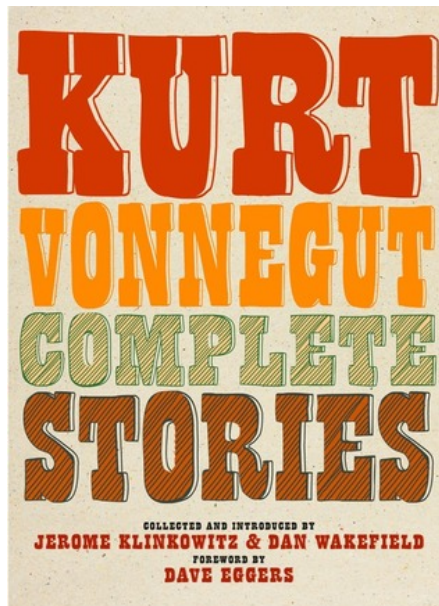




Complete Stories

Kurt Vonnegut , Jerome Klinkowitz (Editor) , Dan Wakefield (Editor) , Dave Eggers (Foreword)

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Featuring five never-before-published Vonnegut stories!

Here for the first time is the complete short fiction of one of the twentieth century's foremost imaginative geniuses. More than half of Vonnegut's output was short fiction, and never before has the world had occasion to wrestle with it all together. Organized thematically—"War," "Women," "Science," "Romance," "Work Ethic versus Fame and Fortune," "Behavior," "The Band Director" (those stories featuring Lincoln High's band director and nice guy George Hemholtz), and "Futuristic"—these ninety-eight stories were written from 1941 to 2007, and include those Vonnegut published in magazines and collected in *Welcome to the Monkey House*, *Bagombo Snuff Box*, and other books; here for the first time five previously unpublished stories; as well as a handful of others that were published online and read by few. During his lifetime Vonnegut published fewer than half of the stories he wrote, his agent telling him in 1958 upon the rejection of a particularly strong story, "Save it for the collection of your works which will be published someday when you become famous. Which may take a little time."

Selected and introduced by longtime Vonnegut friends and scholars Dan Wakefield and Jerome Klinkowitz, *Complete Stories* puts Vonnegut's great wit, humor, humanity, and artistry on full display. An extraordinary literary feast for new readers, Vonnegut fans, and scholars alike.

Complete Stories Details

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From Reader Review Complete Stories for online ebook

John Fetzer says

I am not a huge Vonnegut fan, although I have read some of his books. So I had no positive bias before reading this collection. It is huge, but very readable. The stories are categorized which is a mixed result. The these reenforce Vonnegut's beliefs that most people are good, naive, and bumbling through life. He was a good storyteller, so they are each quick reads. The downside is that the clustering by category sometimes gets redundant.

The stories reflect America when Vonnegut wrote, so from the 1940s onward. A Little's dated because they are around a half-century old, but that reminded me of reading John Cheever or Raymond Carver stories. This is a great book to read a few and pause and come back to repeatedly until you have read it all.

Mark Fallon says

This is a MUST HAVE for any Vonnegut fan. While I've read most of his novels, I wasn't as familiar with his short stories. At over 900 pages, it was the perfect nightstand book these last few months,

In many of his books, Vonnegut comes across as a cynic. However, reading these stories made me realize that while he may have been cynical, deep down, he was a romantic.

Conny says

I was a First Read Winner of this book and I will cherish it for years to come. The Author has been on my to read list for so long that I am a bit ashamed that I never gotten around to reading any of his works until now. I have to confess I have not read the entire book there is just to much of it, but I enjoyed what I have read so far and I can't wait to sink my teeth into the rest. Great addition to my library.

Andrea says

I had always heard of Kurt Vonnegut but I had never read anything by him before. Oh my gosh. What a delight! In the interest of time frankly I only read two short stories but wow, I was blown away. I read "Harrison Bergeron", which seems to be a commentary on affirmative action perhaps? and "Report on the Barnhouse Effect" about a very powerful man and wanting to be in control of that power. It's so good...it's close to being an episode of The Twilight Zone. This seems to be a very good and comprehensive compilation of stories. My only critique is that there were no page numbers. I did receive a free copy in exchange for a review but umm...no page numbers. Maybe it's Vonnegut's ghost pulling my leg.

Brendan says

Vonnegut's talent truly shines in his short stories; this book is an absolute joy to read. Expertly curated and organized.

Zack Zildjan says

I mean...it's a collection of Vonnegut's short stories.
Zero stars!

Brad Bell says

At almost 1000 pages this collection hurts your wrists if you hold it up too long. But it's worth the pain, since it's a complete collections of a masters early career writing short fiction and the unreleased five stories in here doesn't hurt either.

I didn't actually read every story since I've already read them all in previous collections so for me the real draw here was the introductions to each category by Vonnegut scholars and friends Jerome Klinkowitz and Dan Wakefield, who offer revealing insights and backstories to each category before you dive into the stories and these introductions are fascinating on there own. The book is broken up into 8 categories ranging from War to Futuristic and having read all these stories they range from brilliant (Harrison Bergeron) to meh (A Night for Love) but the real draw is the unreleased stuff.

Of the five my favourite was "The Drone King" which is both humorous and sad in equal measures that Vonnegut was an expert at, as well as "Atrocity Story" which is a story based on the soldier who stole a teapot in "Slaughterhouse Five" but with an even more depressing and gut punch ended which is hard to believe since Slaughterhouse is particularly dark.

But the reason this book gets 5 stars is that it's what you want if you love Vonnegut and lets be honest who are if your picking up this behemoth, it's everything he wrote minus the novels and if that's not enough for 5 stars I don't know what is.

Kent says

It is a wonderful thing that all of Vonnegut's stories are together in one collection along with a few that haven't been put in book form before. They arrange these stories into themes, like War, futuristic, behavior, science, ect. I think it's a pretty good way to arrange the stories, though I'm sure some would prefer to arrange them in chronological order in which they were written or published. Along with all the stories that started Vonnegut's career you have intros to each section by the people who knew him well. It gives a lot of insight to the reasons behind the stories he wrote and who he was writing for. Many of his early works embody much of the culture from the 50's, but in a way that still lets in that classic Vonnegut charm. If you already have the other short story books there is only a few that aren't in those, but it's still great to have them all in one collection.

Zachary Houle says

This posthumous collection of short stories by Kurt Vonnegut throws in everything and the kitchen sink. If you want to read every single completed short story written by Vonnegut, who was a grandmaster of American letters in the 20th century and who died a decade ago in New York City, this is the volume for you. Not only does it bring together every single story from previous story collections, such as *Welcome to the Monkey House* and *Bagombo Snuff Box*, it throws in completed stories that have been previously unpublished. The only thing that's not here are those stories that were left unfinished.

As you can imagine, *Complete Stories* is a mammoth volume that surpasses 1,000 pages. If you want to read this, plan on calling in sick to work or school?—?for a week. It took me two months to read this book, though I crammed in other books for reviews here on Medium, aware that if I were silent too long by taking the time to read this start to finish in one go, my Top Writer status in Books would be revoked. There are nearly 100 stories in this collection, and your investment in Vonnegut in this case is measured by time mostly. (The book is expensive, though, too, costing \$45 US and \$60 Canadian.)

So should you read *Complete Stories*? I would give a resounding yes, but that yes will mean different things to different people. If you already have all of the other short story collections published by Vonnegut and his estate, you're only getting a handful of new ones. For you, unless you're a completist and must own everything the guy wrote, I'd hit the library for this one. If you've read Vonnegut's novels and want to see how he developed during the early part of his career, when he was chiefly a short story writer, this is a book to discover. If you've only read *Slaughterhouse-Five* and maybe one or two more of his books, and are curious, then maybe this is a book you'll want to read.

Read the rest of this review here: https://medium.com/@zachary_houle/a-r...

Brakob Arthur says

Reading all of Vonnegut's short stories was a nice way to finish up the year. I'd only ever read his novels before this. His short stories are a lot different. I realize the intended audience for these stories was different from his novels, and that is why many of them are so much more straightforward than his novels. But they were just as enjoyable.

If you've already read *Welcome to the Monkey House* (I hadn't) and his other short story collections you'll get a lot less out of this than I did. It was all new and wonderful to me. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I can't say I liked every story in the collection. I think the story *Welcome to the Monkey House* was probably my least favorite of the book. It's not easy to read a story that seems to condone rape, especially these days with horrible news stories of sexual violence coming out daily. I'm probably missing some dark irony in that particular story, but I found it quite uncomfortable. There didn't seem to be anything else like it in the rest of the book.

Overall, the book was very satisfying and I would recommend it to anyone who may only be familiar with his novels.

Read Ng says

What a collection. It was just so massive. It was scary to even pick it up.

As with every collection, there are some stories that I don't really care for, or are too brief, just don't resonate with me. This collection has few of those. It must just be the way Vonnegut tunes into my personal wavelength.

It may take you a while to read through this, but you will enjoy the stories.

Have a GoodRead.

Jimmy says

If we're talking about the content—the stories themselves—this is deserving of the rating I give. Vonnegut has always been an author that I've looked up to, though for reasons I still to this day don't quite understand, and to have his entire short fiction in one nice doorstop of a book (seriously, this thing is big and unwieldy in the greatest way possible) is utterly fantastic. However, I can't help but notice how flawed the printing and editing is for this. I know that it only came out last year, so it's understandable that not every spelling error is caught on a first run, but for the money it costs (about thirty bucks on Amazon last time I checked) and the fact that this is a collection of the work of one of the greatest writers of the modern era the amount of typos is vexing. Along with this, the way the editors decided to parse Vonnegut's stories is interesting in concept—dividing it into sections based on subject, like War, or Romance, or Science—I feel like it's cutting the man's work short thematically and emotionally, not to even mention the fact that many stories here are arguably misplaced, or are too multidimensional to be pigeonholed as such. Dave Eggers—despite being a writer I highly admire—only adds to this pigeonholing of Vonnegut's stories in his introduction, essentially saying (in my interpretation, anyway) that the man's work was exclusively about morality. It's objectively wrong to say that Vonnegut never wrote about morality (most, if not all of his work arguably revolves around it), but it's equally objectively wrong to say that that's all there was to it, without giving a second thought to the man's humor or thoughts on science, or just the pithy and glorious everyman way he wrote.

So, in short: this book has great content that's mandatory reading for Vonnegut fans wanting the full gamut of the man's short stories, but the editing and presentation leave a little bit to be desired.

Richard says

This was a long, but generally enjoyable, read. It makes you appreciate the beauty of a curated collection. These 900+ pages contain all of Kurt Vonnegut's short stories arranged into a series of broad themes with introductions penned by Vonnegut fans and scholars. It's interesting to see his development as an author, as you can see that the quality of the pieces improving over time. It is also interesting to observe how he repurposed story lines or images/phrases between stories. In gathering all the stories in one place there is a risk that reading them becomes repetitive, and there were points where it did and I had to put the book down for several days to cleanse my palate. Overall reading the stories was enjoyable and made me appreciate his skills as a writer in that form.

Andrew Langert says

This is a massive 900+ page collection of 97 short stories. I won this excellent set of works in a Goodreads Giveaway.

The stories are organized by the subjects Vonnegut wrote about: War, Women, Science, Romance, Work Ethic Versus Fame And Fortune, Behavior, The Band Director and Futuristic.

This is not the type of book you read from cover-to-cover. It is more of a reference book. I have not read many stories yet. I have read the Foreword by Dave Eggers and see how each set of stories is introduced and out into perspective by the collection's two curators.

I plan to read a story or two in between reading full-length books in the coming months.

Todd R. Gunderson says

Listen, while I enjoyed the freshness of the 5 unpublished stories that are included in this book, I can't help but recognize that for any already addicted Vonnegut fans, the book should have been... different?

It is broken down into sections: War, Love... and his catalog of work is then flipped about, collected and compartmentalized in that grouping by each topic - which to me has ruined the continuity of Vonnegut's other short story collections.

Personally, I would have much preferred this book had been built chronologically. We read his first ever short story on page 1, follow along his career by years of each story being published on several hundred other pages, then 900+ pages later you read his last short story. Or at least have added in the dates or years of publication along with each story. This book is so large in physical form I only wish it was larger in depth of Vonnegut's history with these individual stories, years, months, etc. A few of the introductions are meaningful and well written, but very general.

This collection could have gone one small step further and finally released his original uncorrected version of *Hal Irwin's Magic Lamp*, but sadly that version is not included either.

So, if you were to give this book as a gift to someone - maybe someone that hasn't read a lot of Vonnegut - this book singlehandedly makes 5 or 6 of his recently released short story collections (a few which were released as recently as 2013, see *Sucker's Portfolio* quick collection for example) obsolete. Save yourself from buying at least eight of his other books, to read it all here.

I will of course rate this book very highly because all of his short stories are works I tend to read over and over throughout the years, I too had read every story in this new book but for these "new" 5 which is probably the only real reason this book was made in the first place. I fell for it, it worked! Ting~a~Ling!