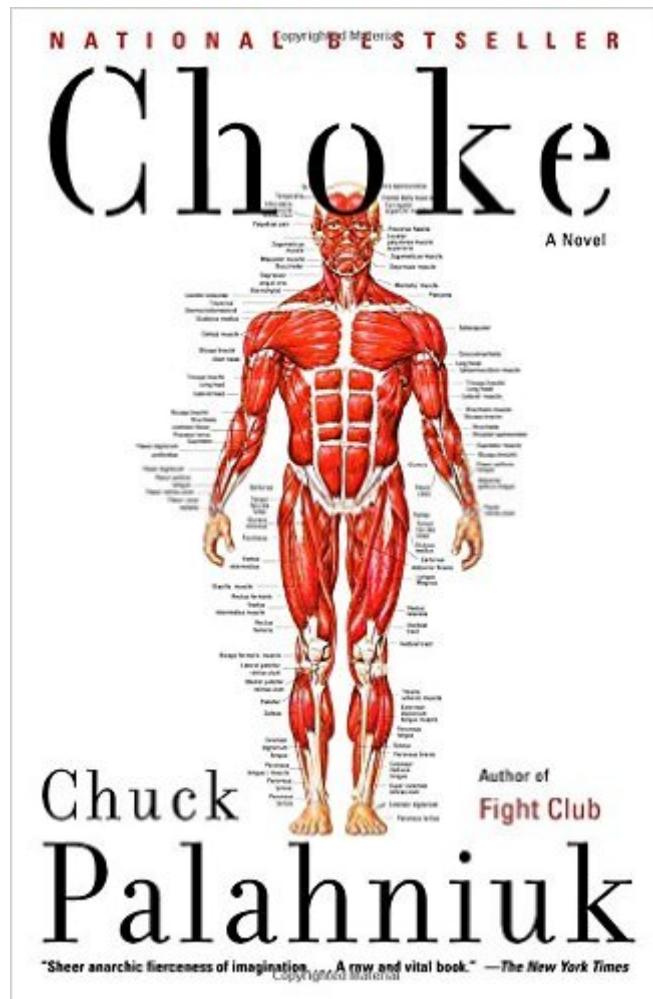


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Choke



Synopsis

Victor Mancini, a medical-school dropout, is an antihero for our deranged times. Needing to pay elder care for his mother, Victor has devised an ingenious scam: he pretends to choke on pieces of food while dining in upscale restaurants. He then allows himself to be "saved" by fellow patrons who, feeling responsible for Victor's life, go on to send checks to support him. When he's not pulling this stunt, Victor cruises sexual addiction recovery workshops for action, visits his addled mom, and spends his days working at a colonial theme park. His creator, Chuck Palahniuk, is the visionary we need and the satirist we deserve.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Anchor (June 11, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385720920

ISBN-13: 978-0307388926

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 7.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 782 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #50,321 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #74 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Humor & Satire > Dark Humor #107 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Self-Help & Psychology #948 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Psychological Thrillers

Customer Reviews

Victor Mancini is a ruthless con artist. Victor Mancini is a med-school dropout who's taken a job playing an Irish indentured servant in a colonial-era theme park in order to help care for his Alzheimer's-afflicted mother. Victor Mancini is a sex addict. Victor Mancini is a direct descendant of Jesus Christ. All of these statements about the protagonist of *Choke* are more or less true.

Welcome, once again, to the world of Chuck Palahniuk. "Art never comes from happiness." So says Mancini's mother only a few pages into the novel. Given her own dicey and melodramatic style of parenting, you would think that her son's life would be chock-full of nothing but art. Alas, that's not the case. In the fine tradition of Oedipus, Stephen Dedalus, and Anthony Soprano, Victor hasn't quite reconciled his issues with his mother. Instead, he's trawling sexual-addiction recovery meetings for dates and purposely choking in restaurants for a few moments of attention. Longing for

a hug, in other words, he's settling for the Heimlich. Thematically, this is pretty familiar Palahniuk territory. It would be a pity to disclose the surprises of the plot, but suffice it to say that what we have here is a little bit of Tom Robbins's *Another Roadside Attraction*, a little bit of Don DeLillo's *The Day Room*, and, well, a little bit of *Fight Club*. Just as with *Fight Club* and the other two novels under Palahniuk's belt, we get a smattering of gloriously unflinching sound bites, including this skeptical bit on prayer chains: "A spiritual pyramid scheme. As if you can gang up on God. Bully him around." Whether this is the novel that will break Palahniuk into the mainstream is hard to say. For a fourth book, in fact, the ratio of iffy, "dude"-intensive dialogue to interesting and insightful passages is a little higher than we might wish. In the end, though, the author's nerve and daring pull the whole thing off--just barely. And what's next for Victor Mancini's creator? Leave the last word to him, declaring as he does in the final pages: "Maybe it's our job to invent something better.... What it's going to be, I don't know." --Bob Michaels --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

While it's always interesting to hear authors read their own work, this production is not likely to prompt a narrating career for Palahniuk (*Fight Club*) on par with his literary accomplishments. That's not to say, however, that his style doesn't work with this offbeat story of a sex-addicted medical school dropout whose gift is pretending to choke in restaurants and reaping the sympathy checks of the people who "save" him in order to pay for the care of his sick mother. Palahniuk reads with a husky, occasionally whiny voice that's rushed and intense. At times it seems like he's not reading at all, but reciting the novel from memory as he paces the floor with a cup of coffee in one hand and the fingers of the other pressed to his forehead while a cigarette smolders away in the ashtray. He brings a unique sensibility and opts for inflections that other narrators probably would not. After the book implores listeners to turn away and go no further in Chapter 1, for instance, Palahniuk reads the words "Chapter 2" in a tone of voice that says, "OK, you asked for it." That's a fitting sentiment for those who choose to listen, as this bizarre story is by turns hilarious and depressing, read in an idiosyncratic manner by an idiosyncratic author. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'm not an avid reader. At all. I'm one of the guys who saw a movie and wanted to pick up the book to compare and be able to finally tell people "Yeah, the book is bla bla bla compared to the movie." Maybe this will give me a point in credibility to my hipster friends. I must say that I'm glad to have picked this title up. The movie isn't for everybody. The book isn't for everybody. This is because the

story isn't for everybody. If you are like me and enjoy dark humor with a psychological twist and are not easily offended then this story is for you. For more detail about what this story is actually about then read the review or one of the many other reviews. To get to the book specifically (while catering to those who are like me and admittedly do not read often), I will say this was a great casual read. It was fun flipping through the pages with the movie in mind and comparing mental notes about accuracy and placement of the story. Since I was going into this book with very little care to the translation from book to film I wasn't disappointed. In fact I felt it was a great supplement to the movie. Yes, some characters aren't portrayed exactly alike. No, the ending isn't the same, it's quite different. But what a great ride it was. Plus, for a casual reader such as myself the fact that the 304 page book is broken up into many chapters averaging 4 to 7 pages, makes it a great "pick up, put down" or "toilet read." This book sparks my interest enough to actually start reading more books, and of course starting with another title by Chuck. Maybe Fight Club, but I would like to read another title that isn't accompanied by a movie. I'm curious to see what goes through my mind without the mental images a film director and actors already fed me. Pick it up. You'll know if you like it just by clicking the "look inside" option anyway.

Those of you who enjoy Palahniuk's early work will enjoy this as well. Using the same minimalist style, Palahniuk dives into the odd world of a sex addict. There's no doubt this story will maintain your interest. It's funny, disgusting, and touching all at the same time. A common complaint of Palahniuk's work is the similarities of the narrators in his stories. Though I am a huge fan of his work and would normally defend his work, I must say that Victor Mancini reminded me of lead characters in past Palahniuk novels. However, this is not a bad thing if you have enjoyed Chuck's older novels. Overall, it is a very good book. I would definitely recommend this book to Palahniuk fans and readers wanting some excitement.

This book is good. Not amazing but good. You can tell Chuck is a very skilled prose stylist and I love his choice of 1st person narrative for this piece. It works on every level. I also like the language. The author definitely has a way with words. However, the title and premise are misleading. This is not a story of a guy who chokes on food to make a living. This is the story of a very, very disturbed person with more issues and defects that I can count who happens to choke on food to make a living. I expected this to be the A plot when it was really more of the Z plot. I kind of felt like it was a bait and switch.

I feel the need to add in the same warning I saw on another review - THIS IS NOT A BOOK FOR CHILDREN! IT'S ALSO NOT FOR SOMEONE WITH A WEAK STOMACH OR SOMEONE WHO GETS OFFENDED EASILY! I recently finished reading the novel Choke by author Chuck Palahniuk. If you're not familiar with his name, you're definitely familiar with some of his work - this is the man who wrote Fight Club and countless other novels. Someone at work recommended him for something to read that was interesting and "out there" so I decided to download some of his stuff to my Kindle and give it a shot. Choke is definitely an interesting concept. The main character, a drop-out medical student named Victor Mancini, is a sex addict working as an Irish indentured servant in a colonial reenactment town. His mother, Ida, is in a nursing facility; she is addled with dementia after years and years of drug abuse. His upbringing was definitely NOT your traditional childhood, and, as a result, his view on society is very skewed. How skewed? He goes to expensive restaurants and makes himself choke on his food. Why? So some unknowing stranger will be forced to perform the Heimlich maneuver to save him. His idea is, after saving his life, the stranger feels protective of him and wants to make sure he's okay for the rest of his life. Like I said, the concept of the book itself is very interesting but very weird. You are invited into Victor's world through the glimpses he gives of his normal activities. With his days spent supposedly giving historically-accurate reenactments to school children and tourists; and visiting his mother at St. Anthony's, where he meets an intriguing young woman named Paige Marshall, you get glimpses of how twisted this man's view of the world is. His nights are consumed with finding as many sexual conquests as he can - normally at Sex Addicts' meeting. While the concept was interesting, the writing itself was very confusing and slow in my opinion. I can normally read a novel in less than an evening, and I kept finding myself unable to keep up with this one. I kept putting it down for days at a time but always returning to it, determined to get through it. The dialog in parts was very contrived and did not flow well for me. Palaniuk does know how to flesh out his characters though. By the time the book ends, he has given birth to a tragically wounded, confused young man who you come to realize is only looking for a place to belong. Through the glimpses of Ida given as Victor remembers his childhood, you start to get to know this outrageously vivacious drug addict with very strange views on the world; and she tries to impart these views on her son. And while seeming just a minor character in the Mancini universe at first, Victor's best friend Denny is a well-matched complement to Victor's refusal to combat his vices and addictions. All in all, I'd have to give this book a 2.5. It's not something I'll probably read again, but it was worth a read once. It seems to have enough of a following that, like Fight Club, the book has been turned into a movie (starring Sam Rockwell as Victor Mancini.)

I don't even quite know to describe this. Unpredictable, crazy outlier characters. Gotta love it.

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Choke Winner Take All (Previously published as Rain Storm and Choke Point) (A John Rain Novel Book 3) Triangle Choke (The Dojo)

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