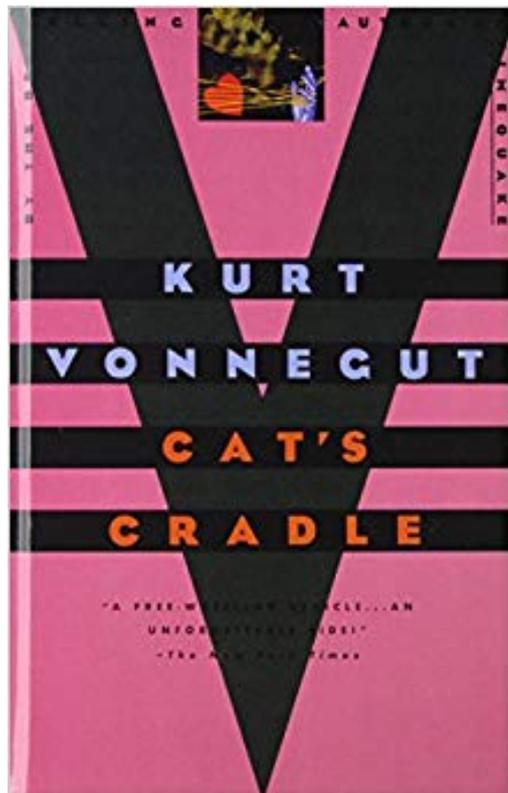


Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut



ISBN: 1439501378

ISBN13: 978-1439501375

Author: Kurt Vonnegut

Book title: Cat's Cradle

Publisher: Paw Prints 2008-06-26; Reprint edition
(June 26, 2008)

Language: English

Category: Humor & Satire

Size PDF version: 1672 kb

Size ePUB version: 1883 kb

Size DJVU version: 1835 kb

Other formats: mobi lit rtf lrf

1439501378



Reviews of the *Cat's Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut

Rainshaper

Kurt Vonnegut is a man who saw which way the world was turning and was none to pleased by it. This is one of many novels covering his themes of how flawed human society is, regardless of what it tries to pursue.

The story follows a reporter named John. John wants to write a book Felix Hoennikker, who was one of the principle engineers of the atomic bomb. While investigating him, he meets many things: a new religion called Bokononism, a stone angel, a philosophical dwarf, a Hoosier, and a chemical more dangerous than the A-bomb itself.

Vonnegut spares no one in this volume, taking shots at scientists and the religious with equal fervor. Vonnegut writes some of the best absurdism in literature, and anyone should be glad to read this.

Enjoy.

Rainpick

Okay -- three stars. That's what I think OTHER readers will think of this book. I think it is worth four stars. But this review is supposed to try and be helpful to you, dear reader, so I do not wish to inflate how good YOU might think this book is.

But let's face it: It's Vonnegut. Satirical. Whimsical. Deadly earnest in a half-joking kind of way. Not particularly optimistic about the future of us People, and not, apparently, particularly fond of us either. Three stars of Vonnegut is worth maybe four stars of Wolfe, maybe five stars of Koontz. Just three stars of Twain, though.

So about this book: it's a quick read. There are like 127 chapters in the story, but they all fit (in my edition) into just 287 pages. 287 very spacious and roomy pages. The chapters tend to be about a page-and-a-half long, some just a couple of paragraphs. Vonnegut bounces right along, telling the story of John, as John seeks to write a biography of one of the father's of the atom bomb. (A fictional father.)

The work no doubt contains some of Vonnegut's more creative ideas: ice-9; Bokononism; Mona Aamons Monzano, the most beautiful girl ever; a completely incomprehensible dialect of what might have once been the English language; and, of course, the end of the World. The story starts out innocently enough, but one thing just leads to the next and the next and before you know it, you will find yourself enmeshed in a world of utter ridiculousness, but you had better take it seriously or you may end up on "the hook." Pronounced "hy-u-o-ook-kuh."

So, not too deep, but deep enough. Not too, too funny, but totally, irreverently so. Not too long, but not too short. You will most likely enjoy this book.

Levaq

This was technically my second book by Vonnegut -- my first being 'God Bless You, Dr. Kevorkian' -- but I consider this to be my real intro to his work, as Kevorkian was rather short and maybe not the best introduction to Kurt's style. And as far as introductions to prolific authors go, I thought it was excellent. I'm excited to explore Kurt's catalog after this.

Cat's Cradle is a story about the end of the world, but I promise you it is not like any apocalyptic story you have read. This is the kind of book that is stuffed with information to contemplate, while at the same time being totally skimmable. Essentially it's the kind of books that goes fast, but has so much more to pick up on subsequent reads (I definitely plan to read it again). Cat's Cradle offers an interesting analysis of religion through Bokononism, in which believers maintain that they are all instruments of God's Will, whether they wish to be or not.

While the plot is entertaining and the ideas worth contemplating it was really Kurt's voice that propelled me through the story. Right from the beginning I latched onto his dry wit and rolled with it through to the end. As it happens, I really enjoyed it. Er, rather, as it was meant to happen.

See the cat? See the cradle?

Kabei

I'm finding Cat's Cradle tricky to review. Being the second Vonnegut piece I've read (after Slaughter-house Five) I'm in the unusual position of not being too sure what is classic Vonnegut style and what is unique to Cat's Cradle.

Generally the two stories seem similar in intent, Cat's Cradle dances around politics and religion where Slaughter-house danced around war. The overt plot of Cat's Cradle is MC Jonah is planning to

write a book about the atomic bomb, but ends up experiencing and writing something quite different. The story is presented in short chapters at times leaping through time, but more often leaping through the books of 'Bokonon' a fictional religion prominent in Cat's Cradle.

Overall, the book is witty and worthy allegory/satire. At times the writing style (which I can only assume was written to be similar to the Cat's Cradle - simultaneously complex and pointless) made it hard to really connect with the story and characters fully, but I'm pretty confident that was intentionally rather than flawed writing per se.

Lost Python

I read this in High School and remembered the infamous ice-nine. What piqued my interest was hearing terms from Vonnegut's invented religion Bokononism (like karass) and the fact this book was what got him his Anthropology degree from the University of Chicago. The book is dark satire but I was struck by the incredible creative feat of imagination and his attempt to ASK the question: what's the point of life?

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