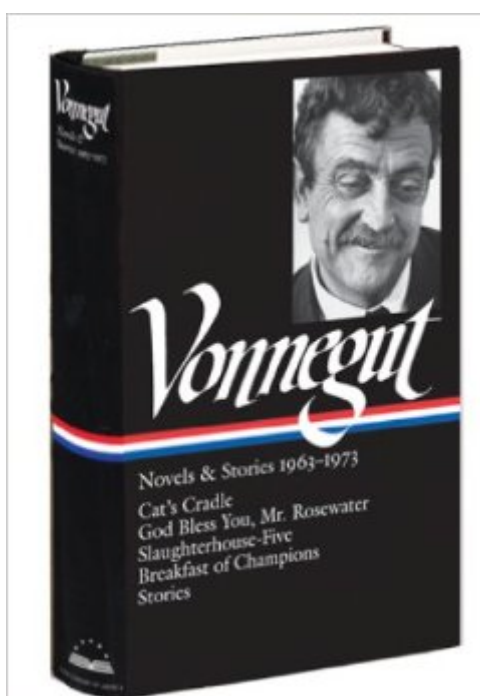


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**Kurt Vonnegut: Novels & Stories
1963-1973: Cat's Cradle / God Bless
You, Mr. Rosewater /
Slaughterhouse-Five / Breakfast Of
Champions / Stories (Library Of
America, No. 216)**



Synopsis

Like Mark Twain, Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) was a Midwestern everyman steeped in the rhythms of American speech whose anger at the way things are was matched only by his love for the best that we can be. His cunningly relaxed delivery was so original, so finely calibrated, and so profound an articulation of the Sixties' spirit that many critics overlooked the moral seriousness behind the standup-comic craftsmanship. Capturing Vonnegut in pyrotechnic mid-career, this first volume of a projected three-volume edition gathers four of his most acclaimed novels. *Cat's Cradle* (1963) is a comedy of the end of the world (it ends with ice). *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965) is the tale of a so-called fool, his money, and the lawyer who contrives to part them (it ends with fire).

Slaughterhouse-Five (1969), Vonnegut's breakout book and one of the iconic masterpieces of twentieth-century American literature, is the tale of Billy Pilgrim, who, being unstuck in time, is doomed to continually relive both the firebombing of Dresden and his abduction by space aliens. And, in a text enhanced by the author's spirited line drawings, *Breakfast of Champions* (1973) describes the fateful meeting of "two lonesome, skinny, fairly old white men," one of whom disastrously believes that everyone else is a robot. The volume is rounded out with three brilliant short stories and revealing autobiographical accounts of the bombing of Dresden.

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Customer Reviews

Ever since I lost my collection of Vonnegut books to water damage some years ago, I've been looking for a nice omnibus edition of his novels. Well, the Library of America (LOA) has now come out with a collection of his work beginning with "Cat's Cradle" and ending with "Breakfast of

Champions." In between those two, we also get "God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater" and his masterpiece "Slaughterhouse Five", along with a few short stories and some assorted minutiae. My problem with this edition is that, while it's nice to have these titles together, I question why the LOA didn't put his first three novels - "Player's Piano", "Sirens of Titan", and "Mother Night," in this collection first and save Slaughterhouse and Breakfast for a later collection (UPDATE: the LOA is planning on releasing a larger second volume of Vonnegut sometime in the near future with his first three novels and even more goodies). I was also hoping for more short stories instead of letters and speeches. Save the letters and speeches for a separate volume that you could devote to his essays (of which he wrote plenty). While this introductory volume from LOA is not a total letdown, it could've been much better!**UPDATE AS OF 6/20/2011: Having been taken to task in the Comments section for my supposedly "uninformed" comments, I now revise my review. While I still feel the same way as I did in the earlier review, I will say that this is still a book worth buying - especially if you want a nice hardcover collection of Vonnegut's material as opposed to buying the various soft cover editions. The ancillary material at the back of the book really does compliment the stories and the illustrations for "Breakfast of Champions"(done by Vonnegut himself) are reproduced with great clarity.

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