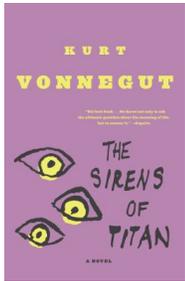


# Books by the Stack



## **The Sirens of Titan by Kurt Vonnegut**

The Sirens of Titan is an outrageous romp through space, time, and morality. The richest, most depraved man on Earth, Malachi Constant, is offered a chance to take a space journey to distant worlds with a beautiful woman at his side. Of course there's a catch to the invitation—and a prophetic vision about the purpose of human life that only Vonnegut has the courage to tell.

**Why you'll like it:** *Science fiction classic. Darkly humorous. Unconventional.*

**About the Author:** Kurt Vonnegut is among the few grandmasters of 20th century American letters. He was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on November 11, 1922. He died from head injuries sustained in a fall on April 11, 2007. (Publisher Provided)

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. Would you consider this Science Fiction? How would you classify it?
2. How did you like his writing style...the simple sentences, the repetitious phrases...
3. Did you find humor in this book? Did it help make the book easier to understand?
4. What did this book reveal about the author? Do you think this was a peek at his philosophy of the world? Of religion? Was he an optimist? Pessimist?
5. Does this feel "timeless" to you...even though it was written in 1959?
6. Was there a "hero" or a "villain" in this story? Who was most sympathetic to you? Who drove you the craziest as a character?
7. What did you think of his treatment of women in the story? The few that there were! Do you think it was typical of the time it was written? Could he have been more sensitive of the rape scene in which Chronos was conceived?
8. Did you get a sense of how he viewed scientific progress?
9. What did you think when it was revealed that human's history was manipulated by the Tralfamadorians to send a message? What do you think Vonnegut was saying with that? Do you think we as humans have a say in where we are going? Can we control our own destiny?
10. Would you agree that Rumfoord held power over humanity? Or was it just something that would have happened anyways? Did he seem to enjoy that power, false though it may be?
11. What was your reaction to the revelation that Rumfoord was being used by the Tralfamadorians much like he was using Malachi Constant? Do you think the Tralfamadorians were used by someone else?

- 12.** What was the role of the Sirens of Titan?
- 13.** What was the point of Salo's (the Tralfamadorian) mission? Was there a point?
- 14.** What did you think of the rules of the church that Rumfoord established? That God really doesn't care what happens to you? That no one should be "luckier" than anyone else? If you lived under those rules, what would you have to handicap? How would you do it?
- 15.** What was your reaction to the kidnapping of all those people to become Martians? Can you see some of that lock-step behavior in our time, even without those antennas stuck in our head?
- 16.** Would you want to live in the world Rumfoord created? There was no war, but what did it lose to gain that peace? Was it worth the death of all those "Martians"?
- 17.** How would you relate that war with what we read in Hiroshima? Is there a time when it is worthwhile to sacrifice human life for a greater good?
- 18.** Would you agree with Constant that we are all "victims of a series of accidents"?
- 19.** Do you think he was asking "what is the purpose of life" in this book? Did you get an answer?
- 20.** What did you think of Chance? Why wasn't he happy with all of his wealth, before he became entangled in Rumfoord's plans?
- 21.** Why did he create Beatrice as a woman in white, with a great fear of getting dirty?
- 22.** What was Boaz's role in the story? What was his act of redemption?
- 23.** Were there any healthy relationships in this book – especially between parent and child?
- 24.** Explain, if you can, why Chronos chose to stay on Titan and live with the birds!
- 25.** From what you've read in this book, what do you think he thought of our use of technology and science? What do YOU think of our use of it?
- 26.** What did you take away from this book? Would you recommend it to someone else? Did it make you want to read more by Vonnegut?

*(Questions provided by the Southfield Public Library)*



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