



*Poison for Breakfast* by Lemony Snicket  
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'This morning, I had poison for breakfast.'

When I first read this book, I had only just realised Snicket had also made the extremely popular book and Netflix series, 'A Series of Unfortunate Events'. It is how most people have heard of him, as when you type in 'all books Lemony Snicket has made' into Google, *Poison for Breakfast* doesn't even show up. In fact, it is barely even referred to on his Wikipedia – having one sentence about the publishing date.

While I am a fan of his most popular series, this book deserves much more recognition than it has. His style of writing evokes a sense of mystery that gives the feeling that even he does not know what is going on throughout the book. While having the basic premise of a character going on a journey to solve a problem, it dives deep into philosophical ideas and references from all different corners of literature. As it is based on a true story, all references he makes are from different segments of his life and are described at the very end of the book in the notes.

One reference that stuck out to me the most was the metaphor that describes the sea as 'all a case of knives' from a poem by Elizabeth Bishop. He himself says he never had forgotten that quote, wondering why he had never thought of it himself. These quotes roll into the story so smoothly that they add to descriptions and the storyline he crafts, painting beautiful pictures with his words throughout the book. A lot of them are also part of the bigger picture later in the story. For example, he refers to another poem called 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes in Chapter 1 and it is still being mentioned and adding to the storyline much later into the book.

Despite what is suggested in the blurb, Snicket focuses much more on wordplay and his picturesque descriptions than 'unravelling the riddle of his demise', like it says on the back. If you are looking for a fast-paced murder mystery novel, this book would not be for you. If you are looking for a book full of words to calm your mind, this book would be great for you. It

contains a lot of interesting discussions about philosophy, death and bewilderment which can let you reflect and have your own thoughts on the matter. He himself says it is not for those who don't enjoy philosophy or reflecting on everyone's inevitable death. It also has Snicket's signature sass and comedic aspects, as well as his description of words used to open episodes in his infamous Netflix series.

As a recipe book for breakfast, I would not recommend. But as a philosophy that makes you learn about literature, discover new metaphors and descriptions, and can make you ponder your own life; I would recommend whole-heartedly.