

To ban or not to ban?

[Profession](#), [Writer](#)



Mariah Smyth English II Honors Holzberger 11 May 2012 To Ban or Not to Ban? Give me literature or give me death. Why stand we here idle? What is that gentlemen wish? What would they want? Is it text so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of the chains of censorship? Forbid it, almighty god! I know not what course others might take; but ask me give me literature, or give me death! (Parody of “ Speech to the Virginia Convention”). For centuries people have been reading books to gain knowledge and to be entertained (Introductory Assignment Sheet).

Kurt Vonnegut did a magnificent job writing a piece threaded with compassion of a tragic historical event leaving behind a conspicuous moral statement. Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut should not be removed from shelves, because the book is eye-opening especially for young adults who are soon to enter the real world and become our future. Certain groups decided to challenge harsh reality of the truth written into an educational and humorous read. A school's board article stated, “ We're not making a judgment call on if the book is good or bad, we just want to make sure it's age appropriate” (School board removes 2 books from school).

This is NOT an arguable reason considering Billy Pilgrim, the main character in Slaughterhouse-Five, went into war at the age of sixteen. The book states the facts. Vonnegut argues that war is inhumane. This IS arguable and negotiable; war is deceitful and tears apart homes. Educational supervisors are trying to ban a book that is making children aware of the gruesome effects of war, and warnings to create a more diplomatic world. Vonnegut served in World War II first hand and wanted to stress the anxiety war puts upon people.

While being a veteran, “ Vonnegut once knew the comfort of such a community and home life, and knew also the feeling of having them wrenched away” (Twentieth-Century Writers 1950-1990). His goal in *Slaughterhouse-Five* was to create a third world era where “ Tralfamadorians,” or aliens, known as the enemy took over and demonstrated manifestations of the immaturity of human species for creating war. Vonnegut’s *Dresden bombing in literature* explained that, “ In the aftermath they were assigned the task of carrying out dead bodies from the ruins.

The descriptions of the removal of the bodies are particularly gruesome reminders of the insanity” (*Dresden bombing in literature*). Vonnegut wanted a moral vision of war cutting social community. After being kidnapped by the extraterrestrial Tralfamadorians he attempted to find peace and learned that the only secret of life is to live only in the happy moments. His embellished comparison to overcoming a tragedy was an honorable mention for young readers. It helps them realize war is unacceptable along with everything that comes with it.

In addition, Vonnegut wanted someone to, “ tell him the secret so he can take it back to Earth and save us all: How can a planet live at peace? ” (Kurt Vonnegut). Vonnegut stated this in *Slaughterhouse-Five* meaning war should not be believed to take place on Earth. When coming back from his third world era, “ war,” he thought it would be different, but everything came back with him. Therefore, when young adults read *Slaughterhouse-Five* they will fathom the idea wars resolve nothing and to create world peace for our future.

Also respect everyone who has and is serving in war learning the truth and unpleasant effects. However, you may argue war is still an issue today and the book is not age appropriate considering it is anti-war and putting horrid images in young reader's mind. Overall, the book is reality and history. You cannot feed your children lies and candy coat everything. If Billy Pilgrim was capable of entering war at the age of sixteen, young adults are capable of facing the truth and forming opinions for themselves.

Vonnegut wanted to leave behind a message, " God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change courage to change the things I can and wisdom to always tell me the difference" (Kurt Vonnegut). We cannot change what has already happened, but we can prevent it from happening again. Slaughterhouse-Five sets a good example and should not be banned. Works Cited Quinn, Edward. " Dresden bombing in literature. "

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