

confederacy of dunces

confederacy of dunces is a phrase that has captured the imagination of readers, scholars, and literary enthusiasts for decades. Known primarily as the title of John Kennedy Toole's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "A Confederacy of Dunces," the term itself has broader implications and a rich history. This comprehensive article explores the origins and meaning of the phrase, provides an in-depth look at the novel and its author, examines major themes, analyzes the cultural impact, and discusses why this work remains influential in literature and popular culture. Readers will discover the background of the confederacy of dunces, understand its significance, and gain insights into its lasting legacy. Whether you are a student, a literature lover, or someone interested in classic American novels, this guide will offer valuable information and SEO-optimized content for your research or enjoyment.

- Origins and Meaning of "Confederacy of Dunces"
- John Kennedy Toole: The Author Behind the Classic
- Plot Overview and Major Characters
- Central Themes and Literary Devices
- Cultural Impact and Legacy
- Reception and Awards
- Interesting Facts About "Confederacy of Dunces"

Origins and Meaning of "Confederacy of Dunces"

The Phrase and Its Historical Context

The expression "confederacy of dunces" predates the novel and finds its earliest known usage in the writings of Jonathan Swift. In his 1711 essay, Swift wrote, "When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him." The phrase refers to a group of foolish or incompetent individuals united in opposition to a person of intellect or originality. Over time, the term has come to symbolize collective folly and the challenges faced by those who stand apart from the crowd.

Evolution in Popular Culture

While "confederacy of dunces" was once a literary reference, its adoption as the title for John Kennedy Toole's novel brought it into popular culture. Today, it is often used to describe groups or situations where ignorance or lack of insight prevails. The phrase encapsulates the comedic and satirical elements that pervade the novel and serves as a pointed critique of society's tendency to marginalize unconventional thinkers.

John Kennedy Toole: The Author Behind the Classic

Early Life and Education

John Kennedy Toole was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1937. He demonstrated academic prowess from a young age, attending Tulane University and later Columbia University for graduate studies in English. Toole's upbringing in New Orleans greatly influenced his writing style and subject matter, imbuing his work with a distinct sense of place and cultural authenticity.

Struggles and Legacy

Despite his literary talent, Toole struggled to find a publisher for "A Confederacy of Dunces" during his lifetime. The repeated re

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The Confederacy of Dunces: A Hilarious Descent into Absurdity

Are you ready to meet Ignatius J. Reilly, arguably literature's most unforgettable curmudgeon? John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces* isn't just a novel; it's a comedic masterpiece, a sprawling, chaotic adventure into the heart of New Orleans absurdity. This post delves deep into the novel, exploring its enduring appeal, its complex characters, and its lasting impact on literature. We'll unpack its humor, analyze its social commentary, and examine why it continues to resonate with readers decades after its publication. Prepare for a wild ride through the streets of New Orleans, guided by the delightfully infuriating Ignatius himself.

The Unforgettable Ignatius J. Reilly: A Portrait of Incompetence

At the heart of *A Confederacy of Dunces* lies Ignatius J. Reilly, a self-proclaimed intellectual and a man of breathtaking incompetence. He's overweight, opinionated, and perpetually clad in a tattered robe. His disdain for modern society is matched only by his inability to function within it. Ignatius isn't simply lazy; he's a masterclass in passive resistance, a walking embodiment of societal anxieties. His resistance isn't revolutionary; it's a hilarious, self-defeating rebellion against the mundane.

Ignatius's Philosophy: A Hilarious Blend of Pretension and Inanity

Ignatius's philosophy, heavily influenced by his mother's strict Catholic upbringing and his own inflated sense of self-importance, is a source of much of the novel's humor. His rants, often lengthy and convoluted, are filled with archaic language, classical allusions, and a profound distrust of anything remotely modern. He sees himself as a man out of time, a brilliant mind trapped in a world unworthy of his intellect, a viewpoint hilariously undermined by his constant failures.

Ignatius's Relationships: A Comedy of Errors

Ignatius's interactions with the colorful cast of characters surrounding him are a constant source of conflict and comedic tension. His relationship with his mother, Irene Reilly, is a complex mixture of dependence and resentment. His interactions with his various employers are marked by disaster, leading to a series of hilarious misadventures. Even his fleeting romantic encounters are tinged with his uniquely obtuse worldview.

The Novel's Social Commentary: Beyond the Laughs

While undeniably hilarious, *A Confederacy of Dunces* is more than just a comedic romp. Toole masterfully weaves social commentary into the narrative, offering a satirical look at 1960s New Orleans and the broader American society. The novel subtly critiques consumerism, class divisions, and the changing social landscape of the time. The absurdity of Ignatius's life serves as a reflection of the societal pressures and contradictions of the era.

A Satire of Conformity and Rebellion

Ignatius's rejection of societal norms can be interpreted as a form of rebellion, albeit a highly ineffective one. His refusal to conform to expectations, while often frustrating, highlights the limitations of societal expectations and the pressure to fit in. The novel subtly suggests that genuine rebellion may not always manifest in easily recognizable forms.

New Orleans as a Character: A City of Contradictions

New Orleans itself plays a significant role in the novel, acting almost as a character in its own right. The city's unique blend of cultures, its vibrant street life, and its underlying social tensions all contribute to the novel's rich tapestry. Toole captures the city's energy, its beauty, and its underlying decay with remarkable precision.

The Enduring Legacy of *A Confederacy of Dunces*

Despite facing initial rejection, *A Confederacy of Dunces* has achieved iconic status in American literature. Its enduring popularity is a testament to Toole's masterful storytelling, his creation of unforgettable characters, and his insightful social commentary. The novel continues to resonate with readers because it explores timeless themes of individuality, conformity, and the absurdity of life. Ignatius J. Reilly, despite his flaws, remains a fascinating and ultimately sympathetic character, making the novel a truly unique and unforgettable reading experience.

Conclusion

A Confederacy of Dunces is a comedic masterpiece that transcends mere entertainment. It's a satire, a social commentary, and a character study all rolled into one hilarious package. Ignatius J. Reilly,

with his absurd philosophies and chaotic life, will forever be cemented in literary history as one of the most memorable and beloved anti-heroes. If you haven't read it yet, prepare yourself for a literary experience unlike any other.

FAQs

1. Is *A Confederacy of Dunces* suitable for all ages? While not explicitly graphic, the novel contains adult themes and language that may not be appropriate for younger readers.
2. What makes Ignatius J. Reilly such a compelling character? His blatant incompetence, paired with his surprisingly astute observations and profound (if misguided) intellectual pretensions, create a character both frustrating and undeniably captivating.
3. What are the major themes explored in the novel? The novel explores themes of conformity versus individuality, social class, the absurdity of modern life, and the complexities of family relationships.
4. How does the setting of New Orleans contribute to the story? New Orleans serves as a vibrant backdrop, reflecting the city's unique culture and contributing to the novel's overall comedic and satirical tone. Its atmosphere of chaos mirrors Ignatius's own internal turmoil.
5. Why did the novel take so long to be published? Toole struggled to find a publisher for years, and the novel was only published posthumously after his death, highlighting the sometimes-arbitrary nature of the publishing industry.

confederacy of dunces: A Confederacy of Dunces John Kennedy Toole, 2007-12-01 Winner of the Pulitzer Prize "A masterwork . . . the novel astonishes with its inventiveness . . . it is nothing less than a grand comic fugue."—The New York Times Book Review *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).

confederacy of dunces: A Confederacy of Dunces Cookbook Cynthia LeJeune Nobles, 2015-10-12 In John Kennedy Toole's iconic novel, Ignatius J. Reilly is never short of opinions about food or far away from his next bite. Whether issuing gibes such as canned food is a perversion, or taking a break from his literary ambitions with an occasional cheese dip, this lover of Lucky Dogs, café au lait, and wine cakes navigates 1960s New Orleans focused on gastronomical pursuits. For the novel's millions of fans, Cynthia LeJeune Nobles's *A Confederacy of Dunces Cookbook* offers recipes inspired by the delightfully commonplace and always delicious fare of Ignatius and his cohorts. Through an informative narrative and almost 200 recipes, Nobles explores the intersection of food, history, and culture found in the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, opening up a new avenue into New Orleans's rich culinary traditions. Dishes inspired by Ignatius's favorites -- macaroons and toothsome steak -- as well as recipes based on supporting characters -- Officer Mancuso's Pork and Beans and Dr. Talc's Bloody Marys -- complement a wealth of fascinating detail about the epicurean side of the novel's memorable settings. A guide to the D. H. Holmes Department Store's legendary Chicken Salad, the likely offerings of the fictitious German's Bakery, and an in-depth interview with the general manager of Lucky Dogs round out this delightful cookbook. A lighthearted yet

impeccably researched look at the food of the 1960s, *A Confederacy of Dunces Cookbook* reaffirms the singularity and timelessness of both New Orleans cuisine and Toole's comic tour de force.

confederacy of dunces: *Ken and Thelma* Fletcher, Joel, 2005-03-31 Ken has a real gift for mimicry and a refined sense of the absurd . . . the English faculty . . . both fear and court Ken because of his biting comic talent. --from Joel L. Fletcher's journal John Kennedy Toole's first published novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, which Walker Percy called a gargantuan tumultuous human tragi-comedy, became a publishing phenomenon, with almost two million copies in print worldwide in eighteen languages. The book's outrageous protagonist, Ignatius Reilly, is an icon of contemporary American fiction. Now *Ken and Thelma* sheds new light on the tragic life story of the author, known as 'Ken' to his friends. Drawing on his own journals and personal letters, Joel L. Fletcher recreates his friendship with Ken in the early 1960s and his long association with Ken's indomitable mother, Thelma Ducoing Toole, after the book's publication. *Ken and Thelma* features personal photographs, many never before published.

confederacy of dunces: *Theology and Geometry* Leslie Marsh, 2020-01-29 This collection, the first of its kind, brings together specially commissioned academic essays to mark fifty years since the death of John Kennedy Toole.

confederacy of dunces: *The Neon Bible* John Kennedy Toole, 2007-12-01 "A moving evocation of the small-town South in the mid-twentieth century" that "belongs on the shelf with the works of Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, and Eudora Welty" (Orlando Sentinel). John Kennedy Toole—who won a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for his best-selling comic masterpiece *A Confederacy of Dunces*—wrote *The Neon Bible* for a literary contest at the age of sixteen. The manuscript languished in a drawer and became the subject of a legal battle among Toole's heirs. It was only in 1989, thirty-five years after it was written and twenty years after Toole's suicide at thirty-one, that this amazingly accomplished and evocative novel was freed for publication. "Heartfelt emotion, communicated in clean direct prose . . . a remarkable achievement." —Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times* "John Kennedy Toole's tender, nostalgic side is as brilliantly effective as his corrosive satire. If you liked *To Kill a Mockingbird* you will love *The Neon Bible*." —Florence King "Shockingly mature. . . . Even at sixteen, Toole knew that the way to write about complex emotions is to express them simply." —Kerry Luft, *Chicago Tribune*

confederacy of dunces: *A Confederacy of Dunces* John Kennedy Toole, 2011 'This city is famous for its gamblers, prostitutes, exhibitionists, anti-Christos, alcoholics, sodomites, drug addicts, fetishists, onanists, pornographers, frauds, jades, litterbugs, and lesbians . . . don't make the mistake of bothering me.' Ignatius J. Reilly: fat, flatulent, eloquent and almost unemployable. By the standards of ordinary folk he is pretty much unhinged, too. But is he bothered by this? No. For this misanthropic crusader against an America fallen into vice and ignorance has a mission: to rescue a naked female philosopher in distress. And he has a pirate costume and hot-dog cart to do it with . . . 'I succumbed, stunned and seduced, page after page, vocal with delight. A masterwork of comedy' *The New York Times*

confederacy of dunces: *A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole (Book Analysis)* Bright Summaries, 2018-05-31 Unlock the more straightforward side of *A Confederacy of Dunces* with this concise and insightful summary and analysis ! This engaging summary presents an analysis of *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole, a picaresque novel which follows the life of Ignatius J. Reilly, an eccentric, self-absorbed layabout whose endeavours always seem to be doomed to failure. The novel's comic tone stands in sharp contrast to its bleak portrayal of working-class life, and it has been lauded for its accurate and comprehensive depiction of the dialects of New Orleans. John Kennedy Toole was an American novelist whose work was not published until a decade after his suicide at the age of 31. *A Confederacy of Dunces* is generally considered his masterpiece, and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1981. Find out everything you need to know about *A Confederacy of Dunces* in a fraction of the time ! This in-depth and informative reading guide brings you: •A complete plot summary •Character studies •Key themes and symbols •Questions for further reflection Why choose BrightSummaries? Available in print and digital format, our publications are

designed to accompany you on your reading journey. The clear and concise style makes for easy understanding, providing the perfect opportunity to improve your literary knowledge in no time. See the very best of literature in a whole new light with BrightSummaries !

confederacy of dunces: Daughter of the Salt King A. S. Thornton, 2021-02-02 A 2021 Foreword INDIES Award Winner in Romance and Finalist in Fantasy A 2022 Benjamin Franklin Award Runner-Up in Best New Voice: Fiction "The heat and romance of the desert, the push and the pull of Emel's desperation, and the magic and humanity of a caustic jinni make *Daughter of the Salt King* an irresistible ride." —Amy Harmon, New York Times bestselling author "This riveting debut novel will leave readers eagerly awaiting Thornton's future works." —Booklist A girl of the desert and a jinni born long ago by the sea, both enslaved to the Salt King—but with this capricious magic, only one can be set free. As a daughter of the Salt King, Emel ought to be among the most powerful women in the desert. Instead, she and her sisters have less freedom than even her father's slaves . . . for the Salt King uses his own daughters to seduce visiting noblemen into becoming powerful allies by marriage. Escape from her father's court seems impossible, and Emel dreams of a life where she can choose her fate. When members of a secret rebellion attack, Emel stumbles upon an alluring escape route: her father's best-kept secret—a wish-granting jinni, Saalim. But in the land of the Salt King, wishes are never what they seem. Saalim's magic is volatile. Emel could lose everything with a wish for her freedom as the rebellion intensifies around her. She soon finds herself playing a dangerous game that pits dreams against responsibility and love against the promise of freedom. As she finds herself drawn to the jinni for more than his magic, captivated by both him and the world he shows her outside her desert village, she has to decide if freedom is worth the loss of her family, her home and Saalim, the only man she's ever loved. For readers who enjoy epic desert fantasies and forbidden romance like *The Forbidden Wish* by Jessica Khoury, *The Wrath & the Dawn* by Renée Ahdieh, and *Empire of Sand* by Tasha Suri.

confederacy of dunces: Ignatius Rising René Pol Nevils, Deborah George Hardy, 2005-04-01 The phenomenal success of John Kennedy Toole's comic masterpiece, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, is now legendary, a story that has long beckoned a deeper exploration into the life, imagination, and demise of the writer responsible for one of American literature's most memorable characters -- Ignatius J. Reilly. In *Ignatius Rising*, René Pol Nevils and Deborah George Hardy present the first biography of Toole, drawing upon scores of interviews with contemporaries of the writer and acquaintances of his influencing mother, Thelma, as well as unpublished letters, documents, and photographs. Frank yet sympathetic, *Ignatius Rising* deftly describes a life that is dark, tragic, bizarre, and amazing -- but luminous with the gift of laughter, a life not unlike those of Toole's beloved characters, now loved the world over.

confederacy of dunces: A Cornucopia of Dunderheads John Kennedy Toole, 2015-12-01 WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO IGNATIUS J. REILLY? In this parody of *A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES* by John Kennedy Toole, John Kennedy Toole Jr. plunges Ignatius J. Reilly into a New York City winter wonderland, where our Falstaffian hero inadvertently becomes vice president of the Charlie Chan Chinese Fortune Cookie Company, and where he finds a recently unearthed slip of paper that contains an occult secret for overthrowing the governments of the world (in a most unusual way, of course). Ignatius's parodic adventures would not be complete without his nemesis-friend, Myrna Minkoff. Add to the mix her parents, Mr. Minkoff and Mrs. Minkoff, two inept government agents (is there a redundancy here?), Ignatius's mother, his mother's fiancée, a virago or two, John Kennedy Toole, Ed Sullivan, and Myrna's concupiscent grandmother, Grandmother Horowitz, and you have the ingredients for a parody unlike any other ever written. With a foreword by Franz-Heinrich Katecki.

confederacy of dunces: Jabberwocky and Other Nonsense Lewis Carroll, 2012-09-06 The first collected and annotated edition of Carroll's brilliant, witty poems, edited by Gillian Beer. 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves / Did gyre and gimble in the wabe...' wrote Lewis Carroll in his wonderfully playful poem of nonsense verse, 'Jabberwocky'. This new edition collects together the marvellous range of Carroll's poetry, including nonsense verse, parodies, burlesques, and more.

Alongside the title piece are such enduringly wonderful pieces as 'The Walrus and the Carpenter', 'The Mock Turtle's Song', 'Father William' and many more. This edition also includes notes, a chronology and an introduction by Gillian Beer that discusses Carroll's love of puzzles and wordplay and the relationship of his poetry with the Alice books 'Opening at random Gillian Beer's new edition of Lewis Carroll's poems, Jabberwocky and Other Nonsense, guarantees a pleasurable experience - not all of it nonsensical' - Times Literary Supplement Lewis Carroll was the pen-name of the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. Born in 1832, he was educated at Rugby School and Christ Church, Oxford, where he was appointed lecturer in mathematics in 1855, and where he spent the rest of his life. In 1861 he took deacon's orders, but shyness and a stammer prevented him from seeking the priesthood. His most famous works, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), were originally written for Alice Liddell, the daughter of the Dean of his college. Charles Dodgson died of bronchitis in 1898. Gillian Beer is King Edward VII Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Cambridge and past President of Clare Hall College. She is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Society of Literature. Among her works are *Darwin's Plots* (1983; third edition, 2009), *George Eliot* (1986), *Arguing with the Past: Essays in Narrative from Woolf to Sidney* (1989), *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (1996) and *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (1996).

confederacy of dunces: *The Jesuits* Markus Friedrich, 2022-03-01 The most comprehensive and up-to-date exploration of one of the most important religious orders in the modern world Since its founding by Ignatius of Loyola in 1540, the Society of Jesus—more commonly known as the Jesuits—has played a critical role in the events of modern history. From the Counter-Reformation to the ascent of Francis I as the first Jesuit pope, *The Jesuits* presents an intimate look at one of the most important religious orders not only in the Catholic Church, but also the world. Markus Friedrich describes an organization that has deftly walked a tightrope between sacred and secular involvement and experienced difficulties during changing times, all while shaping cultural developments from pastoral care and spirituality to art, education, and science. Examining the Jesuits in the context of social, cultural, and world history, Friedrich sheds light on how the order shaped the culture of the Counter-Reformation and participated in the establishment of European empires, including missionary activity throughout Asia and in many parts of Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He also explores the place of Jesuits in the New World and addresses the issue of Jesuit slaveholders. The Jesuits often tangled with the Roman Curia and the pope, resulting in their suppression in 1773, but the order returned in 1814 to rise again to a powerful position of influence. Friedrich demonstrates that the Jesuit fathers were not a monolithic group and he considers the distinctive spiritual legacy inherited by Pope Francis. With its global scope and meticulous attention to archival sources and previous scholarship, *The Jesuits* illustrates the heterogeneous, varied, and contradictory perspectives of this famed religious organization.

confederacy of dunces: Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry B S Johnson, 2023-06-29 Christie Malry is a simple man. As a young accounts clerk at a confectionery factory in London he learns the principles of Double-Entry Bookkeeping. Frustrated by the petty injustices that beset his life - particularly those caused by the behaviour of authority figures - he determines a unique way to settle his grievances: a system of moral double-entry bookkeeping. So, for every offence society commits against him, Christie exacts recompense. 'Every Debit must have its Credit, the First Golden Rule' of the system. All accounts are to be settled, and they are - in the most alarming way. *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry*, the last novel to be published in B S Johnson's lifetime, is undoubtedly his funniest.

confederacy of dunces: The Roxy Letters Mary Pauline Lowry, 2020-04-07 Meet Roxy. For fans of *Where'd You Go, Bernadette* and *Bridget Jones's Diary* comes "just the kind of comic novel we need right now" (The Washington Post) about an Austin artist trying to figure out her life one letter to her ex-boyfriend at a time. Bridget Jones penned a diary; Roxy writes letters. Specifically: she writes letters to her hapless, rent-avoidant ex-boyfriend—and current roommate—Everett. This charming and funny twenty-something is under-employed (and under-romanced), and she's

decidedly fed up with the indignities she endures as a deli maid at Whole Foods (the original), and the dismaying speed at which her beloved Austin is becoming corporatized. When a new Lululemon pops up at the intersection of Sixth and Lamar where the old Waterloo Video used to be, Roxy can stay silent no longer. As her letters to Everett become less about overdue rent and more about the state of her life, Roxy realizes she's ready to be the heroine of her own story. She decides to team up with her two best friends to save Austin—and rescue Roxy's love life—in whatever way they can. But can this spunky, unforgettable millennial keep Austin weird, avoid arrest, and find romance—and even creative inspiration—in the process?

confederacy of dunces: *The Scandal of Holiness* Jessica Hooten Wilson, 2022-03-29 How do we become better people? Initiatives such as New Year's resolutions, vision boards, thirty-day plans, and self-help books often fail to compel us to live differently. We settle for small goals--frugal spending, less yelling at the kids, more time at the gym--but we are called to something far greater. We are created to be holy. Award-winning author Jessica Hooten Wilson explains that learning to hear the call of holiness requires cultivating a new imagination--one rooted in the act of reading. Learning to read with eyes attuned to the saints who populate great works of literature moves us toward holiness, where God opens up a way of living that extends far beyond what we can conjure for ourselves. Literature has the power to show us what a holy life looks like, and these depictions often scandalize even as they shape our imagination. As such, careful reading becomes a sort of countercultural spiritual discipline. The book includes devotionals, prayers, wisdom from the saints, and more to help individuals and groups cultivate a saintly imagination. Foreword by Lauren F. Winner.

confederacy of dunces: A Conspiracy of Dunces Bill Shaw, 2012-08-27 A Conspiracy of Dunces, the third in Shaw's Pistol Thicket trilogy, is a rollicking send-up of John Kennedy Toole's 1980 Pulitzer Prize winning *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Ignatius P. Reilly, a product of Ignatius J's New Orleans neighborhood, is a 270 pound college star whose NFL destiny is sidetracked by a football injury. Not to be diminished, I.P. is sped upon a godly mission by his church, Trinity Baptist of Pistol Thicket, La., to install an evangelical president in the White House. Along the way, he is assailed by two liberal Marxist Occupy-DC beauties -- Lizza Sachs and Myrna Minkoff -- who make his life a political hell until . . . love happens. Ignatius P stretches his luck and his madcap schemes about as far as can be done as he works himself into the Bachmann campaign while countering the vicious assaults from Lizza and Myrna. Ignatius P. is supported by Tim Sorenson, a Marine veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and Jim Loughlin, a Bachmann operative. But wait . . . but wait . . . there's a big election night party, November 6, 2012, in Charleston. Readers will be overwhelmed by the unexpected!!!

confederacy of dunces: The Novel Cure Ella Berthoud, Susan Elderkin, 2013-10-08 A novel is a story, a collection of experiences transmitted from the mind of one to the mind of another. It offers a way to unwind, a way to focus, a way to learn about life—distraction, entertainment, and diversion. But it can also be something much more powerful. When read at the right time in your life, a novel can—quite literally—change it. *The Novel Cure* is a reminder of that power. To create this apothecary, the authors have trawled through two thousand years of literature for the most brilliant minds and engrossing reads. Structured like a reference book, it allows readers to simply look up their ailment, whether it be agoraphobia, boredom, or midlife crisis, then they are given the name of a novel to read as the antidote.

confederacy of dunces: Love in the Ruins Walker Percy, 2011-03-29 DIVDIV“A great adventure . . . So outrageous and so real, one is left speechless.” —Chicago Sun Times/divDIV/divDIVIn Walker Percy's future America, the country is on the brink of disaster. With citizens violently polarized along racial, political, and social lines, and a fifteen-year war still raging abroad, America is crumbling quickly into ruin. The country's one remaining hope is Dr. Thomas More, whose “lapsometer” is capable of diagnosing the spiritual afflictions—anxiety, depression, alienation—driving everyone's destructive and disastrous behavior./divDIV /divDIVBut such a potent machine has its pitfalls. As Dr. More soon learns, in the wrong hands, the powerful lapsometer could

lead to open warfare, pushing America into anarchy at full-speed./div /div

confederacy of dunces: American Philosophy John Kaag, 2016-10-11 The epic wisdom contained in a lost library helps the author turn his life around John Kaag is a dispirited young philosopher at sea in his marriage and his career when he stumbles upon West Wind, a ruin of an estate in the hinterlands of New Hampshire that belonged to the eminent Harvard philosopher William Ernest Hocking. Hocking was one of the last true giants of American philosophy and a direct intellectual descendent of William James, the father of American philosophy and psychology, with whom Kaag feels a deep kinship. It is James's question "Is life worth living?" that guides this remarkable book. The books Kaag discovers in the Hocking library are crawling with insects and full of mold. But he resolves to restore them, as he immediately recognizes their importance. Not only does the library at West Wind contain handwritten notes from Whitman and inscriptions from Frost, but there are startlingly rare first editions of Hobbes, Descartes, and Kant. As Kaag begins to catalog and read through these priceless volumes, he embarks on a thrilling journey that leads him to the life-affirming tenets of American philosophy—self-reliance, pragmatism, and transcendence—and to a brilliant young Kantian who joins him in the restoration of the Hocking books. Part intellectual history, part memoir, *American Philosophy* is ultimately about love, freedom, and the role that wisdom can play in turning one's life around.

confederacy of dunces: New Teeth Simon Rich, 2021-07-27 Laugh till you cry in this new collection of stories from the award-winning "Serena Williams of humor writing" (New York Times Book Review) about raising babies and trying not to be one. Called a "comedic Godsend" by Conan O'Brien and "the Stephen King of comedy writing" by John Mulaney, Simon Rich is back with *New Teeth*, his funniest and most personal collection yet. Two murderous pirates find a child stowaway on board and attempt to balance pillaging with co-parenting. A woman raised by wolves prepares for her parents' annual Thanksgiving visit. An aging mutant superhero is forced to learn humility when the mayor kicks him upstairs to a desk job. And in the hard-boiled caper "The Big Nap," a weary two-year-old detective struggles to make sense of "a world gone mad." Equal parts silly and sincere, *New Teeth* is an ode to growing up, growing older, and what it means to make a family.

confederacy of dunces: French Exit Patrick deWitt, 2018-08-28 NOW A MAJOR FILM STARRING MICHELLE PFEIFFER AND LUCAS HEDGES A tragedy of manners from the Man Booker-shortlisted author of *The Sisters Brothers* 'My favourite book of his yet' Maria Semple, author of *Where'd You Go, Bernadette* 'Pure joy' Mail on Sunday 'Buoyantly insane' New Yorker Frances Price is in dire straits. Scandals swirl around the recently widowed New York socialite, and her adult-aged, toddler-brained son Malcolm is no help. Cutting their losses, they grab their cat, Small Frank, and head for the exit. Paris becomes the backdrop for a giddy drive to self-destruction, helped along by a cast of singularly curious characters. Brimming with pathos, warmth and wit, *French Exit* is a riotous send-up of high society and a moving story of mothers and sons.

confederacy of dunces: The Unfilmable Confederacy of Dunces Stephan Eicke, 2022-12-02 For more than 40 years, dozens of film directors, writers and producers tried and failed to adapt John Kennedy Toole's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Along the way lawsuits were filed, filming locations destroyed, friendships shattered, reputations trashed, production companies bankrupted. Drawing on exclusive interviews, internal documents and private correspondence, this book tells the remarkable story of the non-making of *A Confederacy of Dunces* as a breathless and absurdist thriller. Celebrity appearances include John Belushi, Steven Soderbergh, Stephen Fry, Robin Williams, Warren Beatty and Harvey Weinstein, among others.

confederacy of dunces: The Rest of Their Lives Jean-Paul Didierlaurent, 2017-10-19 Filled with all the larger-than-life characters and enchanting storytelling that made readers fall for *The Reader* on the 6.27, Jean-Paul Didierlaurent's follow-up novel, *The Rest of Their Lives*, is set to charm the world. It's hard to find love with a job like Ambroise's - an embalmer in a small French town, he rarely spends time with the living. And while Manelle - a home-help for the elderly - enjoys her days taking care of her spirited clients, she finds her evenings are often spent with TV dinners for one. So when chance - and an unusual road trip - bring Ambroise and Manelle together, they are both more

than ready for the rest of their lives to begin . . .

confederacy of dunces: Alligator Zoo-park Magic C. H. Hooks, 2018 Fiction. Is Jeffers an Alligator Zoo-Park magician or the Messiah? Two friends live unapologetically on the edge of poverty in the rugged, un-decorous part of the South. Jimmy, a single father with an addict ex, and Jeffers, a magician whose tricks are closer to miracles--both are immersed in a place where trailers and Hot Pockets dominate the landscape, and alligators roam free. When Jimmy witnesses losing his best friend to his biggest trick gone awry, he reflects on their lifelong friendship and what it really means to escape. C.H. Hooks' mesmerizing novel, ALLIGATOR ZOO-PARK MAGIC, hovers in the boundaries between city boys and country boys, businessmen and truck drivers, a van named NAILR and a radiator-busting deer drinking beer. The world is both nature untamed and twisted in a theme park of mermaids and crispy-fried reptile bites. Yet, Hooks does so much more than create a new spin on the mystical, mythical South. This fascinating debut delves into the true nature of the heart: everyone's need to belong to someone, to some place, and, most importantly, to oneself.--Erica Dawson Mr. Hooks has produced a magic show of the highest order.--Jensen Beach I've died and been born anew! C.H. Hooks is a damned wizard, and ALLIGATOR ZOO-PARK MAGIC is a holy hell of a book.--Harrison Scott Key AZPM is in the best tradition of Southern literature--it's fast and funny, dark and desperate.--Shane Hinton Draw a direct line from Larry Brown and Harry Crews to Chris Hooks.--Jeff Parker

confederacy of dunces: Say Nothing Patrick Radden Keefe, 2020-02-25 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • SOON TO BE AN FX LIMITED SERIES STREAMING ON HULU • NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD WINNER • From the author of *Empire of Pain*—a stunning, intricate narrative about a notorious killing in Northern Ireland and its devastating repercussions. One of The New York Times's 20 Best Books of the 21st Century Masked intruders dragged Jean McConville, a 38-year-old widow and mother of 10, from her Belfast home in 1972. In this meticulously reported book—as finely paced as a novel—Keefe uses McConville's murder as a prism to tell the history of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Interviewing people on both sides of the conflict, he transforms the tragic damage and waste of the era into a searing, utterly gripping saga. —New York Times Book Review Reads like a novel ... Keefe is ... a master of narrative nonfiction. . .An incredible story.—Rolling Stone A Best Book of the Year: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, TIME, NPR, and more! Jean McConville's abduction was one of the most notorious episodes of the vicious conflict known as The Troubles. Everyone in the neighborhood knew the I.R.A. was responsible. But in a climate of fear and paranoia, no one would speak of it. In 2003, five years after an accord brought an uneasy peace to Northern Ireland, a set of human bones was discovered on a beach. McConville's children knew it was their mother when they were told a blue safety pin was attached to the dress--with so many kids, she had always kept it handy for diapers or ripped clothes. Patrick Radden Keefe's mesmerizing book on the bitter conflict in Northern Ireland and its aftermath uses the McConville case as a starting point for the tale of a society wracked by a violent guerrilla war, a war whose consequences have never been reckoned with. The brutal violence seared not only people like the McConville children, but also I.R.A. members embittered by a peace that fell far short of the goal of a united Ireland, and left them wondering whether the killings they committed were not justified acts of war, but simple murders. From radical and impetuous I.R.A. terrorists such as Dolours Price, who, when she was barely out of her teens, was already planting bombs in London and targeting informers for execution, to the ferocious I.R.A. mastermind known as The Dark, to the spy games and dirty schemes of the British Army, to Gerry Adams, who negotiated the peace but betrayed his hardcore comrades by denying his I.R.A. past--Say Nothing conjures a world of passion, betrayal, vengeance, and anguish.

confederacy of dunces: A Country of Ghosts Margaret Killjoy, 2021-11-23 Dimos Horacki is a Borolian journalist and a cynical patriot, his muckraking days behind him. But when his newspaper ships him to the front, he's embedded in the Imperial Army and the reality of colonial expansion is laid bare before him. His adventures take him from villages and homesteads to the great refugee city of Hronople, built of glass, steel, and stone, all while a war rages around him. The empire fights for

coal and iron, but the anarchists of Hron fight for their way of life. *A Country of Ghosts* is a novel of utopia besieged and a tale that challenges every premise of contemporary society.

confederacy of dunces: *Fiction and Repetition* J. Hillis Miller, 1985-10-15 In *Fiction and Repetition*, one of our leading critics and literary theorists offers detailed interpretations of seven novels: Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*, Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *The Well-Beloved*, Conrad's *Lord Jim*, and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Between the Acts*. Miller explores the multifarious ways in which repetition generates meaning in these novels—repetition of images, metaphors, motifs; repetition on a larger scale of episodes, characters, plots; and repetition from one novel to another by the same or different authors. While repetition creates meanings, it also, Miller argues, prevents the identification of a single determinable meaning for any of the novels; rather, the patterns made by the various repetitive sequences offer alternative possibilities of meaning which are incompatible. He thus sees “undecidability” as an inherent feature of the novels discussed. His conclusions make a provocative contribution to current debates about narrative theory and about the principles of literary criticism generally. His book is not a work of theory as such, however, and he avoids the technical terminology dear to many theorists; his book is an attempt to interpret as best he can his chosen texts. Because of his rare critical gifts and his sensitivity to literary values and nuances, his readings send one back to the novels with a new appreciation of their riches and their complexities of form.

confederacy of dunces: *The Memory of Running* Ron McLarty, 2005-12-27 Smithy is an American original, worthy of a place on the shelf just below your Hucks, your Holdens, your Yossarians. —Stephen King Every so often, a novel comes along that captures the public's imagination with a story that sweeps readers up and takes them on a thrilling, unforgettable ride. Ron McLarty's *The Memory of Running* is this decade's novel. By all accounts, especially his own, Smithson Smithy Ide is a loser. An overweight, friendless, chain-smoking, forty-three-year-old drunk, Smithy's life becomes completely unhinged when he loses his parents and long-lost sister within the span of one week. Rolling down the driveway of his parents' house in Rhode Island on his old Raleigh bicycle to escape his grief, the emotionally bereft Smithy embarks on an epic, hilarious, luminous, and extraordinary journey of discovery and redemption.

confederacy of dunces: *The Ask* Sam Lipsyte, 2010-02-27 In this dark comic novel by the author of *Home Land*, a college development officer's last chance to keep his job comes at a high cost. A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice Milo Burke—husband, father, development officer at a third-tier university—has just joined the burgeoning class of the newly unemployed. Grasping after off jobs to support his wife and child, Milo is relieved to get another chance from his former boss. All he has to do is reel in a potential donor who, mysteriously, has requested Milo's involvement. But it turns out that the ask is Milo's sinister college classmate Purdy Stuart. And the “give” won't come cheap. Exploring such themes as work, war, sex, class, child rearing, romantic comedies, Benjamin Franklin, cooking shows on death row, and the eroticization of chicken wire, *The Ask* is a hilarious tour de force from a writer who has already shown that the deepest fictions are often the funniest.

confederacy of dunces: *The Letters of Mina Harker* Dodie Bellamy, 2021-10-19 Bellamy's debut novel revives the central female character from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and imagines her as an independent woman living in San Francisco during the 1980s. Hypocrisy's not the problem, I think, it's allegory the breeding ground of paranoia. The act of reading into--how does one know when to stop? KK says that Dodie has the advantage because she's physical and I'm only psychic. ... The truth is: everyone is adopted. My true mother wore a turtleneck and a long braid down her back, drove a Karmann Ghia, drank Chianti in dark corners, fucked Gregroy Corso ... --Dodie Bellamy, *The Letters of Mina Harker* First published in 1998, Dodie Bellamy's debut novel *The Letters of Mina Harker* sought to resuscitate the central female character from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and reimagine her as an independent woman living in San Francisco during the 1980s--a woman not unlike Dodie Bellamy. Harker confesses the most intimate details of her relationships with four different men in a series of letters. Vampirizing Mina Harker, Bellamy turns the novel into a laboratory: a series of attempted

transmutations between the two women in which the real story occurs in the gaps and the slippages. Lampooning the intellectual theory-speak of that era, Bellamy's narrator fights to inhabit her own sexuality despite feelings of vulnerability and destruction. Stylish but ruthlessly unpretentious, *The Letters of Mina Harker* was Bellamy's first major claim to the literary space she would come to inhabit.

confederacy of dunces: *Riotous Assembly* Tom Sharpe, 2011-05-26 When Miss Hazelstone of Jacaranda Park kills her Zulu cook in a sensational crime passionel, the gallant members of the South African police force are soon on the scene: Kommandant van Heerden, whose secret longing for the heart of an English gentleman leads to the most memorable transplant operation yet recorded; Luitenant Verkramp of the Security Branch, ever active in the pursuit of Communist cells; Konstabel Els, with his propensity for shooting first and not thinking later - and also for forcing himself upon African women in a manner legally reserved for male members of their own race. In the course of the strange events which follow, we encounter some very esoteric perversions when the Kommandant is held captive in Miss Hazelstone's remarkable rubber room; and some even more amazing perversions of justice when Miss Hazelstone's brother, the Bishop of Barotseland, is sentenced to be hanged on the ancient gallows in the local prison. Not a 'political' novel in any previously imagined sense, *Riotous Assembly* provided a completely fresh approach to the South African scene - an approach startling in its deadpan savagery and yet also outrageously funny.

confederacy of dunces: *How Not to Read* Dan Wilbur, 2012-09-04 The Last Stupid Book You'll Ever Need to Read Don't want to slog through lengthy old books like *A Tale of Two Cities* or *The Giving Tree*? Sick of being judged by your avid-reader "friends" who talk about books you've never heard of? Want to sound smarter without the strain of actually bettering yourself? Never fear. In *How Not to Read*, you'll find techniques to fake your way through literature so you never have to read another book—ever! Inside, you'll find: •Tips for getting through anything you have to read by reading faster: Just read every third word. (One Hundred Years of Solitude becomes "Many as the Colonel was, that when him ice." Wow! It's like a Gertrude Stein poem only more comprehensible!) •Entire genres summed up in a single page: Historical fiction becomes "Guess who else had sex: Hitler!" •Literary insults to make yourself seem smarter: "The only thing sadder than you is a Joycean epiphany!" "You're as weak as a passive sentence written in negative form. And probably not considered by anyone to be worth more than an adverb." It's time to stop fearing those people who keep bringing up Ayn Rand. *How Not to Read* is here to liberate the world from ever needing to read a book again.

confederacy of dunces: *Darconville's Cat* Alexander Theroux, 1996-04-15 The conflicts between love and hate, good and evil, and life and art are explored in a portrait of Alaric Darconville, a twenty-nine-year-old professor at Quinsy College--a women's college in Virginia--who falls in love with and is jilted by one of his students

confederacy of dunces: *Envy* Юрий Карлович Олеша, 1967 This is the most comprehensive collection in English of Olesha's work. It includes eight stories that have been translated especially for the Anchor edition.--Back cover.

confederacy of dunces: *Punisher* Garth Ennis, 2004-03 The most deadly man in the Marvel Universe--The Punisher--might finally meet his match as the Man Without Fear, Daredevil, the Amazing Spider-Man, and the X-Men's Wolverine join forces to finally bring Frank Castle's killing spree to an end.

confederacy of dunces: *Leave it to Psmith* Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, 1953-01 Ronald Psmith (the p is silent, as in pshrimp) is always willing to help a damsel in distress. So when he sees Eve Halliday without an umbrella during a downpour, he nobly offers her an umbrella, even though it s one he picks out of the Drone Club s umbrella rack. Psmith is so besotted with Eve that, when Lord Emsworth, her new boss, mistakes him for Ralston McTodd, a poet, Psmith pretends to be him so he can make his way to Blandings Castle and woo her. And so the farce begins: criminals disguised as poets with a plan to steal a priceless diamond necklace, a secretary who throws flower pots through windows, and a nighttime heist that ends in gunplay. How will everything be sorted

out? Leave it to Psmith

confederacy of dunces: *Made In Scotland* Billy Connolly, 2018-10-18 THE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER 'Where do you come from? It's one of the most basic human questions of all. But there is another question, which might sound a wee bit similar but is actually very different: What do you come from? And, let me tell you, that question can take you all sorts of strange places...' In *Made in Scotland*, legendary comic and national treasure Billy Connolly returns to his roots, reflecting on his life, his homeland and what it means – then and now – to be Scottish. Full of Billy's distinctive humour, *Made in Scotland* is a hilarious and heartfelt love letter to the place and the people that made him.

confederacy of dunces: *The Last One* Fatima Daas, 2021-11-23 “Fatima Daas carves out a portrait, like a patient, attentive sculptor...or like a mine searcher, aware that each word could make everything explode.” —Virginie Despentes Drawn from the author’s experiences growing up in a Paris banlieue, a powerful, lyric debut that explores the diverse, often conflicting facets of her identity—French, Algerian, Muslim, lesbian. The youngest daughter of Algerian immigrants, Fatima Daas is raised in a home where love and sexuality are considered taboo, and signs of affection avoided. Living in the majority-Muslim suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois, she often spends more than three hours a day on public transportation to and from the city, where she feels like a tourist observing Parisian manners. She goes from unstable student to maladjusted adult, doing four years of therapy—her longest relationship. But as she gains distance from her family and comes into her own, she grapples more directly with her attraction to women and how it fits with her religion, which she continues to practice. When Nina comes into her life, she doesn’t know exactly what she needs but feels that something crucial has been missing. This extraordinary first novel, anchored and buoyed by the refrain “My name is Fatima,” is a vital portrait of a young woman finding herself in a modern world full of contradictions. Daas’s journey to living her sexuality in spite of expectations about who she should be offers a powerful perspective on the queer experience. PEN Translation Prize Finalist Bustle: Best Book of the Month Library Journal: Best Debut Novel of the Season Lambda Literary: Most Anticipated Book of the Month

confederacy of dunces: *Mating* Norman Rush, 1992-09-01 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER • Is love between equals possible? This modern classic is a delightful intellectual love story that explores the deepest canyons of romantic love even as it asks large questions about society, geopolitics, and the mystery of what men and women really want. “Luminous...Few books evoke the state of love at its apogee.” —The New York Times Book Review “The best rendering of erotic politics...since D.H. Lawrence...The voice of Rush’s narrator is immediate, instructive and endearing.” —The New York Review of Books The narrator of this splendidly expansive novel of high intellect and grand passion is an American anthropologist at loose ends in the South African republic of Botswana. She has a noble and exacting mind, a compelling waist, and a busted thesis project. She also has a yen for Nelson Denoon, a charismatic intellectual who is rumored to have founded a secretive and unorthodox utopian society in a remote corner of the Kalahari—one in which he is virtually the only man. What ensues is an exhilarating quest and an exuberant comedy of manners: “A dryly comic love story about grown-up people who take the life of the mind seriously.” —Newsweek

confederacy of dunces: *Antkind* Charlie Kaufman, 2021-07-06 The bold and boundlessly original debut novel from the Oscar®-winning screenwriter of *Being John Malkovich*, *Adaptation*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, and *Synecdoche, New York*. LONGLISTED FOR THE CENTER FOR FICTION FIRST NOVEL PRIZE • “A dyspeptic satire that owes much to Kurt Vonnegut and Thomas Pynchon . . . propelled by Kaufman’s deep imagination, considerable writing ability and bull’s-eye wit.—The Washington Post “An astonishing creation . . . riotously funny . . . an exceptionally good [book].”—The New York Times Book Review • “Kaufman is a master of language . . . a sight to behold.”—NPR NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY NPR AND MEN’S HEALTH B. Rosenberger Rosenberg, neurotic and underappreciated film critic (failed academic, filmmaker, paramour, shoe salesman who sleeps in a sock drawer), stumbles upon a hitherto unseen

film made by an enigmatic outsider—a film he’s convinced will change his career trajectory and rock the world of cinema to its core. His hands on what is possibly the greatest movie ever made—a three-month-long stop-motion masterpiece that took its reclusive auteur ninety years to complete—B. knows that it is his mission to show it to the rest of humanity. The only problem: The film is destroyed, leaving him the sole witness to its inadvertently ephemeral genius. All that’s left of this work of art is a single frame from which B. must somehow attempt to recall the film that just might be the last great hope of civilization. Thus begins a mind-boggling journey through the hilarious nightmarescape of a psyche as lushly Kafkaesque as it is atrophied by the relentless spew of Twitter. Desperate to impose order on an increasingly nonsensical existence, trapped in a self-imposed prison of aspirational victimhood and degeneratively inclusive language, B. scrambles to re-create the lost masterwork while attempting to keep pace with an ever-fracturing culture of “likes” and arbitrary denunciations that are simultaneously his *bête noire* and his *raison d’être*. A searing indictment of the modern world, *Antkind* is a richly layered meditation on art, time, memory, identity, comedy, and the very nature of existence itself—the grain of truth at the heart of every joke.

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