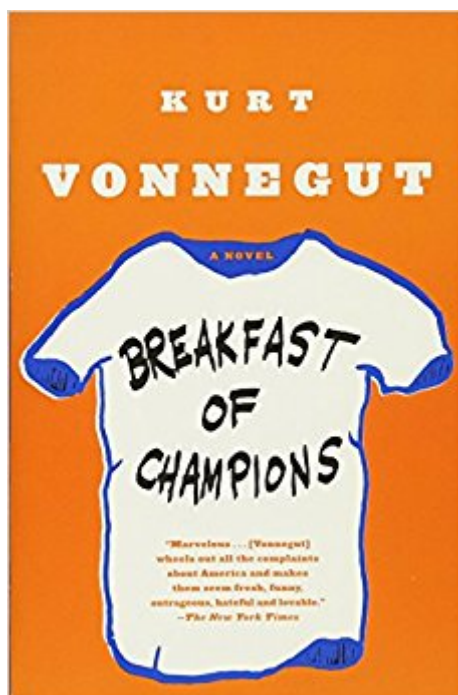


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Breakfast Of Champions: A Novel



Synopsis

In *Breakfast of Champions*, one of Kurt Vonnegut's most beloved characters, the aging writer Kilgore Trout, finds to his horror that a Midwest car dealer is taking his fiction as truth. What follows is murderously funny satire, as Vonnegut looks at war, sex, racism, success, politics, and pollution in America and reminds us how to see the truth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"We are healthy only to the extent that our ideas are humane." So reads the tombstone of downtrodden writer Kilgore Trout, but we have no doubt who's really talking: his alter ego Kurt Vonnegut. Health versus sickness, humanity versus inhumanity--both sets of ideas bounce through this challenging and funny book. As with the rest of Vonnegut's pure fantasy, it lacks the shimmering, fact-fueled rage that illuminates *Slaughterhouse-Five*. At the same time, that makes this book perhaps more enjoyable to read. *Breakfast of Champions* is a slippery, lucid, bleakly humorous jaunt through (sick? inhumane?) America circa 1973, with Vonnegut acting as our Virgil-like companion. The book follows its main character, auto-dealing solid-citizen Dwayne Hoover, down into madness, a condition brought on by the work of the aforementioned Kilgore Trout. As Dwayne cracks, then crumbles, *Breakfast of Champions* coolly shows the effects his dementia has on the web of characters surrounding him. It's not much of a plot, but it's enough for Vonnegut to air unique opinions on America, sex, war, love, and all of his other pet topics--you know, the only ones that really count. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Marvelous . . . [Vonnegut] wheels out all the complaints about America and makes them seem fresh, funny, outrageous, hateful and lovable.” •The New York Times
“Vonnegut is George Orwell, Dr. Caligari and Flash Gordon compounded into one writer . . . a zany but moral mad scientist.” •Time
“Free-wheeling, wild and great . . . uniquely Vonnegut.” •Publishers Weekly

Erudite and punchy, this was Kurt Vonnegut on a good roll. The man's a legacy in vibrant pitch and earthy wit. We thoroughly enjoyed this hellacious romp through American camp and circumstance. Stanley Tucci's narration was perfectly suited to Vonnegut's wily absurdities revolving around the sound insights of life in America this was a romp worth taking. My only complaint is the sound people need to get the audio gain issue under control. Actor Tucci's sound resonance varied too much in volume. Still, it was well worth the price and perfect company for the vacation traffic. I get the feeling Kurt's covered the nonsense of vacations somewhere.

"Breakfast of Champions" was my first Vonnegut novel way back in college. It was quirky and funny and tragic and I loved it. It set me off to read just about everything he wrote. To be honest, I have now forgotten much of the general story in the book (which is why I acquired this copy), but I have never forgotten completely about Kilgore Trout and his joke about mirrors. I am prone to say to my wife, "Excuse me while I go and steal a mirror." From this book I also learned the expression, "And so on...". I use it often in my own writing. With Mr. Vonnegut now gone, it is a little late to say, but...God Bless You, Mr. Vonnegut...wherever you are.

I can't see myself giving this book anything but five stars. Most novels read more than once, in my opinion, have to be considered good enough for that, though I know that there are exceptions. I first read Breakfast of Champions back in about 1975 or so, and it blew me away. It became the first of many Vonnegut novels I eventually dug into, and the second to be read again (Cat's Cradle as well), but definitely my favorite. His avant-garde sense of humor and easy writing style, especially in this one, was as much a pleasure the second time as the first. The story of Dwayne Hoover and Kilgore Trout, and their crazed antics and lifestyles leading up to their pinnacle meeting point is as hilarious as it can get. It's full of satire and cynicism regarding life in general (especially that of the late sixties and early seventies). The way Vonnegut picks at sex (you'll notice the way he mentions the size of a man's genitalia when introducing a character into the story, just as an author would describe hair

or eyes), and racism (for the 'N' word is ridiculed and teased), is sheer lunacy at its most hilarious level. If you're ever in the mood to read something that isn't exactly intended to change the world or move mountains with intellectualism, but at the same time, does have the power to force us to think a little about life, and make us laugh horrendously as well, then this is it.

I first read this book about 15 years ago and remembered thinking it was hilarious...turns out it still is. It is almost impossible to describe this book but I think everybody should read some Vonnegut and this is as good of a place to start as any. This book will make you laugh out loud but also leave notions in your head to contemplate long after you have finished reading it.

As always, Vonnegut gave us doses of strong black coffee, mirroring in the black brew who we are as a species, without sentimental apology, allowing us to make the wry recognition. The outrage is often humorous. High Wince Factor in this title for the PC reader--showing racism from the bottom of an empty cup called Midland City. If you are PC, don't get shocked out of it, read closely into the folds of this one, they're as deep as your cranial chasms. Worth reading down to the last bitter drop. A flagrant nose thumbing to modern 'how to write a novel' conventions, done extremely well. I laughed. On my recommended list for any mechanics of novel writing class.

I would much rather read *Cat's Cradle*, to be quite frank. Over and over. B of C has its signature moments of satire and social commentary, brooding rudeness of language (which he addresses in the introduction), but the structure of the novel seems depressingly anti-climactic. The themes present are a commentary on being ruled by one's bad or destructive thoughts, chance meetings and coincidences, fame vs. insignificance, censorship/access to pornography, and the irony of machines taking over where slavery left off, plus much more subtly elucidated ideas. It's interesting, but like I say in the title of this review, not his best work. I prefer it when Vonnegut goes a bit deeper into the big questions of human existence, as he did in *Cat's Cradle*, touching on themes of God (though in B of C one of his characters does state, "What is the purpose of life?...To be the eyes and ears and conscience of the Creator of the Universe, you fool!"), judgementalism vs. acceptance, creative views on how the world was created (in mud!), and so forth. The Breakfast of Champions (spoiler alert!) referenced in the title turns out to be a dry martini, not the slogan of the popular breakfast cereal (or so he persistently states throughout the text, perhaps in effect admitting to an actual ironic correlation); and maybe it's just all our "bad chemicals" keeping us from seeing that.

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