**Slaughterhouse Five**

**Chapter One. Summary:**

The narrator assures us that the book we are about to read is true, more or less. The parts dealing with World War II are most faithful to actual events. Twenty-three years have passed since the end of the war, and for much of that time the narrator has been trying to write about the bombing of Dresden. He was never able to bring make the project work. When he thinks about Dresden's place in his memory, he always recalls two things: an obscene limerick about a man whose penis has let him down, and "My Name is Yon Yonson," a song which has no ending.

Late some nights, the narrator gets drunk and begins to track down old friends with the telephone. Some years ago he tracked down Bernard O'Hare, an old war buddy of his, using Bell Atlantic phone operators. When he tracked his old friend down, he asked if Bernard would help him remember things about the war. Bernard seemed unenthusiastic. When the narrator suggests the execution of Edgar Derby, an American who stole a teapot from the ruins, as the climax of the novel, Bernard still seems unenthusiastic.

The best outline the narrator ever made for his Dresden book was on a roll of toilet paper, using crayon. Colors represented different people, and the lines crisscrossed when people met, and ended when they died. The outline ended with the exchange of prisoners who had been liberated by Americans and Russians.

After the war, the narrator went home, married, and had kids, all of whom are grown now. He studied anthropology at the University of Chicago, and in anthropology he learned that "there was absolutely no difference between anybody," and that "nobody was ridiculous or bad or disgusting." He's worked various jobs, and tried to keep up work on his Dresden novel all this time.

He actually did go to see Bernard O'Hare just a few weeks after finding him over the telephone. He brought his young daughters, who were sent upstairs to play with O'Hare's kids. The men could not think of any particularly good memories or stories, and the narrator noticed that Mary, Bernard's wife (to whom Slaughterhouse Five is dedicated), seemed very angry about something. Finally, she confronted him: the narrator and Bernard were just babies when they fought. Mary was angry because if the narrator wrote a book, he would make himself and Bernard tough men, glorifying war and turning scared babies into heroes. The movie adaptation would then star "Frank Sinatra and John Wayne or some of those other glamorous, war-loving, dirty old men" (14). Wars would look good, and we would be sure to have more of them. The narrator promised that it won't be that kind of book, and that he'd call it The Children's Crusade. He and Mary were friends starting at that moment. That night, he and Bernard looked through Bernard's library for information on the real Children's Crusade, a war slightly more sordid than the other crusades. The scheme was cooked up by two monks who planned to raise an army of European children and then sell them into slavery in North Africa. Sleepless later that night, the narrator looked at a history of Dresden published in 1908. The book described a Prussian siege of the city in the eighteenth century.

In 1967, the narrator and O'Hare returned to Dresden. On the flight over, the narrator got stuck in Boston due to delays. In a hotel in Boston, he felt that someone had played with all the clocks. With every twitch of a clock, it seemed that years passed. That night, he read a book by Roethke and another book by Erika Ostrovsky. The Ostrovsky book, Cйline and His Vision, is a story of a French soldier whose skull gets cracked during World War I. He hears noises and suffers from insomnia forever afterward, and at night he writes grotesque, macabre novels. Cйline sees death and the passage of time as the same process.

The narrator also read about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the hotel room's Gideon Bible. He calls attention to the moment when Lot's wife looks back and is turned into a pillar of salt. He loves her for that act, because it was such a human thing to do.

Now, he presents us with his war book. He will strive to look back no more. This book, he says, is a failure. It was bound to be a failure because it was written by a pillar of salt. He gives us the first line and the last, and the central story of the novel is ready to begin.

**Chapter Two. Summary:**

"Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time." He wanders from moment to moment in his life, experiencing chronologically disparate events right after one another. He sees his birth and death and everything in between, all out of order, with no pattern to predict what will come next. Or so he believes.

Billy was born in 1922 in Ilium, New York. Tall, thin, and embarrassingly weak, he made an unlikely soldier. He was going to night school in optometry when he got drafted to fight in World War II. His father died in a hunting accident before Billy left for Europe. The Germans captured Billy during the Battle of the Bulge. In 1945 he returned to the States, finished optometry school, and married the daughter of the school's owner. During the engagement, he was hospitalized for a nervous breakdown. After his release, he finished school, married the girl, got his own practice with help from his father-in-law, became quite rich, and had two kids. In 1968 he was the sole survivor of a plane crash. While he was in the hospital, his wife died of carbon monoxide poisoning. He returned home for rest, but without warning one day he went to New York and claimed on the radio that he had been kidnapped by aliens called Trafalmadorians. Billy's daughter, Barbara, retrieved him from New York. A month later, Billy wrote a letter to Ilium's newspaper describing the aliens. The Trafalmadorians are shaped like two-foot tall toilet plungers, suction cup down.

We now see Billy working on a second letter describing the Trafalmadorian conception of time. All time happens simultaneously, so a man who dies is actually still alive, since all moments exist at all times. Billy works on his letter, oblivious to the increasingly frantic shouts of his daughter, who has stopped by to check on him. The burden of caring for Billy has made Barbara difficult and unforgiving.

We move to the first time Billy gets unstuck in time. Billy receives minimal training as a chaplain's assistant before being shipped to Europe. He arrives in September of 1944, right in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge. He never meets his chaplain or gets a proper helmet or boots. Although he survives the onslaught, he wanders behind German lines, tagging along with two scouts and an anti-tank gunner named Roland Weary. Weary repeatedly saves Billy's life, mostly by not allowing him to lie down in the snow and die. Although the scouts are experienced, Weary is as new to the war as Billy is; he just fancies himself as having more of a taste for it. By firing the anti-tank gun incorrectly, his gun crew put scorch marks into the ground. Because of those marks, the position of the gun crew was revealed to a Tiger tank that fired back. Everyone but Weary was killed. He is stupid, fat, cruel, and violent. Back in Pittsburgh he was friendless, and constantly getting ditched. His father collects torture devices. He carries a cruel trench knife, various pieces of equipment that have been issued to him, and a pornographic photo of a woman with a horse. He plagues Billy with macho, aggressive conversation. In his own mind, Weary narrates the war stories he will one day tell. Although he is almost as clumsy and slow as Billy, he imagines himself and the two scouts as fast friends. In his head he dubs them and himself the Three Musketeers, and tells himself the story of how the Three Musketeers saved the life of a dumb, incompetent college kid.

Straggling behind the others, Billy becomes unstuck in time. He goes back to the red light of pre-birth and then forward again to a day in his childhood with his father at the YMCA. His father tries to teach him how to swim by the sink-or-swim method. Billy sinks, and someone has to rescue him. He jumps forward to 1965, when he is a middle-aged man visiting his mother in a nursing home. Then he jumps to 1958, and Billy is attending his son's Little League banquet. Leap to 1961: Billy is at a party, totally drunk and cheating on his wife for the first and only time. Then, he is back in 1944, being shaken awake by Weary. Weary and Billy catch up to the scouts. Dogs are barking in the distance, and the Germans are searching for them. Billy is in bad shape: he looks like hell, can barely walk, and is having vivid (but pleasant) hallucinations. Weary tries to be chummy with his supposed buddies, the scouts, grouping himself with them as "the Three Musketeers." The scouts coldly tell him that he and Billy are on their own.

Billy goes to 1957, when he gives a speech as the newly elected president of the Lion's Club. Although he has a momentary bout of stage fright, his speech is beautiful. He has taken a public speaking course.

He leaps back to 1944. Ditched again, Weary starts to beat Billy up, furious that this weak college kid has cost him his membership in "the Three Musketeers." He cruelly beats Billy, who is in such a state that he can only laugh. Suddenly, Weary realizes that they are being watched by five German soldiers and a police dog. They have been captured.

**Chapter Three. Summary:**

The troops who capture Billy and Weary are irregulars, newly enlisted men using the equipment of newly dead soldiers. Their commander is a tough German corporal, whose beautiful boots are a trophy from a battle long ago. Once, while waxing the boots, he told a soldier that if you stared into their shine you could see Adam and Eve. Though Billy has never heard the corporal's claim, looking into the boots now he sees Adam and Eve and loves them for their innocence, vulnerability, and beauty. A blond fifteen-year-old boy helps Billy to his feet; he looks as beautiful and innocent as Eve. In the distance, shots sound out as the two scouts are killed. Waiting in ambush, they were found and shot in the backs of their heads.

The Germans take Weary's things, including the pornographic picture, which the two old men grin about, and Weary's boots. The fifteen-year old gets Weary's boots, and Weary gets the boy's clogs. Weary and Billy are made to march a long distance to a cottage where American POWs are being detained. The soldiers there say nothing. Billy falls asleep, his head on the shoulder of a Jewish chaplain.

Billy leaps in time to 1967, although it takes him a while to figure out the date. He is giving an eye exam in his office in Ilium. His car, visible outside his window, has conservative stickers on the bumper; the stickers were gifts from his father-in-law.

He leaps back to the war. A German is kicking his feet, telling him to wake up. The Americans are assembled outside for photographs. The photographer takes pictures of Billy's and Weary's feet as evidence of how poorly equipped the American troops are. They stage photos of Billy being captured. Billy then returns to 1967, driving to the Lion's club. He drives through a black ghetto, an area recovering from recent riots and fires. He largely ignores what he sees there. At the Lion's club, a marine major talks about the need to continue the fight in Vietnam. He advocates bombing North Vietnam into the Stone Age, if necessary, and Billy does not think of the horror of bombing, which he has witnessed himself. He is simply having lunch. The narrator mentions that he has a prayer on the wall of his office: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom always to tell the difference."

The narrator tells us that Billy cannot change past, present, or future. After lunch, Billy goes home. He is a wealthy man now, with a son in the Green Berets and a daughter about to get married; he also is seized occasionally by sudden and inexplicable bouts of weeping. During one of these spells, he closes his eyes and finds himself back in World War II. He is marching with an ever-growing line of Americans making their way through Luxembourg. They cross into Germany, being filmed by the Germans who want a record of their great victory. Weary's feet are sore and bloody from marching on the German boy's clogs. The Americans are sorted by rank, and a colonel tries to talk with Billy. The colonel is dying; he tries to be chummy with Billy. He has always wanted to be called "Wild Bob" by his men. He dreams of having a reunion of his men in his hometown of Cody, Wyoming. He invites Billy and the other men to come. Vonnegut mentions that he and Bernard O'Hare were there when the colonel gave his invitation. All of the POWs are put into train cars. The train does not leave for two days; during that time Wild Bob dies. The boxcars are so crowded that to sleep the men have to take turns lying down. When the train finally begins its trek deeper into Germany, Billy jumps through time again. It is 1967, and he is about to be kidnapped for the first time by the Trafalmadorians.

**Chapter Four. Summary:**

In 1967, on his daughter's wedding night, Billy cannot sleep. Because he is unstuck in time, he knows that he will soon be kidnapped by a Trafalmadorian flying saucer. He kills time unproductively in the meantime. He watches a war movie, and because he is unstuck in time the movie goes forward and then backward. He goes out to meet the ship, and he is taken as planned. As the ship shoots out into space, Billy is jarred back to 1944. In the boxcar, none of the men want Billy to sleep next to them because he yells and thrashes in his sleep. He is forced to sleep while standing. In another car, Weary dies of gangrene in his feet. As he slowly dies over the course of days, he tells people again and again about the Three Musketeers. He also asks that someone get revenge for him on the man who caused his death. He blames Billy Pilgrim, of course.

The train finally arrives at a camp, and Billy and the other men are pushed and prodded along. The camp is full of dying Russian POWs. At points, Vonnegut likens the Russians' faces to radium dials. The Americans are all given coats; Billy's is too small. They go into a delousing station, where all of the men strip naked. Billy has one of the worst bodies there; he is skinny and weak, and a German soldier comments on that fact. We are introduced briefly to Edgar Derby and Paul Lazarro. Derby is the oldest POW there, a man who pulled strings to get into the army. He is a high school teacher from Indianapolis, and he is physically sturdy despite his forty-four years of age. He will be shot after the Dresden bombing for trying to steal a teapot.

 Paul Lazarro is a car thief from Illinois. His body is even weaker and less healthy than Billy's. He was in Roland Weary's boxcar, and he vowed solemnly to Weary that he would find and kill Billy Pilgrim. When the scalding water turns on, Billy leaps back to his infancy. His mother has just finished giving him a bath. He then leaps forward to a Sunday game of golf, played with three other optometrists. Then, he leaps in time to the space ship, on his first trip to Trafalmadore. He talks with one of his captors about time, and he says that the Trafalmadorians sound like they do not believe in free will. The alien replies that in all of the inhabited planets of the galaxy, Earth is the only one whose people believe in the concept of free will.

**Chapter Five. Summary:**

En route to Trafalmadore, Billy asks for something to read. The only human novel is Valley of the Dolls, and when Billy asks for a Trafalmadorian novel, he learns that the aliens' novels are slim, sleek volumes. Because they have a different concept of time, Trafalmadorians have novels arranged by juxtaposition of marvelous moments. The books have no cause or effect or chronology; their beauty is in the arrangement of events meant to be read simultaneously. Billy jumps in time to a visit to the Grand Canyon taken when he was twelve years old. He is terrified of the canyon. His mother touches him and he wets his pants. He jumps forward in time just ten days, to later in the same vacation. He is visiting Carlsbad Caverns. The ranger turns the lights off, so that the tourists can experience total darkness. But Billy sees a light nearby: the radium dial of his father's watch.

Billy jumps back to the war. The Germans think Billy is one of the funniest creatures they've seen in all of the war. His coat is preposterously small, and on his already awkward body it looks ridiculous. The Americans give their names and serial numbers so that they can be reported to the Red Cross, and then they are marched to sheds occupied by middle-aged British POWs. The British welcome them with singing. These British POWs are officers, some of the first Brits taken prisoner in the war. They have been prisoners for four years. Due to a clerical error early in the war, the Red Cross shipped them an incredible surplus of food, which they have hoarded cleverly. Consequently, they are some of the best-fed people in Europe. Their German captors adore them.

To prepare for their American guests, the Brits have cleaned and set out party favors. Candles and soap, supplied by the Germans, are plentiful: the British do not know that these items are made from the bodies of Holocaust victims. They have prepared a huge dinner and a dramatic adaptation of Cinderella. Billy is so unhinged that his laughter at the performance becomes hysterical shrieking, and he is taken to the hospital and doped up on morphine. Edgar Derby watches over him, reading The Red Badge of Courage. He leaps in time to the mental ward where he recovered in 1948.

In the mental ward, Billy's bed is next to the bed of Elliot Rosewater. Like Billy, he has little love for life, in part because of things he saw and did in the war. He is the man who introduces Billy to the science fiction of Kilgore Trout. Billy is enduring one of his mother's dreaded visits. She is a simple, religious woman. She makes Billy feel worse just by being there. Billy leaps back in time to the POW camp. A British colonel talks to Derby; after the newly arrived Americans shaved, the British were shocked by how young they all were. Derby tells of how he was captured: the Americans were pushed back into a forest, and the Germans rained shells on them until they surrendered.

Billy leaps back to the hospital. He is being visited by his ugly, overweight fiancйe Valencia. He knew he was going crazy when he proposed to her. He does not want to marry her. She is visiting now, eating a Three Musketeers bar and wearing a diamond engagement ring that Billy found while in Germany. Elliot tells her about The Gospel from Outer Space, a Kilgore Trout book.

 Valencia tries to talk to Billy about plans for their wedding and marriage, but he is not too involved. He leaps forward in time to the zoo on Trafalmadore, where he was on display when he was forty-four years old. The habitat is furnished with Sears and Roebuck furniture. He is naked. He answers questions posed by the Trafalmadorian tourists. He learns that there are five sexes among the Trafalmadorians, but the sex difference is only visible in the fourth dimension. On earth there are actually seven sexes, all necessary to the production of children; earthlings just do not notice the sex difference between themselves because many of the sex acts occur in the fourth dimension. These ideas baffle Billy, and they in turn are baffled by his linear concept of time. Billy expects the Trafalmadorians to be concerned about or horrified by the wars on earth. He worries that earthlings will eventually threaten all the other races in the galaxy, causing the eventual destruction of the universe. The Trafalmadorians put their hands over their eyes, which lets Billy know that he is being stupid.

The Trafalmadorians already know how the universe will end: during experiments with a new fuel, one of their test pilots pushes a button and the entire universe will disappear. They cannot prevent it. It has always happened that way. Billy correctly concludes that trying to prevent wars on Earth is futile. The Trafalmadorians also have wars, but they choose to ignore them. They spend their time looking at the pleasant moments rather than the unpleasant ones; they suggest that humans learn to do the same.

Billy leaps back in time to his wedding night. It is six months after his release from the mental ward. The narrator reminds us that Valencia and her father are very rich, and Billy will benefit greatly from his marriage to her. After they have sex, Valencia tries to ask Billy questions about the war. She wants a heroic war story, but Billy does not really respond to her. He has a crazy thought about the war, which Vonnegut says would make a good epitaph for Billy, and for the author, too: "Everything was beautiful, and nothing hurt." He jumps in time to that night in the prison camp. Edgar Derby has fallen asleep. Billy, doped up still from the morphine, wanders out of the hospital shed. He snags himself on a barbed wire fence, and cannot extract himself until a Russian helps him.

Billy never really says a word to the Russian. He wanders to the latrine, where the Americans are sick from the feasting. A long period without food followed by a feast almost always results in violent sickness. Among the sick Americans is a soldier complaining that he has shit his brains out. It is Vonnegut. Billy leaves, passing by three Englishmen who watch the Americans' sickness with disgust. Billy jumps in time again, back to his wedding night. He and his wife are cozy in bed. He jumps in time again, to 1944. It is before he left for Europe; he is riding the train from South Carolina, where he was receiving his training, all the way back to Ilium for his father's funeral.

We return to Billy's morphine night in the POW camp. Paul Lazarro is carried into the hospital; while attempting to steal cigarettes from a sleeping British officer, he was beaten up. The officer is the one carrying him. Seeing now how puny Lazarro is, the officer feels guilty for hitting him so hard. But he is disgusted by the American POWs. A German soldier who adores the British officers comes in and apologizes for the inconvenience of hosting the Americans. He assures the Brits in the room that the Americans will soon be shipped off for forced labor in Dresden. The German officer reads propaganda materials written by Howard Campbell, Jr., a captured American who is now a Nazi. Campbell condemns the self-loathing of the American poor, the inequalities of America's economic system, and the miserable behavior of American POWs. Billy falls asleep and wakes up in 1968, where his daughter Barbara is scolding him. Barbara notices the house is icy cold and goes to call the oil-burner man.

Billy leaps in time to the Trafalmadorian zoo, where Montana Wildhack, a motion picture star, has been brought in to mate with him. Initially unconscious, she wakes to find naked Billy and thousands of Trafalmadorians outside their habitat. They're clapping. She screams. Eventually, though, she comes to love and trust Billy. After a week they're sleeping together. He travels in time back to his bed in 1968. The oil-burner man has fixed the problem with the heater. Billy has just had a wet dream about Montana Wildhack. The next day, he returns to work. His assistants are surprised to see him, because they thought that he would never practice again. He has the first patient sent in, a boy whose father died in Vietnam. Billy tries to comfort the boy by telling him about the Trafalmadorian concept of time. The boy's mother informs the receptionist that Billy is going crazy. Barbara comes to take him home, sick with worry about what how to deal with him.

**Chapter Six. Summary:**

Billy wakes after his morphine night in POW camp irresistibly drawn to two tiny treasures. They draw him like magnets; they are hidden in the lining of his coat. It will be revealed later on exactly what they are. He goes back to sleep, and wakes up to the sounds of the British building a new latrine. They have abandoned their old latrine and their meeting hall to the Americans. The man who beat up Lazarro stops by to make sure he is all right, and Lazarro promises that he is going to have the man killed after the war. After the amused Brit leaves, Lazarro tells Derby and Billy that revenge is life's sweetest pleasure. He once brutally tortured a dog that bit him. He is going to have all of his enemies killed after the war. He tells Billy that Weary was his buddy, and he is going to avenge him by having Billy shot after the war. Because of his time hopping, Billy knows that this is true. He will be shot in 1976. At that time, the United States has split into twenty tiny nations. Billy will be lecturing in Chicago on the Trafalmadorian concept of time and the fourth dimension. He tells the spectators that he is about to die, and urges them to accept it. After the lecture, he is shot in the head by a high-powered laser gun.

Back in the POW camp, Billy, Derby, and Lazarro go the theater to elect a leader. On the way over, they see a Brit drawing a line in the dirt to separate the American and British sections of the compound. In the theater, Americans are sleeping anywhere that they can. A Brit lectures them on hygiene, and Edgar Derby is elected leader. Only two or three men actually have the energy to vote. Billy dresses himself in a piece of azure curtain and Cinderella's boots. The Americans ride the train to Dresden. Dresden is a beautiful city, appearing on the horizon like something out of a fairy tale. They are met by eight German irregulars, boys and old men who will be in charge of them for the rest of the war. They march through town towards their new home. The people of Dresden watch them, and most of them are amused by Billy's outlandish costume. One surgeon is not. He scolds Billy about dignity and representing his country and war not being a joke, but Billy is honestly perplexed by the man's anger. He shows the man his two treasures from the lining of his coat: a two-carat diamond and some false teeth. The Americans are brought to their new home, a converted building originally for the slaughter of pigs. The building has a large 5 on it. The POWs are taught the German name for their new home, in case they get lost in the city. In English, it is called Slaughterhouse Five.

**Chapter Seven. Summary:**

Billy is on a plane next to his father-in-law. Billy and a number of optometrists have chartered a plane to go to a convention in Montreal. There's a barbershop quartet on board. Billy's father-in-law loves it when they sing songs mocking the Polish. Vonnegut mentions that in Germany Billy saw a Pole getting executed for having sex with a German girl. Billy leaps in time to his wandering behind the German lines with the two scouts and Roland Weary. He leaps in time again to the plane crash. Everyone dies but him. The plane has crashed in Vermont, and Billy is found by Austrian ski instructors. When he hears them speaking German, he thinks he's back in the war. He is unconscious for days, and during that time he dreams about the days right before the bombing.

He remembers a boy named Werner Gluck, one of the guards. He was good-natured, as awkward and puny as Billy. One day, Gluck and Billy and Derby were looking for the kitchen. Derby and Billy were pulling a two-wheeled cart; it was their duty to bring dinner back for the boys. Gluck pulled a door open, thinking the kitchen might be there, and instead revealed naked teenage girls showering, refugees from another city that was bombed. The women scream and Gluck shuts the door. When they finally find the kitchen, an old cook talks with the trio critically and proclaims that all the real soldiers are dead. Billy also remembers working in the malt syrup factory in Dresden. The syrup is for pregnant women, and it is fortified with vitamins. The POWs do everything they can to sneak spoonfuls of it. Billy sneaks a spoonful to Edgar Derby, who is outside. He bursts into tears after he tastes it.

**Chapter Eight. Summary:**

Howard Campbell, Jr., the American-turned-Nazi propagandist, visits the captives of Slaughterhouse Five. He wears an elaborate costume of his own design, a cross between cowboy outfit and a Nazi uniform. The POWs are tired and unhealthy, undernourished and overworked. Campbell offers them good eating if they join his Free American Corps. The Corps is Campbell's idea. Composed of Americans fighting for the Germans, they will be sent to fight on the Russian front. After the war, they will be repatriated through Switzerland. Campbell reasons that the Americans will have to fight the Soviet Union sooner or later, and they might as well get it out of the way. Edgar Derby rises for his finest moment. He denounces Campbell soundly, praises American forms of government, and speaks of the brotherhood between Russians and Americans. Air raid sirens sound, and everyone takes cover in a meat locker. The firebombing will not occur until tomorrow night; these sirens are only a false alarm. Billy dozes, and then leaps in time to an argument with his daughter Barbara. She is worrying about what should be done about Billy. She tells him that she feels like she could kill Kilgore Trout.

We move to Billy's first meeting with Trout, which happened in 1964. He is out driving when he recognizes Trout from the jackets of his books. Trout's books have never made money, so he works as a newspaper circulation man, bullying and terrorizing newspaper delivery boys. One of Trout's boys quits, and Billy offers to help Trout deliver the papers on the boy's route. He gives Trout a ride. Trout is overwhelmed by meeting an avid fan. He has only received one letter in the course of his career, and the letter was crazed. It was written by none other than Billy's friend from the mental ward, Elliot Rosewater. Billy invites Kilgore Trout to his anniversary party.

At the party, Trout is obnoxious, but the optometrists and their spouses are still enchanted by having an actual writer among them. A barbershop quartet sings "That Old Gang of Mine," and Billy is visibly disturbed. After giving Valencia her gift, he flees upstairs. Lying in bed, Billy remembers the bombing of Dresden.

We see the events as Billy remembers them. He and the other POWs, along with four of their guards, spend the night in the meat locker. The girls from the shower were being killed in a shallower shelter nearby. The POWs emerge at noon the next day into what looks like the surface of the moon. The guards gape at the destruction. They look like a silent film of a barbershop quartet.

We move to the Trafalmadorian Zoo. Montana Wildhack asked Billy to tell her a story. He tells her about the burnt logs, actually corpses. He tells her about the great monuments and buildings of the city turned into a flat, lunar surface.

We move to Dresden. Without food or water, the POWs have to march to find some if they are to survive. They make their way across the treacherous landscape, much of it still hot, bits of crumbling. They are attacked by American fighter planes. The end up in the suburbs, at an inn that has prepared to receive any survivors. The innkeeper lets the Americans sleep in the stable. He provides them with food and drink, and goes out to bid them goodnight as they go to bed.

**Chapter Nine. Summary:**

When Billy is in the hospital in Vermont, Valencia goes crazy with grief. Driving to the hospital, she gets in a terrible accident. She gears up her car and continues driving to the hospital, determined to get there even though she leaves her exhaust system behind. She pulls into the hospital driveway and falls unconscious from carbon monoxide poisoning. An hour later, she is dead.

Billy is oblivious, unconscious in his bed, dreaming and time traveling. In the bed next to him is Bertram Copeland Ruumford, an arrogant retired Brigadier General in the Air Force Reserve. He is a seventy-year-old Harvard professor and the official historian of the Air Force, and he is in superb physical condition. He has a twenty-three year-old high school dropout with an IQ of 103. He is an arrogant jingoist. Currently he is working on a history of the Air Corp in World War II. He has to write a section on the success of the Dresden bombing. Ruumfoord's wife Lily is scared of Billy, who mumbles deliriously. Ruumfoord is disgusted by him, because all he does in his sleep in quit or surrender.

Barbara comes to visit Billy. She is in a horrible state, drugged up so she can function after the recent tragedies. Billy cannot hear her. He is remembering an eye exam he gave to a retarded boy a decade ago. Then he leaps in time when he was sixteen years old. In the waiting room of a doctor's office, he sees an old man troubled by horrible gas. Billy opens his eyes and he is back in the hospital in Vermont. His son Robert, a decorated Green Beret, is there. Billy closes his eyes again.

He misses Valencia's funeral because he is till too sick. People assume that he is a vegetable, but actually he is thinking actively about Trafalmadorians and the lectures he will deliver about time and the permanence of moments. Overhearing Ruumford talk about Dresden, Billy finally speaks up and tells Ruumford that he was at Dresden. Ruumford ignores him, trying to convince himself and the doctors that Billy has Echonalia, a condition where the sufferer simply repeats what he hears.

Billy leaps in time to May of 1945, two days after the end of the war in Europe. In a coffin-shaped green wagon, Billy and five other Americans ride with loot from the suburbs of Dresden. They found the wagon, attached to two horses, and have been using it to carry things that they have taken. The homes have been abandoned because the Russians are coming, and the Americans have been looting. When they go to the slaughterhouse and the other five Americans loot among the ruins, Billy naps in the wagon. He has a cavalry pistol and a Luftwaffe ceremonial saber. He wakes; two Germans, a husband-and-wife pair of obstetricians, are angry about how the Americans have treated the horses. The horses' hooves are shattered, their mouths are bleeding from the bits, and they are extremely thirsty. Billy goes around to look at the horses, and he bursts into tears. It is the only time he cries in the whole war. Vonnegut reminds the reader of the epigraph at the start of the book, an excerpt from a Christmas carol that describes the baby Jesus as not crying. Billy cries very little.

He leaps in time back to the hospital in Vermont, where Ruumford is finally questioning Billy about Dresden. Barbara takes Billy home later that day. Billy is watched by a nurse; he is supposed to be under observation, but he escapes to New York City and gets a hotel room. He plans to tell the world about the Trafalmadorians and their concept of time. The next day, Billy goes into a bookstore that sells pornography, peep shows, and Kilgore Trout novels. Billy is only interested in Kilgore Trout novels. In one of the pornographic magazines, there is an article about the disappearance of porn star Montana Wildhack. Later, Billy sneaks onto a radio talk show by posing as a literary critic. The critics take turns discussing the novel, but when Billy gets his turn he talks about Trafalmadore. At the next commercial break, he is made to leave. When he goes back to his hotel room and lies down, he travels back in time to Trafalmadore. Montana is nursing their child. She wears a locket with a picture of her mother and the same prayer that Billy had on his office wall in Ilium.

**Chapter Ten. Summary:**

Vonnegut tells us that Robert Kennedy died last night. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated a month ago. Body counts are reported every night on the news as signs that the war in Vietnam is being won. Vonnegut's father died years ago of natural causes. He left Billy all of his guns, which rust. Billy claims that on Trafalmadore the aliens are more interested in Darwin than Jesus. Darwin, says Vonnegut, taught that death was the means to progress. Vonnegut recalls the pleasant trip he made to Dresden with his old war buddy, O'Hare. They were looking up facts about Dresden in a little book when O'Hare came across a passage on the exploding world population. By 2000, the book predicts, the world will have a population of 7 billion people. Vonnegut says that he supposes they will all want dignity.

Billy Pilgrim travels back in time to 1945, two days after the bombing of Dresden. German authorities find the POWs in the innkeeper's stable. Along with other POWs, they are brought back to Dresden to dig for bodies. Bodies are trapped in protected pockets under the rubble, and the POWs are put to work bringing them up. But after one of the workers is lowered into a pocket and dies of the dry heaves, the Germans settle on incinerating the bodies instead of retrieving them. During this time, Edgar Derby is caught with a teapot he took from the ruins. He is tried and executed by a firing squad.

Then the POWs were returned to the stable. The German soldiers went off to fight the Soviets. Spring comes, and one day in May the war is over. Billy and the other men go outside into the abandoned suburbs. They find a horse-drawn wagon, the wagon green and shaped like a coffin. The birds sing, "Po-tee-weet?"