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Book Review

Vonnegut 'Does It Again'

By Donna McDonald

Slapstick. Kurt Vonnegut. Delta paperbacks. \$3.95.

Kinky Kurt Vonnegut has done it again. He's written another hilarious novel *Slapstick*. Keeping in mind that the book is dedicated to the memory of Laurel and Hardy, the popular television slapstick comedians, the reader must adjust to the idea that all nonsense makes sense in *Slapstick*. Hi ho.

Neanderthaloid twins, Wilbur and Eliza Swain, are deserted in infancy by their ashamed, but rich, parents. The children are freaks: having 12 fingers and 12 toes apiece, supernumerary nipples, and genius — if they put their heads together. They are, however, very happy children until they reach the age of 15, when their genius is discovered and they are separated.

Wilbur goes to Harvard, plays basketball, becomes a doctor, and even becomes President of the war-weary United States.

Eliza, being a girl, is sent to a mental institution. She dies at a young age in the Chinese colony on Mars.

Wilbur and Eliza live in a twilight world, a transitional world on a planet Earth which is decaying, within a society which is decaying. The Earth is in an unrecognizable condition where people have such names as Vera Chipmunk-5 Zappa, where gravity isn't gravity anymore, where the Chinese have discovered the process of self-

miniaturization, and where travel is possible to distant planets without the aid of spaceships. The world just does not make sense until you expand your limited vision of the primitive and modern world, until you expand your conception of what life is and how life should be lived.

Vonnegut makes you think seriously about the meaning of life; but, at the same time, his *Slapstick* makes you laugh.



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