

Kurt vonnegut's slaughterhouse five

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Kurt Vonnegut has written something that has captured the imagination of generations. His novel is entitled "Slaughterhouse Five." This novel has put into use what the literary world call as dark comedy, also known as black comedy. Dark comedy is basically a sub-genre of comedy that has satirical elements. This sub-genre typically tackles serious topics like death, war, rape, and the likes with wit and humor.

I have selected three scenes of which Kurt Vonnegut displayed his talent in using dark comedy to hook his readers. The first scene that I've picked is that where the arguable protagonists Billy Pilgrim and the unlovable fat soldier Roland Weary were captured by enemy troops.

Those enemy troops who had captured them were not regulars. They were merely using equipment collected from dead soldiers. When the novel was first read by the public, they could have just thought that this was fiction. Maybe they weren't aware that this is a reality in war. Equipment from the dead is considered free rations since there will always be shortages in wars. What the author had done here is that with all the dark comedy packed into this novel, he had squeezed in bits of reality.

The dark comedy there is that as readers we were caught off guard that we were already laughing at something that is brutally happening in reality. It could also be that the author is in favor of stripping the dead off their possessions since those things would only be beneficial to those who are still alive.

The next dark scene that I've picked is where the Valencia, the overweight wife of the arguable protagonist Billy Pilgrim, died because of carbon

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monoxide poisoning. She was already on her way to see his husband. Then the unfortunate happened, or Kurt Vonnegut's dark comedy made it happen, she died of carbon monoxide poisoning inside her car. The author had constructed the scene as if the death of Valencia didn't invoke sad emotion at all. Again, I believe that the function of this is to show what is happening in reality.

We don't need statistics to prove that there are countless wives out there who are left by their unfaithful husbands. But then, this dark humor could also be targeted to those who have eating and weight issues. The author may have wanted to show that most overweight bring the problem upon themselves because just like Valencia, they can't stop eating. This could be the author's answer to why are there such a number of miserable people in this planet. It is because we cause our own problems.

The last dark scene that I have chosen is when the prisoners of war were assigned to the dreadful task of digging up the graves for a lot of dead bodies after the town of Dresden was bombed. It was such an awful sight that one of those who were digging the graves threw up from the bad smell. He threw up so bad that he died. Again, there is no word that can perfectly describe the scene than dark comedy.

The author had beautifully used the elements of dark humor, wit and irony. It is such an irony that the 'dead' is in a sense free from the toils of being alive and stuck in a war. That scene also shows that people can be pushed to do even the things that they won't imagine themselves doing. Anyone will succumb when there is a gun pointed to you and your loved one's.

All in all, the author had used dark comedy as a hook that has kept his readers turning the pages. Dark comedy also evokes a certain weird combination of the effects of entertainment and disgust.

Work Cited

1. Vonnegut, K. Jr. Vonnegut, J. Slaughterhouse Five. NY: Tandem Classic Books. 1999.