



# SLAUGHTERHOUSE

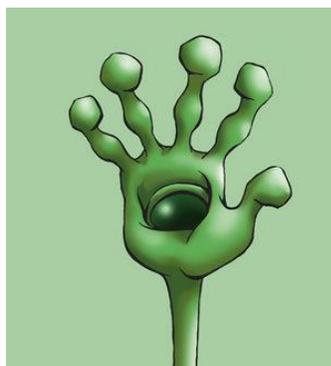
## FIVE



In the book *Slaughterhouse Five*, the main character Billy Pilgrim is a student who ends up getting drafted in the Second World War. When he is shipped overseas to Luxembourg, he is almost immediately seized and taken prisoner. During his time in imprisonment, he is traumatized and is slowly, mentally breaking down. Author Kurt Vonnegut uses this trauma to log Billy's memories in a out of order sequence to signify the intensity of Billy's suffering. All the events happening in Billy's mind are poisoned by the amount of stress he has had to go through. With him briskly surviving the Dresden Firebombing, to him surviving a plane crash, these events are scrambling his brain and making him to remember things in bits and fragments. Also, he has to deal with the mental stress of his father dying and his mother being sent to a mental hospital. This all adds up to thinking he has been captured by aliens. In chapter 2 alone, Billy experiences roughly 30 years of his life, from being born, to having 2 kids. He then goes on to tell how he was abducted by aliens and his daughter threatens to



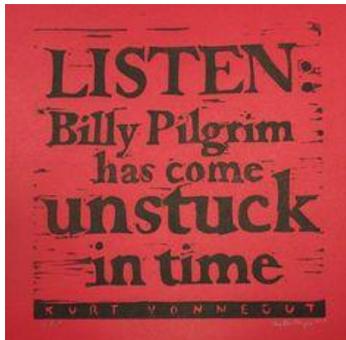
put him in a mental asylum. The way Kurt Vonnegut writes the sequences of the events is parallel to the way Billy is experiencing the memory in his mind. He uses freight-train language to symbolize the way Billy is thinking in fragments. – Written by Alondo



Kurt Vonnegut attempts to distance himself from any possible emotions he could feel about the situation and maintain the books overall informal tone with language that is distant, neutral, and occasionally harsh. On page 182 he discusses Valencia's reaction to finding out her husband Billy was in the hospital. He described her crying over her husband as 'yelping', which is usually defined as being done by a dog, not a woman who was crying over being notified her husband was in the hospital. He also described her as 'babbling' when talking about her husband's death to a stranger, babbling is usually seen as someone rambling nonsensically and not someone mourning over an assumed loss. Then finally, when Valencia dies from carbon monoxide poisoning, he ends the paragraph with 'so it

goes' regarding her death. This is not the only time Vonnegut uses that phrase in regards to someone's

death, it's almost guaranteed after every death Vonnegut would use this phrase. It's impersonal and sharp much like the rest of the book. Vonnegut uses words that are easy to understand and relate to, but in a majority of the text, Vonnegut doesn't allow his feelings about the situation to come through. Occasionally this choice makes the text come off as impersonal and sometimes even cold, but this contributes to the book as a dark comedy. Despite the serious nature of the subject matter being discussed, Kurt's lack of language that invokes sympathy allows people to see the dark humor the book provides. – Written by Bianca



One could ask themselves is a book even considered noteworthy without the effective usage of figurative language? In the case of Slaughterhouse Five, Kurt Vonnegut uses figurative language in select parts of the book, but when he does use this writing technique he uses it powerfully to create more than images in a person's mind, but he also creates

feelings. Throughout this nonfiction novel we can clearly picture the story through the author's uses of figurative language spread out in the book which is a great amount of figurative language usage, and this shows of great importance. The most famous quote from this book was written with the figurative language device "irony". Kurt wrote "everything was beautiful and nothing hurt" to be said by the main character Billy Pilgrim as a reply to his daughter when asked about what war was like. This is most definitely ironic in the sense that this description given by Billy describes the complete opposite of what war is. Kurt obviously doesn't stop there in his usage of figurative language, he continues with the usages of metaphors and similes. On page 39 Kurt uses a metaphor to explain just how different Roland Weary was to Billy and the others in terms of body fat. "Billy and the scouts were skinny people. Roland Weary had fat to burn. He was a roaring furnace under all his layers and straps and canvas." This last sentence is a clear metaphor in the sense that it is used to compare Roland to a furnace and it's energy it was capable of creating and this case it was an effective metaphor to create the image that Roland was more fit for the conditions compared to Billy and the others. – Written by Jack

