



The Man Who Planted Trees

Jean Giono

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Man Who Planted Trees

Jean Giono

The Man Who Planted Trees Jean Giono

Simply written, but powerful and unforgettable, *The Man Who Planted Trees* is a parable for modern times. In the foothills of the French Alps the narrator meets a shepherd who has quietly taken on the task of planting one hundred acorns a day in an effort to reforest his desolate region. Not even two world wars can keep the shepherd from continuing his solitary work. Gradually, this gentle, persistent man's work comes to fruition: the region is transformed; life and hope return; the world is renewed.

The Man Who Planted Trees Details

Date : Published January 4th 2000 by Shambhala (first published 1953)

ISBN : 9781570625381

Author : Jean Giono

Format : Paperback 74 pages

Genre : Fiction, Short Stories, Classics, Cultural, France, Environment, Nature, European Literature, French Literature

 [Download The Man Who Planted Trees ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Man Who Planted Trees ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Man Who Planted Trees Jean Giono

From Reader Review The Man Who Planted Trees for online ebook

PattyMacDotComma says

4.5★~5

“For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years.”

So begins this lovely story, almost a fairy tale, of a lone (not lonely) shepherd whom our narrator meets in a barren wasteland, tending a few sheep. He tells us he first met the shepherd while on a walk across a land where people must have once lived in houses that are now crumbling and deserted.

“I was crossing the area at its widest point, and after three days’ walking, found myself in the midst of unparalleled desolation. I camped near the vestiges of an abandoned village. I had run out of water the day before, and had to find some. These clustered houses, although in ruins, like an old wasps’ nest, suggested that there must once have been a spring or well here. There was indeed a spring, but it was dry. The five or six houses, roofless, gnawed by wind and rain, the tiny chapel with its crumbling steeple, stood about like the houses and chapel in living villages, but all life had vanished.”

He was looking for water and starting to get pretty nervous when he suddenly spotted the shepherd and his well-kept cottage. He was given water, a meal and a bed for the night. After dinner, the shepherd sifted through some acorns he’d collected, saying he was going to plant them. Our narrator thinks this is unlikely to be successful in a place like this.

“ . . . the wind blew with unendurable ferocity. It growled over the carcasses of the houses like a lion disturbed at its meal.”

Long story short (or rather, short story shorter), the narrator returns from time to time, sees the changes, and later the area is unrecognisable – green, lush, springs running, mists over the valley.

And the government is passing laws about protecting "natural forests" like this, and life goes on.

The man who planted trees reclaimed the land, and you don’t need me to tell you the moral of the story. I loved it, but of course I’m inclined to, being such a fan of trees. And I always enjoy a story where someone prevails because they took that first step, in spite of well-meaning friends who said don’t bother. What’s that old saying about the longest journey starts with the first step? :)

This was a story I found through the Reading For Pleasure group on Goodreads, and if you’d like to see more of these, here’s the discussion link where you’ll find the Breakfast Club.

<https://www.goodreads.com/topic/group...>

And here’s a link to the PDF of this little tale. <http://www.idph.net/conteudos/ebooks/...>

Have a look at the author’s credentials on Goodreads. He was an interesting man.

<https://www.goodreads.com/author/show...>

I'd recommend this one for teachers as a good discussion topic for both the subject (the natural world) and the writing. This was a French story in 1953. Universal and timeless.

A 30-minute, animated short film won the 1988 Academy Award for the category. It’s on YouTube here:

<https://youtu.be/KTvYh8ar3tc>

Warwick says

This slender Provençal parable was – bizarrely – originally composed for a *Reader's Digest* competition which asked people to write about ‘The most unforgettable character I've met’. Giono's response was to produce this simple, bucolic tale about a lone shepherd who takes it upon himself to plant trees singlehandedly across vast swathes of the Provençal Alps.

The landscape which, at the start of the story in the 1910s, is desolate and bleak, has become by the end, in the late 1940s, a sort of rural paradise of lush woodland, running streams, and happy red-cheeked villagers. It's a narrative with obvious ecological appeal, as well as carrying a message of humanist hopefulness:

Quand on se souvenait que tout était sorti des mains et de l'âme de cet homme, sans moyens techniques, on comprenait que les hommes pourraient être aussi efficaces que Dieu dans d'autres domaines que la destruction.

The contrast with destruction is important, since the narrative is twice interrupted – significantly, if discreetly – by world wars. Giono himself fought at Verdun, and found naturally enough that the experience had made him a committed pacifist. (He took this position pretty far, famously asking in 1937, ‘What's the worst that could happen if Germany does invade France?’) The simple, easy prose style turns this stance into something that feels timeless, like a fable.

In contrast to the dark ambiguity of the classic pre-modern legends and fairytales, I find that modern myths often have a sort of clunking subtlety to them – Paolo Coelho, for example. This is nowhere near that bad, but I must admit I'm a little cautious about a story whose conclusion is that ‘*malgré tout, la condition humaine est admirable*’, which perhaps risks encouraging a little too much complacency in the reader. Then again, sometimes you need a bit of encouragement, and certainly this short story has a message to deliver and captures the landscape of Haute Provence with great sensitivity.

Maria Espadinha says

Hip Hip Hip, Hurra

Logo após a visita guiada aos infernos que a leitura de "Quem Governa O Mundo?" me proporcionou, dei de caras e por acaso com "O Homem Que Plantava Árvores".

Bem!... Foi como vislumbrar Luz ao fundo do túnel!

Andava eu a afundar-me em águas negras, quando um Anjo diligente, daqueles que surgem sempre nos momentos certos, se apiedou de mim, arremessando-me uma bóia salvadora!... ;)

Num período de flagelos e destruição (a guerra de 1914-18), um pastor, um homem simples e solitário, atira umas centenas de bolotas terra adentro e:

KABUM -- O Nada Faz-se Tudo!!!

Uma terra inóspita, árida, dá lugar a uma floresta de carvalhos, áceres, faias... e pequenos bosques de bétulas por onde serpenteiam alegremente alguns riachos.

O que outrora fôra um deserto despovoado, era agora um local de felicidade celebrada , partilhado por numerosas famílias!...

Parece fábula mas é a mais pura realidade!

Elzéard Bouffier existiu mesmo e é um ícone, um símbolo, uma prova viva do poder milagroso do "Homem que Cultiva o seu Jardim"!!!

E acresce referir que foi um deleite conhecê-lo -- a sua Generosidade é tocante e a sua Paz contagiante...

"O Homem Que Plantava Árvores" presenteia-nos com um Mundo para lá dos Infernos, apontando-nos um Caminho:

Simplicidade, Paz e uma Causa Nobre

Uma fórmula simples, que merece ser celebrada - Venha daí o champanhe: Tchim, Tchim ;) :)

São 5 estrelas cintilantes :))

Hugo says

"Ele sabe muito mais do que todos nós. Encontrou uma bela maneira de ser feliz."

Precisamos de acreditar que, no nosso mundo, existem de facto almas puras como a de Elzéard Bouffier. Oxalá as guerras lhes passem sempre ao lado.

Arghya Dutta says

For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years. If this performance is devoid of all egoism, if its guiding motive is unparalleled generosity, if it is absolutely certain that there is no thought of recompense and that, in addition, it has left its visible mark upon the earth, then there can be no mistake.

An amazingly relaxing and uplifting allegorical story of a man, Elzeard Bouffier, who, in the solitary and barren lands near Alps, planted trees and did nothing else, and, surprisingly, was very content with his life. Bouffier lived alone in that desolate land not only undaunted by its bareness but also quite enjoyed it. He had a penchant for meticulousness and order in his life: *"His roof was strong and sound. The wind on its tiles made the sound of the sea upon its shore."* For over forty years while two world wars raged, scarred the face of earth and passed by; he kept planting trees.

When I reflect that one man, armed only with his physical and moral resources, was able to cause this land of Canaan to spring from the wasteland, I am convinced that in spite of everything, humanity is admirable.

A short story that tells us about the meaning of life in a serene and gentle way. Though it was, sadly, an allegorical tale, Bouffier do have real life counterparts. Highly recommended.

PS: Found that Frédéric Back made this book into an Academy award winning flim:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_7yE...

Sam Quixote says

I think peoples' opinions on this book are based more on the message of the book rather than the story itself. It's the story of a shepherd who plants trees over many years, slowly transforming his barren part of the world into a flourishing fecund forest during the years of the First and Second World Wars. And despite the destruction the trees remain. The message - man's capacity for creation is as great, if not greater, than his own for destruction. And godlike acts can be done by anybody, even an uneducated shepherd.

A fine message I agree, and with strong environmental imagery this is something many people have latched onto as literature for people who care about nature. Sure, except...

Except it's a short story not a book. If you took away the large font and the page long woodcuts (though they are an excellent addition) and put the story into a regular font on regular sized paper (the paper used here is especially small) you'd wind up with a story maybe half a dozen pages long.

And the story is especially simple. Man plants trees, trees grow, man dies. The end. The writing is ok but not spectacular, nor is the story especially memorable. Really it's just a very average short story that nonetheless has become something of a popular classic because of it's accessibility and positive message.

"The Man Who Planted Trees" is not the best read nor as profound as others would have you believe and is one of the few books I've read where I've found just reading the title would have told me everything about the book without having to read it.

Lynne King says

I had happened to see Warwick's review of this book in French and I realized that I had never rated it. My book, as you can see, is the English version.

A fabulous, tiny, simple book about a man in France who planted acorns.

The wood engravings by Michael McCurdy are superb and worth getting the book purely for that reason.

Teresa Proença says

E agora?

Depois de conhecer Elzéard Bouffier como posso eu continuar a ter a ilusão de que sou determinada, persistente e generosa?

Vou ter de o esquecer...

Steven Godin says

A magnificent but gently told short story featuring a narrator telling of just one man, shepherd Elzéard Bouffier, living at the foot of the Alps and the beloved countryside that he is clearly in harmony with. This evoked the feeling of reading a myth carrying with it a powerful message, that is written and inspired with total respect. The final few lines are some of the most moving I have come across.

"When I reflect that one man, armed only with his own physical and moral resources, was able to cause this land of Canaan to spring from the wasteland, I am convinced that in spite of everything, humanity is admirable. But when I compute the unfailing greatness of spirit and the tenacity of benevolence that it must have taken to achieve this result, I am taken with an immense respect for that old and unlearned peasant who was able to complete a work worthy of God."

This is the sort of book that should be compulsory for schools, or for anyone out there that believes greenery is unimportant, so that hopefully future generations will realize that individuals can make a difference when putting their arms around mother earth.

Gabrielle says

This is one of my all-time favorite texts. I have had a copy for as long as I can remember and I re-read it at least once a year and I let the incredible writing and the beautiful story wash over me. It never fails to make me feel hopeful and happy.

A very short novella, "L'Homme qui Plantait des Arbres" tells the deceptively simple story of a nameless man who was once wandering through the hills of southern France and met an extraordinary character: Elzéard Bouffier. This old shepherd lived all alone in a small house, tended his flock and planted acorns. This seems like such a waste of time and effort at first, but over the years, the once arid hills slowly become covered in luscious plant life, small abandoned villages are repopulated and the entire country side comes back to life.

The obvious moral of this little tale – even small actions can lead to big changes - is overshadowed by the absolute beauty of the language Giono uses to describe his home country. Along with Pagnol and Daudet, he is one of those writers who have made Provence into this mythical land of sun, cicadas, olive trees, old stone farms and dreams. These men had a gift for making this small part of the world feel more beautiful than anywhere else you can imagine. When I visited Marseille and walked a bit in the country side, their words resonated in my head, their extreme sensitivity to nature perfectly understandable when you stand in the breathtaking landscapes that inspired them.

The story of a lonely old man, who with great care, selflessly reforests an entire desolate region simply because he can is also very inspiring. It reminds me of Buddhist stories about solitary monks and hermits who changed the world with the strength of their loving kindness. Giono's fable rejuvenates something in me at every read. Not faith, but belief that the toxic modern world is not all there is, that simplicity and beauty still exist and that good people walk around on our planet, often unseen, but changing the universe at an almost molecular level. Deserts can be covered with flowers with enough care and time.

I recommend this deeply moving little book to everyone. It is barely 50 pages, and can be read in a single sitting. I suggest a sun-bathed terrace as your setting and a glass of wine to accompany your reading. This is a tiny book to be savored like a precious vintage.

Konstantin says

Minimalistic, touching and heartwarming. The entire story feels like watching an impressionist painting in subtle earth tones with touches of green from a distance; it was painted not so long ago, so the paint dries. You can feel the sun warmth on your skin, sharp winds on the empty valley edges and see drops of yellow flowers on the rocks. Sun's shadows play under the trees. Really wonderful, I wholeheartedly recommend this. It can also be read in no more than 20 minutes, so you really have no excuses.

Rosie says

ABSOLUTAMENTE maravilhoso!

Lê-se de um fôlego e retém-se para a vida toda.

Foi um mero acaso encontrar este pequeno grande livro, nas minhas buscas para deliciar e inspirar os meus filhos e acabei por comprar uns quantos e oferecer a quem muito quero. Uma lição de vida, de humildade, de perseverança, transmitido com mestria e a sensibilidade necessária para imprimir na nossa alma o poder do amor, do respeito pela natureza e pelos outros. O homem tem a capacidade de mudar o mundo, está em cada um de nós, só é preciso querer, querer verdadeiramente. Muito mais poderia dissertar, mas o melhor mesmo é lerem e o guardarem no coração.

Recomendo vivamente.

Irmak says

'?nsan büt?ün bunlar?n tek bir adam?n elinden ve ruhundan ç?kt???n? dü?ününce, insano?lunun yok etmenin d???ndaki i?lerde de Tanr? kadar yetenekli olabilece?ini kavr?yordu.'

?öyle ufak bir al?nt? b?rak?p sizi Elzeard Bouffier'in hikayesini okumaya davet ediyorum. Çünkü kendisi hiçbir kar??l?k beklemeden, çorak bir araziyi azmi ile tek ba??na a?açland?r?yor. Ve üç ki?inin ya?ad??? bir kasaba onun sayesinde yıllar sonra onbinlerin ya?ad??? bir yer halini al?yor.

Kitap a?aç sevgisini a?laman?n da ötesinde bir insan?n yapt??? bir eylemin nelere sebep olabilece?ini o kadar güzel anlat?yor ki. Do?an?n dengesi yeniden kurulurken siz mest oluyorsunuz, kalbiniz s?cak bir his ile sarmalan?yor.

Elzeard Bouffier'in gerçek olmas?n? o kadar çok istedim ki. Yine de böyle güzel bir mesaj bize bu kitap sayesinde aktar?ld?ktan sonra kitab?n arkas?nda da dedi?i gibi;

‘Fark eder mi ?’

Joey says

After long, long consideration, I changed my 3 stars into 4 stars. It is awesome, inspiring, and deeply moving. This is the essence of writing reviews of books. I can understand a book more deeply. Besides, I love reading this kind of story. It has almost something to do with God’s Providence despite the fact that I have frozen my faith.

What lobbied me?

First, I liked the way Jean Giono himself introduced his story by giving us his wisdom.

“ For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years. If this performance is devoid of all egoism, if its guiding motive is unparalleled generosity, if it is absolutely certain that there is no thought of recompense and that, in addition, it has left its visible mark upon the earth, then there can be no mistake.”

Writing this part guided me to understand the crux of the story.

Second, the themes are about solitude, human spirit, simplicity, and environment.

Solitude

I have this Trappist attitude. I prefer spending time doing things I want to do on my own. Not that I am a sociopath. In doing so is the way I find happiness and peacefulness. For sure, it is universal. But in the end, it is a choice.

Human spirit

As what the banal saying goes, “Nothing is impossible. “ We can do things we find idealistic in a simple and humble way. You do not need to be flamboyant.

Simplicity

Although life has many choices, we can still find happiness and peacefulness in leading a simple life.

Environment

I used to be an aggressive environmentalist. Reading this story chastened me that the key to saving our barren earth is human spirit. Sadly, I am still discouraged to advocate it again; I have backslid to self-delusion.

Finally, it is absolutely well-written. Every sentence is so smooth, meditative. It is apparent that Jean Giono had a deep impression.

Jean Giono is considered as one of France’s greatest writers. His prodigious literary output included stories, essays, poetry, plays, ?lmscripts, translations and over thirty novels, many of which have been translated into English. He was a paci?st, and was twice imprisoned in France at the outset and conclusion of World War II.

(Ref.: <http://www.idph.net>)

So, don't dare demote it to 2 stars. Take a stab at the French raconteur. He could make a big difference. ^^

Larnacouer de SH says

Umut dolu bir öykü.

Bir kaç zamandır ne yapacağımı bilmediğim süreç dönemlerin birindeyim, içim içime sızıyor. Kitap falan okuyamıyorum zaten. Haliyle kaç zaman sonra elime aldığım ilk kitap **Ağ Diken Adam** oldu. Acaba acaba diyerek okuduğum bu kısacık öykü son sayfaıyla önce suratımı nasıl masna hemen sonra deli gibi sırtıma neden oldu. Güzel bir düüncüyle yazılmış özel bir kitap, çok beğendim.

Jan-Maat says

[despite my vaunted intention to review each book I read since joining Goodreads (hide spoiler)]

Paula M. says

A mensagem é ecológica e a escrita "limpa"....sem floreados.

Contudo, ao ler este livrinho, que se lê em menos de nada, não me saiu, uma única vez, do pensamento as imagens dos inúmeros e violentos incêndios que tanta destruição e sofrimento causaram, neste verão, no nosso país.

Entretanto, a nossa pegada destruidora não para de se tornar cada vez mais funda!

Liliana Rio says

Que alma grandiosa, que generosidade apaixonante, Elzéard Bouffier será eternamente memorável!!

É uma obra pequeninha mas tão sábia, tão tocante que me encheu o espírito, encheu-me o coração de esperança que o ser humano seguisse semelhante sabedoria.

A natureza é também para mim um refúgio de felicidade e paz interior por isso não podia deixar de adorar :)

LW says

La poesia e la saggezza della semplicità

Quando penso che un uomo solo, ridotto alle proprie semplici risorse fisiche e morali, è bastato a far uscire dal deserto quel paese di Canaan, trovo che, malgrado tutto, la condizione umana sia ammirevole.

Ma, se metto in conto quanto c'è voluto di costanza nella grandezza d'animo e d'accanimento nella generosità per ottenere questo risultato, l'anima mi si riempie d'un enorme rispetto per quel vecchio

contadino senza cultura che ha saputo portare a buon fine un' opera degna di Dio

Grazie alla fatica generosa e silenziosa di un pastore solitario un'area desolata si trasforma ,a poco a poco,in una foresta piena di vita e di bellezza.

Questo piccolo racconto è qualcosa di davvero prezioso

riempie di speranza e di positività

e mi è piaciuto, poi ,per un'altra ragione: Elzéard Bouffier , con la sua tenacia, la sua vita semplice e serena ,mi ha fatto subito pensare ad una persona ,che, con il suo esempio, mi ha insegnato quello che più conta nella vita .

ps. bellissimo anche il film d'animazione (letto da Toni Servillo)

<https://youtu.be/YIFDIYqtXDA>

Geoff says

I read this book in its entirety (a slim 46 pages) sitting alone in a cafe in Annecy, in the French Alps. I was on my way to Provence that week, and I had brought this book along with me on my trip with the explicit purpose of reading Giono in Provence, already considering Joy of Man's Desiring and Blue Boy two of the finest French novels I had encountered, but I didn't wait. So I sat and read it, such the typical American tourist, in a cafe in Annecy le Vieux over a carafe of Jura wine. Afterword, I paid the bill and left and wandered up to the castle to look over the town, my head glowing with a half bottle of wine, and watched the shadows of the clouds move slowly over Lac Annecy and up the mountainside, and felt that strange feeling, a dream-like nostalgia for a lost world I never knew, that only Giono evokes so particularly. His supreme sensitivity to nature, how we submit our emotions to it, how it informs our hidden lives, how we look to it as a mirror of ourselves and seek it, even unconsciously, as a rejuvenation for the heaviness of our hearts, it is all here in this little fable. Giono is the antidote to all that ails me in the modern world. Simply one of my favorite writers.

If you can find the Harvill Press editions of his books, they have lovely illustrations.
