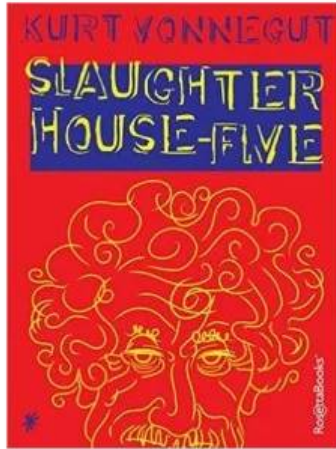


December 2019



The December book, [Slaughterhouse-Five](#), is about the allied bombing of Dresden at the end of WWII. The descriptions of the bombing are grim – more people were killed in Dresden than in Hiroshima. The Vietnam war is also mentioned.

All reviewers liked the book, but because of its subject, some said that couldn't say they enjoyed it. This despite the fact that they found parts of it funny.

It is semi autobiographical – most of the first chapter is the voice of Vonnegut explaining why it has taken him so long to write it. He writes that you cannot say anything intelligent about a massacre. He then hands the story to Billy Pilgrim, an American prisoner of war, who gets disconnected from time.

Billy travels to different points of his life including his alien abduction to the planet of Tralfadore. This time travel confuses him – he often doesn't know where or when he is. The confusion perhaps mirrors the effects of what is now called PTSD.

He sees his own birth and death and when he arrives in Dresden he can see forward 30 days to the bombing. There is also a clever foretelling of the alien abduction and the dropping of burning gasoline thanks to the bizarre writing of Kilgore Trout

The most important thing Billy learns about the Tralfamadorians is their concept of time. To them time is not linear but happening all at once. So while we can be sad about a death, at the same time there are good things happening. They say "So it goes".

This phrase "So it goes" is repeated in the book every time death is mentioned. This allows him to keep his promise to not make war look wonderful and not to encourage war in any way.

Another phrase that is repeated is "I was there (in Dresden but don't want to talk a bout it)". Perhaps this is why it took Vonnegut so long to write the book – and why so little is about the actual bombing of Dresden. It also reminds us of war veterans we know that don't want to talk about the war either.

Ratings: Janet 3.5, Lynda 3.5, Sandi 3.5, Pauline 3.5, Margie 4, Nicola 4, and Judith 4.

The first meeting of 2020 will be 13/01/20 at 6:30PM at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to discuss *The Rich Man's House* by Andrew McHagan.

Hope to see you all there and happy reading!

Other Books We Read

December 2019

The World That We Knew by Alice Hoffman, 4

White Nights by Ann Cleeves, 3

The Spare Room by Helen Garner, 4

Boy, Lost by Kirstina Olsson, 5

The Labyrinth of the Spirits by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, 4

The Forty Rules of Love by Elif Shafak, 2.5

The Trauma Cleaner by Sarah Krasnostein, 4

Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut, 3.5

Identity Crisis by Ben Elton, 3

The Erratics by Vicki Laveau-Harvie, 3.5

Quichotte by Salmon Rushdie, 3

Too Much Lip by Mellisa Lucachenko, 3.5

The Testaments by Margaret Atwood, 3