

A Happy Boy

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Bjørnstjerne Martinius Bjørnson (1832 – 1910) was a Norwegian writer who received the 1903 Nobel Prize in Literature "as a tribute to his noble, magnificent and versatile poetry, which has always been distinguished by both the freshness of its inspiration and the rare purity of its spirit", becoming the first Norwegian Nobel laureate.

This novel was originally published in 1860 in Norwegian as *En glad Gut* which translates to the English title, *A Happy Boy*. The present edition of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's works is published by special arrangement with the author. Mr. Bjørnson has designated Prof. Rasmus B. Anderson as his American translator, cooperates with him, and revises each work before it is translated, thus giving his personal attention to this edition.

A Happy Boy Details

Date : Published by IndyPublish.com (first published 1860)

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From Reader Review A Happy Boy for online ebook

Fredrikke Wongraven says

this is one of my favourite books. the way it is written is so charming and delightful. it is a simple, but still so sweet. the story is just heart-warming. it is a must read for everyone.

Constanza says

Si bien la historia narrada es bastante simple, creo que lo mejor de este libro es que permite al lector evocar los paisajes y costumbres de Noruega. Mientras leía me parecía ver los bosques, los débiles rayos de sol sobre la nieve, los trineos. Los nombres de los personajes también contribuyeron a esa sensación de familiaridad. Es una novela dulce, sin grandes giros en la historia, pero me parece que, de alguna manera, nos muestra el alma noruega.

Marie says

a sweet story which meant more to me because it was one of only two books which my father remembered as really liking from his childhood. I asked him because our library's Extreme Book Nerd challenge has a category " A book your dad loves"

Karen says

Delightful story of a young man creating a good life for himself. Simple story with plenty of substance. Did I say delightful?

Andy Vale says

More interesting for the view of that lifestyle than the actual story (which was nice, but not particularly noteworthy). There's a ton of simple lessons wrapped up in the narrative, and it almost feels like an extended fairytale (minus fairies) with all of the morals found within the story. This snapshot of 19th century Norwegian peasant life is short enough to read in a couple of hours, and they will be spent pleasantly enough.

Jerry Pogan says

A short easy read about a poor peasant boy growing up to become more than his lowly status would dictate.

Winter says

Such a sweet story and heartwarming! I read it in Norwegian of course, but I'm using the english cover on goodreads. Bjørnson is a part of "The Norwegian Four"; considered among the best classic Norwegian authors. It was a story more on the light side which was perfect for me right now.

Jareed says

"That poverty hemmed him in on every side, he felt, but for that reason his whole mind was bent on breaking through it."(43)

A Happy Boy, the second Peasant tale of Bjørnson that I have read, the third (1860) in writing of his four Peasant Tales, the first being *Synnøve Solbakken*, (1857) followed by *Arne* (1858). Sadly, it would seem that the first two do not exist except in the original Norwegian texts and completion of his Peasant Tales dictates reading it in the original, nothing less.

A Happy Boy, tells us of Oyvind, the son of a houseman, who happens to meet the love of his life in Marit, the granddaughter of a gard (farm) owner. By their stations in life, the inevitable schism arises. This quandary is solely predicated in Oyvind's lowly station in life. *"I will tell you why I have been so happy before: It was because I did not really love anyone; from the day we love someone we cease to be happy."*(34) Our happy boy is not so happy after all. Oyvind struggles to break free from the familial shackles that fate has imposed, and we are taken through his rise from being the son of a houseman to the pride of the town.

This story is a lot sweeter and simpler than The Fisher Girl (3 Stars). Again, Bjørnson plays the same card in the Fisher Girl with love as the mechanism by which the story is set in motion. The same peasant struggles and desire within the story exist.

What is more prevalent however is how Bjørnson incorporated the Norwegian faith in the story, more than he did in the The Fisher Girl. This led me to read up on a little bit of Norwegian religious history and find that Norway has always been labeled as a Christian country and that at numerous times in history, Norway sent more missionaries per capita than any other country. What is more interesting is that this Christianity is not under the Holy See but is an entirely new animal. The Church of Norway it is called, with the King of Norway as its head, and professes a Lutheran belief. Interesting isn't it, a union of the church and the state that, it would seem, hasn't screwed the people over. This is probably why the depiction in one scene of the story was like this.

Other work by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson:
The Fisher Girl (3 Stars)

This book forms part of my remarkably extensive reading list on Nobel Prize for Literature Laureates

This review, along with my other reviews, has been cross-posted at [imbookedindefinitely](#)

Christen Tyre says

A Happy Boy was my first read by Bjørnson, as well as my first Norwegian story, and it was simply amazing. It felt like such a light and refreshing read, and I loved it from the first paragraph and knew I was going to love the rest! I often have to read 20 pages or so before I get truly interested, but that wasn't my experience here.

The story opens with a remark about Oyvind as a baby, and quickly goes to his early childhood, where he meets Marit. I appreciated that the story started almost immediately, without a lot of explaining or "fluff," and that there was still so much to tell. There were some points I wish I had known a little more, or certain times where I was confused by the span of time, but I don't feel like I missed anything, and the time frame soon became rather clear.

About halfway in Oyvind goes off to school, and while Bjørnson doesn't write much about Oyvind's life at school, I really loved that time because we were only privy to the letters he wrote, and I liked seeing the differences in writing among he, Marit, and the school master. I found a lot of it amusing as well, like requests to burn immediately, and Oyvind getting frustrated with Marit's short letters.

As Oyvind came home I came to love him even more by his role with his family, his determination with Marit, and how he so respectfully stood up to her family and eventually gained favor, to the point that he not only got her, but the farm as well!

While I would have loved to read about the wedding "as it was happening" there was something wonderful about it being narrated, and while I was so sad the story was coming to an end, I was also so happy with how it was ending and I felt it was perfect. Sometimes there is a happy ending.

Oyvind was always a happy boy.
