

APPENDIX I

SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE (1969)

Plot Summary

Billy Pilgrim was born in 1922 and grew up in Ilium, New York. A young man whose portrayal looked cute and weak. Billy enrolls in evening classes at the Ilium School of Optometry and joins the army in World War II. He trained as an assistant chaplain in South Carolina, where a referee presides during combat rehearsals and announces who survives and who dies before they all sit down to lunch together. Billy's father died in a hunting accident just before Billy left overseas to join the fighting in Luxembourg. Billy was thrown into the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and then taken prisoner by German soldiers after escaping the battle. Just before he is caught, he experiences his first flashback: he sees his entire life, from beginning to end, in a flashback.

After his capture, Billy is transported in a train carriage overcrowded with prisoners to a prisoner of war camp in Germany. Once there, he and the other soldiers are treated to a feast by his fellow prisoners, who are British officers captured earlier in the war. Billy has a breakdown and gets an injection of morphine which gives him another flashback. After the detention camp, Billy and the other Americans continue on to the city of Dresden, which has been relatively unaffected by the war. Here prisoners had to work to make ends meet in a wide variety of jobs, including manufacturing nutritional malt syrup. Their camp occupies a former slaughter house. One night, Allied forces bombed the city, then dropped incendiary bombs to create a firestorm that sucked most of the oxygen into the flames, suffocating or burning about 130,000 people. Billy and his fellow prisoners of war survive in the slaughterhouse in an airtight meat locker. They emerge to find a view of the ruined city of Dresden. A few days later, Russian troops captured the city, which was the last time Billy was involved in the war.

The night after his daughter Barbara's 1967 wedding, as Billy revealed on a radio talk show, Billy is kidnapped by two-foot-tall aliens who resemble inverted toilet bowls, whom he calls the Tralfamadorians. According to Billy's story, he is transported into a flying saucer bound for the planet Tralfamadore, where they marry him to a film actress named Montana Wildhack. The Montana Wildhack, as Billy recounts, has been brought from Earth to live under a zoo-like transparent geodesic dome where Tralfamadorians can observe extraterrestrials. The Tralfamadorians explain to Billy about their perception of time, how the entire timeline exists for them simultaneously in the fourth dimension. When a person dies, that person dies at a particular time. Elsewhere and at different times he was alive and well. Tralfamadorians prefer to see the better moments of life.

When he returned to Earth, Billy initially said nothing about his experience. In 1968, he boarded a chartered plane to attend an optometry conference in Montreal with his professional colleagues. The plane crashes into a mountain, and, among the optometrists, only Billy survives. A brain surgeon operated on him at a Vermont hospital. Valencia his wife on his way to visit Billy in the hospital, had an accident and died of carbon monoxide poisoning after crashing his car. Billy's daughter, Barbara, puts Billy under the care of a nurse at her home in Ilium. But Billy felt that it was time for him to tell the world what he had learned. Billy had foreseen this

moment of flashback, and he knew that his message would eventually be received. He sneaked into New York City, where he appeared on a radio talk show. Shortly thereafter, he wrote a letter to the local newspaper. Her daughter is at her wits end and doesn't know what to do with her. Billy made a tape recording of his death, which he predicted would take place in 1976 after Chicago was hydrogen bombed by the Chinese. He knew exactly how it would turn out: a vengeful man he knew, namely Paul Lozaro in war, would hire someone to shoot him. Billy adds that he will experience death and then will return to some other point in his life. He had seen it all many times.

APPENDIX II

Kurt Vonnegut

Biography

Kurt Vonnegut is a writer born in Indianapolis in 1922, descended from a German-American family. His father was an architect. His father spoke German fluently but refused to teach Kurt the language due to widespread anti-German sentiment after World War I. Kurt's well-established family finances helped send two of his siblings to private schools. While in high school, Vonnegut edited the school's daily newspaper. He attended Cornell for about two years, at the behest of his father and brother to study chemistry, a subject he was not good at. He also writes for the Cornell Daily Sun. In 1943 he enlisted in the US Army. In 1944 his mother committed suicide, and Vonnegut was taken prisoner after the Battle of the Bulge, in the Belgian Ardennes Forest.

After the war, Vonnegut married and entered a master's program in anthropology at the University of Chicago. He also worked as a reporter for the Chicago City News Bureau. He left for Schenectady, New York, to take a job in public relations at General Electric's research laboratory. Vonnegut left GE in 1951 to devote himself full time to writing. During the 1950s, Vonnegut published short stories in national magazines. *Player Piano*, was his first novel published in 1952. *Sirens of Titan* was published in 1959, followed by *Mother Night* in 1962, *Cat's Cradle* in 1963, *God Bless You, Mr Rose-water* in 1965, and his most famous work, *Slaughterhouse-Five* published in 1969. Vonnegut continued to write until he died in 2007.

Slaughterhouse-Five presents one of the most gruesome massacres in European history with serious humour and anti-war sentiment. More than 130,000 civilians died in Dresden, a number roughly equal to the deaths from the Allied bombing attack on Tokyo and the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, both also occurring in 1945. The population of Dresden was burned or strangled in an incident of bombing and the burning City of Dresden. Firestorms suck up available oxygen.

The novel is based on Kurt Vonnegut's own experiences in World War II. In the novel, a prisoner of war witnesses and survives the Allied bombing of Dresden. Vonnegut, like protagonist Billy Pilgrim, emerges from the meat locker under the slaughterhouse into a view of Dresden's burning moon. His surviving captors put him to work searching, burying, and burning bodies. His work continued until the Russians arrived and the war ended. Vonnegut survived by chance, being locked up as a prisoner of war in a meat locker, and because of that, he survived the devastating attack, which emerged the day after into the charred ruins of the once picturesque cityscape. Vonnegut has said that he had always intended to write about the experience but found himself unable to do so for more than twenty years. Although he attempted to simply describe what happened and create a linear narrative, this method never worked. Vonnegut wrote *Slaughterhouse-Five* as a refusal to fight a war.