

A stupid book for brainy people.

SCHRÖDINGER'S CATERPILLAR



ZANE STUMPO

"This just has to be the funniest book I've read in a long time ...
... and I've read lots of seriously funny books.
Simply brilliant."

Schrodingers Caterpillar

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Schrodingers Caterpillar Zane Stumpo

Graham Paint is a downsizing consultant, and sick of it. One morning he misses his bus when he stops to put a strange caterpillar in a matchbox. As the bus passes he's shocked to spot himself inside. Like Schrödinger's Cat in the famous quantum thought experiment, the caterpillar's spawned parallel possibilities. This comic novel explores Graham's search for a better life among the various overlapping alternatives.

Another clone, Grim Dupeint, is a loathsome international arms dealer. Graham infiltrates Grim's corporation, then embezzles cash for charity. When a furious Grim realises, Graham must act fast. And right now he's acting like fish food.

Graham launches upon a new lifestyle (and sex life) as he dons the designer suits of power. But sinister figures soon see through Graham's clothing.

Now Graham's under attack from the corporation, the police, his ex-wife's private detective, and an infuriatingly pompous water-colourist who Graham might have been if he'd gone to art college rather than business school. To survive (and steal the artist's wonderful woman) Graham needs to find hidden resources.

By definition Dopplegraham's equally resourceful.

Bugger...

Schrödinger's Caterpillar - a stupid book for brainy people!

Schrodingers Caterpillar Details

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From Reader Review Schrodingers Caterpillar for online ebook

Darth says

3.5 stars

Really enjoyed reading this interesting book. Haven't read anything like it before. Full of puns. Surprised me quite a few times. Graphic sex scenes. Funny read. Looking forward to Einstein's Wormhole.

DavidO says

The premise of this book is 5 star material: by making a decision 2 alternate realities are created. Because of a caterpillar the 2 realities existed atop one another in the same universe, at least for one character. There's lots of room there for interesting plots and conundrums.

So why not 5 stars? The main character is a bit of a jerk, who thinks only of himself. The plot, despite all the potential things that could happen, didn't really go anywhere and stalls between for the middle of the book. Finally the humor wasn't my cup of tea. I'm sure others will like it, but it did little for me.

David Lindsay says

My kind of book, this: simply a funny story. There's a lot of ingenuity and creativity going on. For example, the author brings the reader into the story by talking directly to them. This didn't work that well for me at first, but as the story progressed it became a more natural part of the reading experience. And the extra chapter in the middle (the one we're warned to disregard and probably best not to bother reading anyway) really tickled me. An enjoyable read - I'll try another ...

Emily says

For being billed "a stupid book for brainy people," the author tried soooo hard to make this hilariously funny. The irony is that, without that insidious begging for laughs, this is a quite funny book. It's those constant forth-wall-breaking asides like "don't try it again. I mean it. Really" and starting a chapter over again because he got distracted (several times) that kill it. That sort of comedy, while fantastic when done right, has to be done delicately and masterfully, and this novel approaches it with all the grace and dexterity of a team of toddlers driving a garbage truck. Edit all that "look at me! look at me!" horror out and this would hit four stars or above from me as a reasonably brainy and yet irreverent romp with laugh-out-loud moments. As is, however, the audible sighs and groans far outnumber the laughs. Side note-- the reviews on Amazon for this book are really quite the polar opposite of those here on GoodReads. One can only imagine the caterpillar is to blame.

Corey says

When Stumpo allows the narrative to take the front seat, Schrodinger's Caterpillar is a remarkable work. Graham's quest to discover his knack for success by examining various potential versions of himself is well-written, funny, and told with reckless abandon. The ending wraps up the narrative tightly -- which is perhaps the greatest compliment I can ever give a novel, as it's something I rarely feel I get to say.

Unfortunately, the narrative is not always the driving force, occasionally taking a backseat to the author's rambling whims. Puns turn to puns about puns turn to treatises on the value of punnery, an entire chapter leads with a plea to be ignored and descends into absurdity, and the occasional joke gets overplayed to the point where it makes the reader cringe.

It's the difference between Vonnegut inspired by Joseph Heller in the voice of Douglas Adams which makes most of the book work so well, and an author trying too hard (and failing) to imitate the same effect, which knocks this review down a star. But the story is five-star good, even if there are hiccups in the telling. Stumpo has a voice of his own, and when he allows it to drive he's an automatic page-turner.

Manoj says

Enjoyable and quick read. Brought a few grins and chuckles. 1 star penalty for 'going overboard' describing the luxuries of a boat.

James Love says

a wonderfully strange writing style mixed with humour
A very good book but not for the light hearted
a whimsical look at reality and what happens IF

Recommended for everyone

Susan Pauls says

Zane is zany, I'll grant you that. I suspect that ADD, and a near-fatal whack over the head from the Extreme Creativity Fairy, are primarily responsible for this book. Parts are hilarious. The plot is brilliantly conceived, but the disruptive continual breaking of the 4th wall and the underdevelopment of its lungs strand this baby in the neonatal care unit for longer than it might have been had better editing nursed it through. The sex, though perhaps overly abundant, is cartoonish in a Guy Noir Private Eye, cardboard cutout sort of way, preventing it from being too over-titillating. Somehow, I found this to be to the author's credit.

Since our family cat is actually named Schrodinger, I just had to open up this novel to see whether what it contained was alive or dead. Shoot--did I just spawn another alternate universe?

Adam Oster says

Schrödinger's Caterpillar starts out feeling a lot like a bad Douglas Adams rip-off. I'll admit that in the early pages, I quickly found this to be an unhappy thought, that this author was really just trying to take Adams' style of going off on random tangents about subjects that may or may not matter at all to the actual story.

But as I read on, I realized I couldn't be farther from the truth.

Stumpo's style here is incredible. Mixing fact with fiction, melding the two to a point where one might get confused about which parts of the science-y bits are actually based on truth and which parts aren't.

But...none of that is all that important anyways, because the true beauty here is the actual tale of Graham Paint, a seemingly witless man who finds himself basically capable of choosing which life, out of his possible lives he could have made it to, he'd prefer to end up in. Or...just try one on for a while. Or just, you know, screw around with the lives of his alternative selves.

But...even that's not important, because all of this comes down to just one incredibly zany adventure where you really don't know what's going to happen next because the narrator himself can just pick and choose which universe he might decide things reside in next.

There are many times throughout the course of the book where it seems like it's about to go down some rather predictable sci-fi roads...only to have the entire thing turned on its head and totally new aspects of the story come to light.

Needless to say, I greatly enjoyed this read, and although I'm not sure the story leaves much room for a sequel, I'll be quite interested to see what Stumpo does with it.

Michael says

Not as funny as he thinks he is.

Cynthia T Cannon says

Funny, and I needed a laugh.

This is funniest that multiple universes have ever seemed to me. Too hilarious a way of approaching the problems that would have to exist.

Olof says

This is one of the best books I've had the luxury to read in a while. I laughed, I wondered, I theorized. I can't

recommend this book enough

John Bayliss says

What's the corniest joke you've ever heard, or the very, very worst pun?

Is that it?

Excuse me for not getting too excited, because I can guarantee that you will find a cornier, more groan-worthy joke somewhere within the pages of Schrodinger's Caterpillar. No, really you will. If you don't believe me then just buy the blinking book and take a look for yourself.

Schrodinger's Caterpillar is the broadest of broad farces (and I mean that in a positive way), a satire of twenty first century business, the international arms trade, and... well, Quantum Physics, too. (Whoever groaned just then, please stop at once: Quantum Physics is interesting.) The hero (or should that be anti-hero) Graham (sometimes called Grey) Paint finds a curious caterpillar and puts it in a matchbox. Then he makes the mistake of opening the box and mayhem ensues.

(Incidentally, what would happen if a Hero meets an Anti-Hero? Would they annihilate one another in a puff of metafictional irony?)

This story is, of course, totally unbelievable (and I mean that as a plus, too) rather like Quantum Physics is unbelievable. In fact, your disbelief will not be so much suspended as trussed up like the client of a Soho bondage club and hung by its ankles from the rafters. However, just like Quantum Physics doesn't make one iota of sense but is totally true, this book has a sensible question at the heart of it -- what actually makes us the person we are? Is it our genetics, our upbringing, or those many tiny little decisions we make throughout our lives, the ones that seem to have so little significance at the time but are capable of changing the universe?

Oh, and did I mention it has some really bad puns in it? And I mean really bad.

Jess Harpur says

Do Not Read This Review

So you've ignored my instruction not to read this, which probably marks you out as a rebellious type, or at least a person with a healthy disregard for assumed authority. Or not. Zane Stumpo strikes me as a person (possibly imaginary) with a healthy disregard for conventional wisdom (aka 'the rules') for writing novels, with an 'in for a penny, in for a pound' approach to breaking them. And he does it consistently well, with total disregard to the 'fourth wall', which he demolishes with gusto.

The style is definitely unconventional, but the content, the story, has all the qualities which keep you wanting to turn the page, and gives you that feeling of vague sadness when it comes to an end. Not because it's tragic (that's optional), but because it means there are no more pages to turn. All in all, the best book I've read for a while.

So why only four stars? Does anybody really believe a 5-star review? Don't 5-star reviews always make you think they are probably written by the author's mother, or his friend from the pub? Don't they suggest a smidgen of fawning sycophancy? No? Oh, alright. You've convinced me. In the immortal words of Janice Nicholls, "I'll give it five."

Ken says

What about the cat?

And what if the cat was a bug? This is a choose-your-own-adventure chosen for you. With puns! Adventure well-chosen, I add. Except at the end, where you're finally allowed to play along. Although by then, things are pretty much preordained.

Writin's good, with a fun Cockney accent. (Or whatever. Not so good at accents.) Story seems inventive enough. Oh, who am I kidding (or kissing, had spell check had its way?)?? The story was a blast. Fave bit was the good guy almost being clocked on the noggin by Methuselah. Favorite part was the whole "I DO have it in me" idea, that there for the grace of Bug go I. Alternative titling might have involved Stanley Milgram. Shockingly, of course. And it's about time someone made an operations research analyst, albeit flawed, is the star.

And there are puns. Rafts of riffs of puns. Entire transgressions made of puns. Relationships existing on and because of puns. Good puns, bad puns, everywhere a pun pun! Title to endnote, puns. Smh so many times mh is bleeding.

Read it. Don't say I didn't warn you.
