Charles Dickens’s satirical masterpiece, The Pickwick Papers, catapulted the young writer into literary fame when it was first serialized in 1836–37. It recounts the rollicking adventures of the members of the Pickwick Club as they travel about England getting into all sorts of mischief. Laugh-out-loud funny and endlessly entertaining, the book also reveals Dickens’s burgeoning interest in the parliamentary system, lawyers, the Poor Laws, and the ills of debtors’ prisons. As G. K. Chesterton noted, “Before [Dickens] wrote a single real story, he had a kind of vision . . . a map full of fantastic towns, thundering coaches, clamorous market-places, uproarious inns, strange and swaggering figures. That vision was Pickwick.”

This book proves that you don’t need organization, theme, or even a plot to write one of the great books of English literature when you’re one of the greatest novelists the world has ever known. There are many excellent reasons to read this book, chief among them the fact that even if you only read a few chapters you’ll get more pleasure, humor, and great writing than if you read hundreds of pages from other authors.

The Pickwick Papers starts out as if the story comes from records taken down from the club itself. This allows Dickens as author to comment as a reader of someone else’s chronicles, and accounts for much hilarity in the early goings. Since the book was written in monthly installments, originally intended as comic vignettes to accompany humorous sketches, there is little to connect the early chapters in terms of theme or even coherence.

This turns out to be irrelevant, because strung together each chapter becomes a crazy quilt of eccentric activities with implausibly funny situations that bring forth the basic 19th Century English difficulty of being respectable while still trying to have fun. Pickwicks problems, and those of his club members, revolve principally around courting women, getting into scrapes, and drinking...constant, incessant, over-the-top drinking. If The Pickwick Papers bears any resemblance at all to the real life of English gentlemen, they were simply never sober.
As the story evolves, Dickens chucks the device of relating these stories from the records of the club and gets down to earnest storytelling in a true narrative. One of the great characters of all time, Sam Weller, makes his appearance and literally carries the rest of the book on his humor, loyalty, philosophy, and pugilistics. If anyone is funnier than Sam, its his father, Tony Weller.

The Pickwick Papers is also rife with the best names, names that match exactly the personality of the person. Dodson & Fogg the lawyers, Winkle the wimpy lover, Jingle the con man, Job Trotter his accomplice, Nathaniel Pipkin the parish clerk, Miss Nupkins the spoiled young lady, the Porkenhams, nemeses of the Nupkins, and of course Lady Tollimglower from the previous century. The names alone are a readers feast.

The story takes Mr. Pickwick through a lawsuit for breach of promise to marry, time spent in debtors prison, time spent helping his young friends get married, and more or less continuous bouts of drinking. By the end Dickens has revealed his warmth, optimism, and love of happy endings. The ending is as heartwarming as the corpus of the book is rollicking and funny.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
The Pickwick Papers (Everymans Library (Cloth)) by Charles Dickens - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!