



A Confederacy of Dunces

By John Kennedy Toole



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A Confederacy of Dunces is an American comic masterpiece. John Kennedy Toole's hero, one Ignatius J. Reilly, is "huge, obese, fractious, fastidious, a latter-day Gargantua, a Don Quixote of the French Quarter. His story bursts with wholly original characters, denizens of New Orleans' lower depths, incredibly true-to-life dialogue, and the zaniest series of high and low comic adventures" (Henry Kisor, Chicago Sun-Times).

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A Confederacy of Dunces By John Kennedy Toole Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"A green hunting cap squeezed the top of the fleshy balloon of a head. The green earflaps, full of large ears and uncut hair and the fine bristles that grew in the ears themselves, stuck out on either side like turn signals indicating two directions at once. Full, pursed lips protruded beneath the bushy black moustache and, at their corners, sank into little folds filled with disapproval and potato chip crumbs."

Meet Ignatius J. Reilly, the hero of John Kennedy Toole's tragicomic tale, *A Confederacy of Dunces*. This 30-year-old medievalist lives at home with his mother in New Orleans, pens his magnum opus on Big Chief writing pads he keeps hidden under his bed, and relays to anyone who will listen the traumatic experience he once had on a Greyhound Scenicruiser bound for Baton Rouge. ("Speeding along in that bus was like hurtling into the abyss.") But Ignatius's quiet life of tyrannizing his mother and writing his endless comparative history screeches to a halt when he is almost arrested by the overeager Patrolman Mancuso--who mistakes him for a vagrant--and then involved in a car accident with his tipsy mother behind the wheel. One thing leads to another, and before he knows it, Ignatius is out pounding the pavement in search of a job.

Over the next several hundred pages, our hero stumbles from one adventure to the next. His stint as a hotdog vendor is less than successful, and he soon turns his employers at the Levy Pants Company on their heads. Ignatius's path through the working world is populated by marvelous secondary characters: the stripper Darlene and her talented cockatoo; the septuagenarian secretary Miss Trixie, whose desperate attempts to retire are constantly, comically thwarted; gay blade Dorian Greene; sinister Miss Lee, proprietor of the Night of Joy nightclub; and Myrna Minkoff, the girl Ignatius loves to hate. The many subplots that weave through *A Confederacy of Dunces* are as complicated as anything you'll find in a Dickens novel, and just as beautifully tied together in the end. But it is Ignatius--selfish, domineering, and deluded, tragic and comic and larger than life--who carries the story. He is a modern-day Quixote beset by giants of the modern age. His fragility cracks the shell of comic bluster, revealing a deep streak of melancholy beneath the antic humor. John Kennedy Toole committed suicide in 1969 and never saw the publication of his novel. Ignatius Reilly is what he left behind, a fitting memorial to a talented and tormented life. --*Alix Wilber*

From Library Journal

Oooo-eeee! Toole's outrageous rambling farce comes to life with the wonderful voices of Arte Johnson?surely one of the greatest matches ever of the written to the spoken word. Toole's novel, written in the early 1960s and published posthumously in the early 1980s, is one of the great comic works of the century and still fresh 35 years later. Toole's finest achievement is protagonist Ignatius J. Reilly, a great intellectual and deadbeat glutton who roams the squalor and charm of New Orleans causing enormous chaos, selling a few hot dogs from his weenie wagon, and suffering a pyloric valve shutdown at the general looniness of the characters he meets in places like the Night of Joy nightclub. Johnson has created a unique voice for each of the many fantastic, overblown crazies woven into this wild story. It's unfortunate that the audio version is abridged. Still, the spirit of the original is here. Highly recommended for all listeners who love a great belly laugh at the human condition.?Barbara Valle, El Paso P.L., TX
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Review

"What a delight, what a roaring, rollicking, footstomping wonder this book is. I laughed until my sides ached, and then I laughed on." --Chicago Sun-Times

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brent Cook:

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Cierra Persaud:

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