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# The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil

By George Saunders



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**The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil** By George Saunders

**From the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* and the story collection *Tenth of December*, a 2013 National Book Award Finalist for Fiction.**

In a profoundly strange country called Inner Horner, large enough for only one resident at a time, citizens waiting to enter the country fall under the rule of the power-hungry and tyrannical Phil, setting off a chain of injustice and mass hysteria.

An *Animal Farm* for the 21st century, this is an incendiary political satire of unprecedented imagination, spiky humor, and cautionary appreciation for the hysteric in everyone. Over six years in the writing, and brilliantly and beautifully packaged, this novella is Saunders' first stand-alone, book-length work—and his first book for adults in five years.



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## The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil By George Saunders Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

### Book Description

Welcome to Inner Horner, a nation so small it can only accommodate one citizen at a time. The other six citizens must wait their turns in the Short-Term Residency Zone of the surrounding country of Outer Horner. It's a long-standing arrangement between the fantastical, not-exactly-human citizens of the two countries. But when Inner Horner suddenly shrinks, forcing three-quarters of the citizen then in residence over the border into Outer Horner territory, the Outer Hornerites declare an Invasion In Progress--having fallen under the spell of the power-hungry and demagogic Phil.

So begins *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*. Fueled by Saunders's unrivaled wit, outlandish imagination, and incisive political sensibility, here is a deeply strange yet strangely familiar fable of power and impotence, justice and injustice--an *Animal Farm* for our times.

### Praise for George Saunders

Author of *Pastoralia* and *Civilwarland in Bad Decline*

"An astoundingly tuned voice--graceful, dark, authentic, and funny--telling just the kinds of stories we need to get us through these times."

--Thomas Pynchon

"Mr. Saunders writes like the illegitimate offspring of Nathanael West and Kurt Vonnegut. [His] satiric vision of America is dark and demented; it is also ferocious and very funny."

--Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

"A master of distilling the disorders of our time into fiction."

--Salon.com

### Amazon.com Exclusive



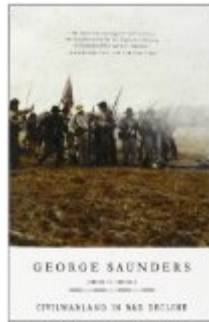
Want to know the story behind the story of award-winning author George Saunders's new novella, *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*? Then read "Why I Wrote *Phil*," an exclusive essay from Saunders concerning the genesis of his new work, which has been praised as possessing "an absurdist wit as playful as Monty Python's and a vision as dark as Samuel Beckett's."

Read George Saunders's Essay, "Why I Wrote *Phil*"

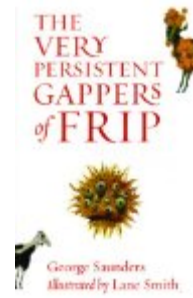
### More from George Saunders



*Pastoralia*



*CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*



*The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip*

From Publishers Weekly

The shift of target to Iraq War-era America proves problematic for major 1990s satirist Saunders (*Pastoralia*), who here checks in with an allegorical novella centered on the tiny imaginary nations of Inner and Outer Horner. The citizens of Inner Horner, live-and-let-livers who have a lot of unproductive discussions, are countable on two hands, and they are not-quite-human: one man's torso is simply a tuna fish can and a belt. (There are 15 b&w illustrations scattered throughout.) When their nation suddenly shrinks, the group spills into Outer Horner, and a border dispute results. It paves the way for the rise of an everyman Outer Horner dictator named Phil—a jingoistic, brute-force bully. The eventual fortuitous military intervention by Greater Keller, a neighboring technocapitalist nation of latte drinkers, comes after much lingering over the mechanics of Phil's coup. (There are multiple references to the "spasming rack" from which Phil's brain periodically slides.) Despite press-chat comparisons to *Animal Farm*, the book lacks Orwell's willingness to follow his nightmare vision all the way out to the end. Saunders delivers some very funny exchanges and imaginative set-pieces, but literally has to call in a deus ex machina to effect Outer Horner's final undoing. It's entertaining, but politics and war don't really work that way, allegorically or otherwise. (*Sept. 20*)

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## Review

Praise for George Saunders:

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"Mr. Saunders writes like the illegitimate offspring of Nathanael West and Kurt Vonnegut. His satiric vision of America is dark and demented; it is also ferocious and very funny."—Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

"A master of distilling the disorders of our time into fiction."—Salon.com

## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Daniel Soderquist:**

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Frightening Reign of Phil? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have other opinion?

**Jetta Butler:**

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