

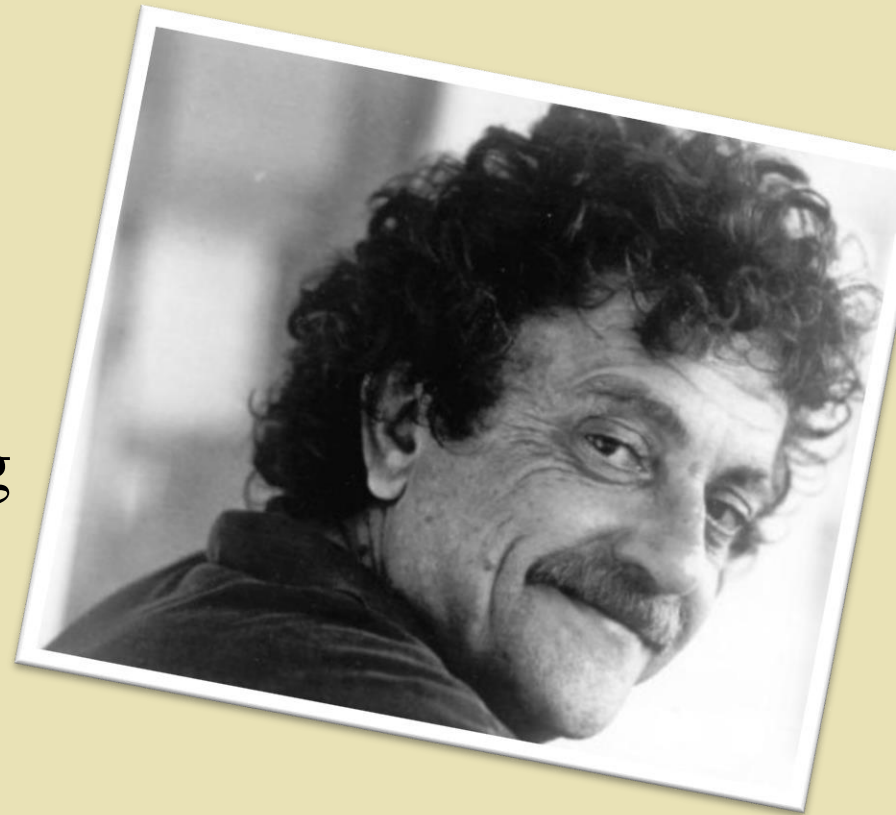
A collection of military medals and a pair of glasses is arranged on a light-colored, textured surface. On the left, a blue ribbon with a red star is pinned to a dark, checkered fabric. Below it, a silver star-shaped medal with a central emblem is visible. Further down, a red ribbon with a white star is pinned to the same fabric. A pair of gold-rimmed glasses with thin temples and small red tips is positioned diagonally across the center. In the bottom left corner, a circular compass with a white face and black markings is partially visible.

Slaughterhouse-Five

by Kurt Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut

- ◆ Born 1922, Indiana
- ◆ Kicked out of college
- ◆ Joined army in 1944
- ◆ POW in Dresden
- ◆ Survived firebombing
- ◆ Returned to college
- ◆ MA thesis rejected



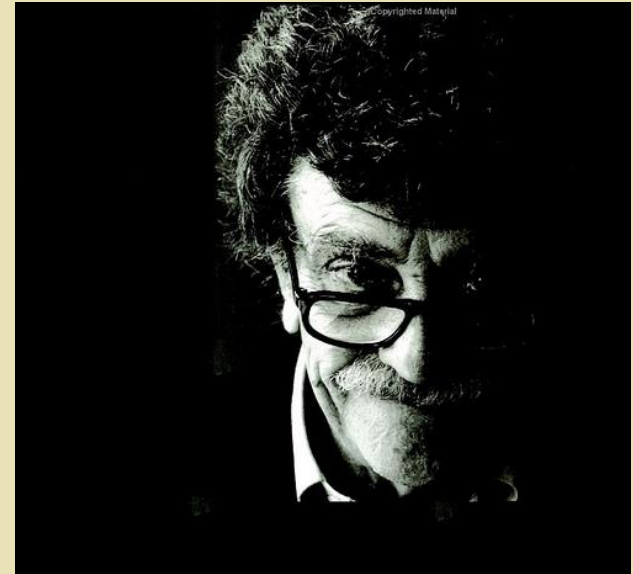
Vonnegut

- ◆ Worked in public relations for General Electric to support himself while writing
- ◆ First short story (1950)
- ◆ First novel (1952)



Vonnegut

- ◆ *Cat's Cradle* (1963)
- ◆ *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965)
- ◆ *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)
- ◆ Published over two dozen novels and story collections



Vonnegut

- ◆ Known for blending satire, dark comedy, and science fiction
- ◆ Pacifist
- ◆ Died 2007, New York



Slaughterhouse-Five

- ◆ Published in 1969
- ◆ Martin Luther King
- ◆ Bobby Kennedy
- ◆ Civil Rights
- ◆ Vietnam





What's it about?

- ◆ The story of Billy Pilgrim, a decidedly non-heroic man who has become "unstuck in time"
- ◆ Travels back and forth in time, visiting his birth, death, and all moments in between repeatedly and out of order
- ◆ A “framed” story
 - In the first and last chapters, Vonnegut talks about the difficulties of writing the novel and the effects of war on his own life
 - In between, Billy Pilgrim's life is given to us out of order and in small fragments



Why did Vonnegut write it?

- ◆ *Slaughterhouse-Five* is an earnest anti-war novel
- ◆ Vonnegut's own enlistment made him a pacifist
- ◆ Intended as an antidote to books and movies that made war look like a great adventure
- ◆ Like his protagonist, Vonnegut was present at Dresden as a POW when American bombers virtually destroyed the city
- ◆ Disjointed and unconventional, the book's structure reflects his central belief
 - *There is nothing you can say to adequately explain a massacre*



What happened at Dresden?

- ◆ The bombing (February 13, 1945) was one of the worst massacres in European history
- ◆ Over 130,000 people died
- ◆ Death toll above the 84,000 people who died in Tokyo bombing and 71,000 people of Hiroshima
- ◆ In Europe's long and often bloody history, never have so many people been killed so quickly