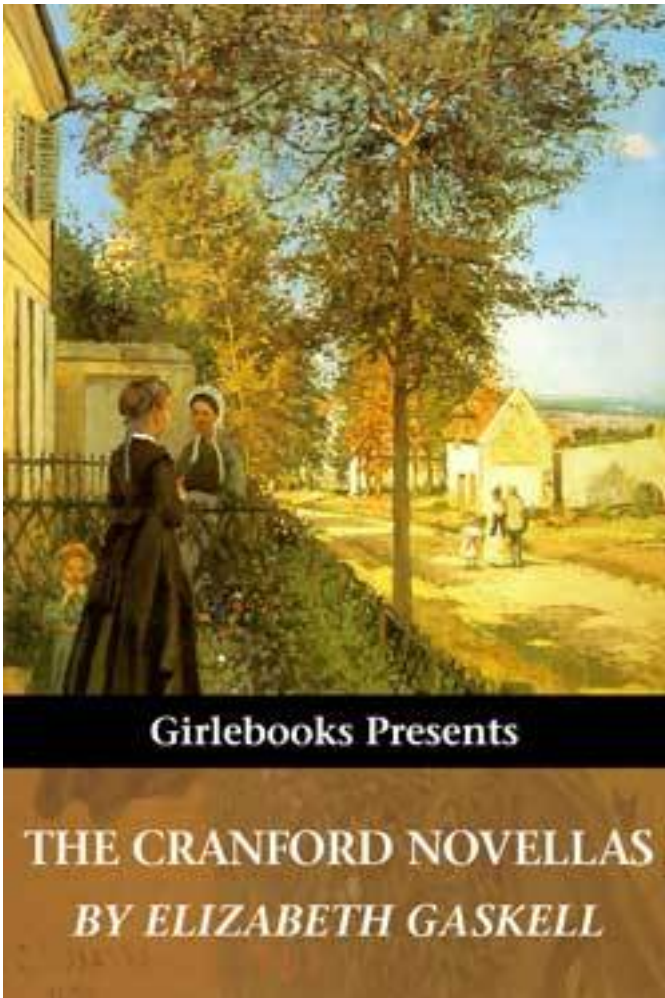

Elizabeth Gaskell

Cranford



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Author: Elizabeth Gaskell

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Description

In the delicately impoverished town of Cranford, everyone is keen to know everyone else's business. The community is almost devoid of men, and in their place a solid matriarchy has formed. Manners must be observed, house calls must not exceed a quarter of an hour, and neither money matters nor death may be discussed in public. But the peace is often disturbed. Rumoured burglars, literary disagreements, and the arrival of Captain Brown and his tactless daughters all cause ripples, warmly charted by the conversational narrator, Mary Smith. When the past erupts through the fragile class distinctions and disputed tea sales, the customary perspective of the town shifts in small but perceptible ways forever. First published as a magazine serial from 1851 and then in novel form in 1853, Cranford is the best-known work by Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-65). This reissue is of the 1853 second edition.

Insightful reviews

Agnieszka: Wonderfully old-fashioned, warm. Reading, all the time I felt a smile on my face. This world is gone, these old ladies and widows who are not bitter, these teas, conventions that are used here not exclude anyone from the community.

Bob Arnold: I ended up liking this much better than I thought I would. At first I was lost as to how all the characters fit together. It felt like walking into a room full of people not knowing anyone. In addition to not knowing anyone in the room nobody acknowledges my presence. I'm in the middle of a conversation not knowing anything about the lives of people around me. I found it daunting getting up to speed on the life and times of the people of Cranford. I even considered abandoning it. I am glad I was patient and stuck with it to the end. It was the humor that kept me going until I caught up with the characters and their relationship to one another. Most of the humor is subtle, involving gossip about other people in the community.

One of the things I found funny involved a cat and a piece of lace. During one of the many conversations between the women of Cranford, one lady commented to another about how beautiful a piece of lace she was wearing was. The owner of the lace thanked the other for the kind comment and acknowledged that it was indeed one of the most beautiful pieces of lace she had ever owned. Then the possessor of this magnificent piece of cloth told the story of how she almost lost this wondrous possession. Apparently one excellent way of cleaning and caring for this wonder cloth is to clean it with milk.

One particular day after this lace was nicely cleaned at the milk bath spa it was laid out to dry. This is where the cat comes in. Old puss eats it, that's right gobbled it up, gone. After several attempts fail to retrieve said lace from the front end of the cat, the owner of the lace and apparently owner of the cat too, for they seemed to be on friendly terms, except for this one incident, gives the cat something to drink. After all after all that lace, not to mention fingers down his throat, old puss is quite thirsty.

This mystery concoction that old puss is forced to drink does indeed result in the reappearance of the lace. The lace survives and is still thought of as wondrous. The dishonorable cat also

survived, hopefully wiser for the experience. Now the ladies listening to this story are all joyously happy that the lace and the cat survived. However, none of the ladies seemed curious about which end of the cat the lace reappeared. Me I'm still curious about it, whatever end old puss returned his ill-gotten gains I think the ladies were very polite and proper by not mentioning it. What else can you expect from the gentile ladies of Cranford.

Inder: Ah, so delightful! I *loved* this. It's really a series of vignettes, and, if there is a plot at all, it doesn't show up until halfway through. But it's so funny! And sad! And it's all about women! I laughed aloud a few times, and almost cried a few other times.

Sigh. I'm such a sucker for this stuff. But I loved it. Despite its disjunctive narrative, I read the whole book in less than three days. But I'm strange that way.

For Happy (I would alert readers to spoilers, but there actually isn't much to spoil):

Yeah, the makers of the *Masterpiece* adaptation took some serious liberties with the plot (or lack thereof). The series is fun and I'm really enjoying it, but it contains several plot lines that are not in the book. In fact, arguably the most important plot lines in the series are completely made up (as opposed to completely made up by Gaskell, I guess). For example, the young doctor and his girl, and all the associated story-lines, simply do not exist in the book. The carpenter with the broken bones - it's all made up. (That disappointed me, because, ever since *Middlemarch*, I've had a soft spot for young, ambitious doctors in 19th Century English villages. Alas, it was not to be found.) The cute kid who wants to rise above his station? Not only isn't he in the book, but I think the entire idea of him is alien to this novella, which (unlike Gaskell's other work) is centered entirely around the middle and aristocratic classes (and shifts therein), and barely touches on the working class at all.

More mildly, all of the timing is wrong (understandable, since following the vignettes too closely would result in a almost cliff-hanger free show, not good TV). And they skip a couple of deaths. There are a surprising number of deaths in this short novella, and I can see that if the series were more faithful to the book, it might be just too depressing. The book is never depressing, although it has sad moments, because of the quality of the narration, but this is difficult to reproduce on film.

Overall, there are probably more inconsistencies than similarities between the two. But it's hard to blame the screen-writer - the book doesn't offer much in the way of actual action to work with, and is noticeably missing any love affairs between attractive young people, which, let's face it, is the bread and butter of *Masterpiece*. The droll, sarcastic, disjunctive narration of commonplace events, makes for a particularly difficult adaptation.

But I love it - a new favorite narrator for me.

Christopher H.: I stopped this publication this morning at the educate on my strategy to work. What a sweet, elegant, witty, and delicate little e-book this is. Cranford can be a sequence of quasi-connected vignettes concerning a bunch of spinster girls in a quiet little city within the south of England. all the stories is stuffed with little information about the little things, even

bordering on minutiae, which are so vital to a bunch of very shut friends. There are laugh-out-loud humorous moments, and there are poignant, even sad, moments too. Now I do know why individuals are desirous to see a similarity in a few of Elizabeth Gaskell's writing to that of Jane Austen. I observed touches of this in Gaskell's better halves and Daughters, however it is much, even more glaring during this book. Also, for those attracted to the models and dressing conduct of girls within the 1830s during the 1850s, this is often the booklet for you. One of many appendices within the again is fully dedicated to the women's models of the time of Cranford with excellent illustrations. When you're looking for a few peace and quiet, and the power to relax and smile and giggle to yourself, decide up a duplicate of Cranford. I believe this is able to make an excellent e-book for a bookclub to together learn and discuss. I hugely suggest this book!

Leslie: 4½ stars. I love the sunshine humor & pathos during this novel, very comparable common to Jane Austen, Angela Thirkell or pass over Read. Even more of a enjoyable learn in comparison to Gaskell's North and South...Nadia might do a superb narration during this audiobook edition.

Pink: I loved this, it was once candy and funny and quickly to pay attention to. Although, I will not take into account a lot that happened. There has been the scene with the cat, a few stuff approximately hats and fashions, a few downfalls and a few reunions. A picture of small city lifestyles in nineteenth century England, now not much has replaced really.

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