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# Bonilla y Asociados

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**Sinopsis**

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Written by the late Toole at age 16, this novel on its surface has little in common with his Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Whereas *Dunces* is, in Walker Percy's words, "a great rumbling farce of Falstaffian dimensions" satirizing modern society via a cast of grotesque New Orleans characters, the early novel is a lyrical attempt at realism in which social criticism is implied but not stated. Growing up in a small town in rural Mississippi, David gradually learns the painful lessons of religious, racial, social and sexual bigotry, and comes to perceive the need to defend himself, a reluctant outsider, from people; in *Dunces*, Ignatius Reilly, who rallies around the cause of social isolation and misanthropy, has long practiced a vigorous campaign against the evils of society. One novel chronicles an awakening, the other an uproarious and bizarre plan of action. Though interesting to read as a naive effort by a writer who later far surpassed it, *The Neon Bible* is a compendium of authorial first steps and missteps, from awkwardly obvious moralizing to mawkishness and improbable melodrama.

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. *The Neon Bible* tells the story of David, a young boy growing up in a small Southern town in the 1940s. David's voice is perfectly calibrated, disarmingly funny, sad, shrewd, gathering force from page to page with an emotional directness that never lapses into sentimentality. Through it we share his awkward, painful, universally recognizable encounter with first love, we participate in boy evangelist Bobbie Lee Taylor's revival, we meet the pious, bigoted townspeople. From the opening lines of *The Neon Bible*, David is fully alive, naive yet sharply observant, drawing us into his world through the sure artistry of John Kennedy Toole.

The first novel by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Confederacy Of Dunces*. David is a young boy growing up in a small Southern town in the 1940s. From his porch, David can see the

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whole valley, including the neon Bible that lights up the sky, emblem of the God-fearing folk who snub his family because Poppa can't afford the church dues.