg from various predicaments, such as the rescue of Aouda. Crucially, his final realization about gaining a day by traveling eastward is what ultimately allows Fogg to win the wager.

How does Phileas Fogg manage to save Aouda?

Phileas Fogg saves Aouda, an Indian princess, from being forced into a Sati ritual (burning alive on her deceased husband's funeral pyre). While traveling through India, Passepartout discovers the impending ritual. Fogg, despite his strict schedule, agrees to intervene. They devise a plan to rescue her under the cover of darkness, with Passepartout impersonating her deceased husband on the pyre, allowing them to spirit her away.

What is the main theme of "Around the World in Eighty Days"?

One main theme is the triumph of human ingenuity and determination over obstacles. Fogg's journey showcases the power of precision, planning, and unwavering resolve in achieving seemingly impossible goals. It also explores the contrast between rigid adherence to logic and the unpredictable nature of life, as well as the unexpected value of human connection and compassion that Fogg discovers along the way.

How does the book explore the concept of time?

The book explores time as a critical, finite resource, central to Fogg's wager. It emphasizes precision and the race against the clock. More profoundly, it highlights the relativity of time through the concept of the International Date Line. By traveling eastward, Fogg's party gains a day, a crucial detail that ultimately determines the success of his journey, demonstrating how human perception of time can be altered by global travel.

What is the significance of the International Date Line in the story?

Spoiler: The International Date Line is of paramount significance. By traveling eastward around the world, Phileas Fogg and his companions effectively "gain" a day relative to Greenwich Mean Time. This means that when they arrive back in London believing it to be Sunday, December 22nd, it is actually Saturday, December 21st. This realization, made by Passepartout, allows Fogg to arrive at the Reform Club just in time to win his wager.

What does Phileas Fogg learn or gain from his journey, beyond the wager?

Beyond winning the wager, Phileas Fogg gains a deeper understanding of human connection and compassion. He starts as a solitary, emotionless man, but through his interactions with Passepartout and especially Aouda, whom he rescues and eventually marries, he discovers the value of companionship, loyalty, and love. He learns that while precision is important, human relationships offer a richer reward than mere financial gain.

How does Jules Verne use technology in the novel?

Jules Verne uses contemporary 19th-century technology, such as steamships, railways, and even an elephant, as the primary means of Fogg's rapid transit. The novel showcases the marvels of industrial-era transportation, emphasizing how these innovations made such a circumnavigation possible within a tight timeframe. Verne highlights the efficiency and speed of these technologies, making them integral to the plot's feasibility and excitement.

What kind of obstacles do Fogg and his companions face?

Fogg and his companions face a myriad of obstacles, including missed connections, unexpected delays due to natural phenomena (like storms) or human error, political unrest (like the Sioux attack on the train), and the constant interference of Detective Fix. They also encounter cultural differences, logistical challenges in securing transport, and the inherent dangers of travel in

remote areas, all threatening to derail their precise schedule.

Why does Phileas Fogg decide to marry Aouda?

Spoiler: Phileas Fogg decides to marry Aouda because, during their journey, he develops genuine affection and respect for her. Aouda, having been rescued by Fogg, becomes a loyal and loving companion. In the moments following his perceived loss of the wager, Aouda proposes marriage, offering him comfort and a future. Fogg, realizing his own feelings and the profound impact she has had on his life, accepts, signifying his transformation from a solitary man to one embracing human connection.

What is the significance of the Reform Club in the story?

The Reform Club serves as the starting and ending point of Fogg's journey, and the setting for the initial wager. It represents the rigid, intellectual, and somewhat detached world from which Fogg originates. The club members embody the skepticism and conventional thinking that Fogg challenges with his audacious bet, making its hallowed halls the ultimate stage for his triumph or failure.

How does the ending of the book demonstrate the theme of unexpected outcomes?

Spoiler: The ending dramatically demonstrates unexpected outcomes through the revelation of the "gained day." Despite Fogg's meticulous planning, it's an unforeseen consequence of global travel—the crossing of the International Date Line—that ultimately allows him to win. This twist highlights that even the most precise calculations can be affected by overlooked details, and that sometimes, success comes from an unexpected, almost accidental, discovery rather than pure foresight.

What lesson can readers take away from Phileas Fogg's character?

Readers can take away the lesson that while precision, determination, and a methodical approach are valuable traits for achieving goals, true fulfillment often comes from embracing human connection and compassion. Fogg's journey transforms him from a detached individual into someone capable of love and loyalty, suggesting that the "heart" is as important as the "head" in navigating life's adventures.

How does the novel reflect the Victorian era's fascination with progress and exploration?

The novel strongly reflects the Victorian era's fascination with progress and exploration by showcasing the capabilities of modern transportation and communication. Verne highlights the shrinking world due to steamships and railways, embodying the era's optimism about technological advancement. Fogg's journey itself is an act of exploration, pushing the boundaries of what was considered possible, aligning with the imperial and scientific ambitions of the time.

Is "Around the World in Eighty Days" considered a science fiction novel?

While Jules Verne is renowned as a pioneer of science fiction, "Around the World in Eighty Days" is more accurately classified as an adventure novel or a travelogue, rather than pure science fiction. It primarily uses existing or near-future technologies of the 19th century (steamships, railways, hot air balloons were considered, but not used for the main journey) rather than inventing fantastical scientific concepts, focusing instead on the human element of the journey.

What is the role of chance or luck in Fogg's journey?

Despite Fogg's belief that "the unforeseen does not exist," chance and luck play a significant role. From Passepartout's accidental discovery of the Sati ritual, allowing them to rescue Aouda, to the timely arrival of various conveyances, and even the final, crucial realization about the gained day, many elements of their success rely on fortunate coincidences or unexpected turns of events that Fogg could not have planned for.

How does the book portray different cultures and regions of the world?

The book portrays various cultures and regions through the lens of a 19th-century European perspective, often highlighting exoticism and adventure. While it offers glimpses into India, China, Japan, and America, these portrayals can sometimes be stereotypical or simplified, reflecting the prevailing attitudes of the time. The focus is more on the logistical challenges and the picturesque aspects of travel rather than deep cultural immersion.