I'm not robot!

The idyllic life of the simple-minded Simplicius Simpli Simplicius Simplizissimus is destroyed with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, leading him on an adventurous journey. 'Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus' by Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen is the first ever German novel. Before it was published in about 1668 or -69, Germans had been able to read academic and religious works, poetry, some derivatives of medieval romances and since the beginning of the century a rapidly increasing number of weekly and daily newspapers. What they got only now was a proper novel with characters that develop and change, talk to each other etc. Etc. - things we take for granted when reading fiction. In 1975 director Fritz Umgelter used 'Simplicissimus' as the basis for this four-part miniseries. On the whole my impression is that he has managed to capture the spirit and tone of Grimmelshausen's work, including murder, torture and rape - goes without saying. After all, the setting is the Thirty-Years War (1618-48) when such things were commonplace. The plot does in general follow the novel; I think the liberties it takes are well-justified, and the fact that it moves relatively slowly is typical of German 1970s TV productions. I liked the sets, though in this respect other films set in this period (for example the 'Wallenstein'-mini series of 1978) were doing better. What spoiled 'Simplicissmus' for me was the abysmal guality of the dialogue: No wit, no sparkle, no originality; instead a lot of stilted talk and affected laughter. In some places this reminded me of second-rate 1970s Italian comedies poorly dubbed by third-rate German actors. That's a pity because in principle Grimmelshausen offers fantastic material of which much more could have been made. Philipp FlersheimApr 8, 2022Suggest an edit or add missing contentBy what name was Des Christoffel von Grimmelshausen abenteuerlicher Simplicissimus (1975) officially released in Canada in English? AnswerYou have no recently viewed pages Jun 22, 2012 Joselito Honestly and Brilliantly rated it really liked it I told myself I am not reading, at the moment, any modern novel with its difficult style, convoluted plots and abstruse language which make my eyes redder than they already are. It has to be an old book written during those less sophisticated times when writers just write to tell stories and entertain. So I got this, written sometime the middle of the 17th century, originally in German, by a guy with a long name, Hans Jacob Christoph Von Grimmelshausen, a writer whose biography was said to be as I told myself I am not reading, at the moment, any modern novel with its difficult style, convoluted plots and abstruse language which make my eyes redder than they already are. It has to be an old book written during those less sophisticated times when writers just write to tell stories and entertain. So I got this, written sometime the middle of the 17th century, originally in German, by a guy with a long name, Hans Jacob Christoph Von Grimmelshausen, a writer whose biography was said to be as shadowy and as elusive as that of Shakespeare, the work carrying an equally-long subtitle "Being the Description of the Life of a Strange Vagabond Named Melchior Sternfels Von Fuchshaim." Divided into short chapters I was into the third, amused by its antiquated tone (in English, but it must have been like that, too, in German), when I blinked. Then I blinked again. And again. I realized, that in a consistent monotone the narrator, then a boy of ten, is actually telling the story of how some bandit-like "troopers" had descended upon their maid, and took everything they can get. Some who reviewed this here at GR say the family members were massacred. But, spoiler alert, in the end you'll find out too, spoiler alert, that the Dad and the Mammy were not really the boy's parents. The setting is supposed to be during the so-called Thirty Years War of which I know nothing about and too lazy to google what went on during these troubled part of history. But I am sure that it was about killings, with crude weapons like bows and arrows, catapults, spears and lances, axes and those stuffs you see in movies with knights and princesses on them. Anyway, reading this novel would give you the impression that the narrator lived in a world where pillaging towns, villages and kingdoms, soldiering or banditry are honorable professions and the best ways for young lads to advance in life. In any case, to get on with the story, the boy escaped and went deep into the forest. There he met a holy hermit who, spoiler alert, may have been his true father, but I am not telling. Not now, at least. Of course, the hermit later dies. For a while the boy lived there like a hermit himself, alone, contemplating in the wild the wise words and ways of the dearly departed saint. Now, at this point, the reader tries to predict how the story will go. Most readers would think: the boy will grow up handsome and strong, virtuous, a champion of the poor and the oppressed, and avenge, in the end, the wrong done to his family. Wrong! This boy, spoiler alert, will do all sorts of them would be to engage in banditry himself, killing for sport and money, waylaying innocent travelers and killing many of them. He'll become famous/notorious as the "Huntsman of Soest." (So recently I was watching a movie starring this stupid girl from Twilight now playing the role of Cinderella and paired with another handsome dude, not a vampire anymore, but a "Huntsman." I was telling myself, not original, you guys took this from Grimmelshausen, 17th century. )But back to the story, spoiler alert. Some reviewers say this novel portray the horrors of war. Hardly, in my opinion. The language of the narrator, insofar as violence is concerned, is much too sterilized and subdued to evoke any sense of horror upon the reader. The outstanding quality here, IMHO, is not in its portrayal of wars or conflicts, but the HUMOR in the principal protagonist's exploits. There are humor in how the boy came to be called Simplicissimus; on how he became rich, then poor, then rich again; how he was forced into marrying a maiden under the most ridiculous circumstances; how he--a brave warrior and a feared bandit--was cuckolded; how he became a widower, a treasure-finder, a vagabond; the lies and inventive strategems he resorted to to survive dangerous situations. Ah, even those which were not written, or had been omitted (in the edition that I read), can probably make you smile. Here, for instance, is Simplicissimus, during one of the stages in his life where he was at the top of the 17th century food chain, confessing in the third chapter: "...Nor will I deny that I gave myself up to the temptations of the Frenchwomen, that entertained me secretly and rewarded me with many gifts for my services, till in the end I was wearied of so vile and shameful a trade, and determined so to play the fool no longer. "Thereupon follows this "NOTE"--"NOTE.--The fourth and fifth chapters of the original edition are devoted to a prolix and tedious account of an adventure-if adventure it may be called-of the kind hinted at in the last sentence of the third chapter. It is absolutely without connection with Simplicissimus's career as an actor in the war; has no interest as a picture of manners; and finally, can be read much better in Bandello, from whose much livelier story (vol. iv., novel 25, of the complete editions) it is copied. It is therefore omitted here. "And here is the down-and-out Simplicissimus, with very little money, staying in a boarding house with a very stingy landlord-- "The fellow (the landlord) had, as I have said, all manner of trades by which he scraped together money: he fed with his guests and not his guests with him, and he could have plentifully fed all his household with the money they brought him in, if the skinflint had so used it: but he fed us Swabian fashion and kept a mighty deal back. At the first I ate not with his guests but with his children and household, because I had little money with me: there were but little morsels, that were like Spanish fasting-food for my stomach, so long accustomed to the hearty Westphalian diet. No single good joint of meat did we ever get but only what had been carried away a week before from the students' table, pretty well hacked by them, and now, by reason of age, as grey as Methuselah. Over this the hostess (his wife), who must do the cooking herself (for he would pay for no maid to help her), poured a black, sour kind of gravy and bedevilled it with pepper. Yet though the bones were sucked so dry that one could have made chessmen of them, yet were they not yet done with, but were put into a vessel kept for the purpose, and when our miser had a sufficient quantity, they must be chopped up fine and all the fat that remained boiled out of them. I know not whether this was used for seasoning soup or greasing shoes. But on fast-days, of which there happened more than enough, and which were all religiously observed (for therein our host full of scruples), we had the run of our teeth on stinking herrings, salt cod, rotten stockfish, and other decayed marine creatures: for he bought all with regard to cheapness only, and grudged not the fish-market and to pick up what the fishmongers themselves were about to throw away. Our bread was commonly black and stale, our drink a thin, sour beer which well nigh burst my belly, and yet must pass as fine old October. Besides all this, I learned from his German servant that in summer-time 'twas yet worse: for then the bread was mouldy, the meal full of maggots, and the est dishes were then a couple of radishes at dinner and a handful of salad at supper. So I asked him why did he stay with the old miser. He answered he was mostly travelling, and therefore must count more on the drink-money of travellers than on that mouldy old Jew, who he said would not even trust his wife and children with the cellar-key, for he grudge them even a drop of wine, and, in a word, was such a curmudgeon that his like would be hard to find; what I had seen up till now, said he, was nothing: if I did but stay there for a while I should perceive that he was not ashamed to skin a flea for its fat. Once, said he, the old fellow had brought home six pounds of tripe or chitterlings and put it in his larder: but to the great delight of his children the grating chanced to be open: so they tied a tablespoon to a stick and fished all the chitterlings out, which they then ate up half-cooked, in great haste, and gave out 'twas the cat had done it. That the old coal-counter would not believe, but caught the cat and weighed her, and found that, skin, hair and all, she weighed not so much as his chitterlings. "Now as the fellow was so shameless a cheat, I desired no longer to eat at his private table but at that of the before-mentioned students, however much it might cost; and there 'twas certainly more royal fare; yet it availed me little, for all the dishes that were set before us were but half-cooked, which profited our host in two ways--first in fuel, which he thus saved, and secondly, because it spoiled our appetite: yea, methought he counted every mouthful we ate and scratched his head for vexation if ever we made a good meal. His wine, too, was well watered and not of a kind to aid digestion: and the cheese which was served at the end of every meal was hard as stone, and the Dutch butter so salty that none could eat more than half an ounce of it at breakfast; as for the fruit, it had to be carried to and fro till it was ripe and fit to eat; and if any of us grumbled thereat, he would begin a terrible abusing of his wife loud enough for us to hear: but secretly gave her orders to go on in the same old way." ...more

