

Harrison Bergeron
By Kurt Vonnegut

Summary

- Year is 2081
- Everyone is not only equal before God and the law, equal in every way
 - No one stronger, better, smarter, etc
 - Due to 211th, 212th, 213th amendments and US Handicapper General
- HG took Harrison (14 yrs old) in April
- Hazel
 - Perfectly average intelligence
 - Thinks in short bursts
- George
 - Above normal intelligence
 - Mental handicap radio tuned to government transmitter; every 20 sec, it sends out sharp noises
- They are watching ballerinas on television
- Hazel had tears but didn't remember why
 - Short attention span
- Ballerinas have sashweights, bags of birdshot, masks
 - George tried to think they shouldn't be handicapped, but he couldn't focus
 - 2/8 ballerinas also have radios
- George described sound as hitting a milk bottle with a ball peen hammer
- Hazel is envious of the radio
- Diana Moon Glampers
 - Handicapper general
 - Hazel has resemblance to her
- If Hazel was handicapper general, she would have chimes on Sunday to honor religion
 - She believes that she would make a good general, but technically no better than anyone else
 - She knows normal the best
- George got a bad noise
 - Hazel told him to stretch out and rest the handicaps - 47 pounds of birdshot in a canvas bag
 - She doesn't care if he is not equal to her for a while
 - George says he does not mind it, it's a part of him
 - The punishment is two yrs in prison and 2000 fine for every ball
 - If everyone cheats on laws, they will return to dark ages
 - Why did they make everyone equal - TO RID **COMPETITION**
- Television program is interrupted by news

- Every announcer has a speech impediment; has ballerina read for him
 - Hazel said he should get a raise for his hard work
 - Mentions that ballerina must be so beautiful since the mask is hideous
 - Points out that you can tell who is what by extremity of handicaps
- Harrison bergeron has escaped from jail (suspicion of plotting to overthrow government)
 - Described as genius, athlete, extremely dangerous
 - 7 ft tall
 - He has the heaviest handicaps
 - Has huge earphones
 - Spectacles to make him half blind and bad headaches
 - Red rubber ball on nose
 - Eyebrows shaves
 - Black caps on teeth
- Harrison breaks into studio and interrupts program with shaking
 - Everyone cowers on knees, thinking they are going to die
 - He calls himself emperor and tells everyone to do what they are told
 - He tears off his handicaps
 - Described as Thor
 - Wants to select empress
 - Ballerina volunteers and harrison removes handicaps
 - He commands music to dance
 - Music is bad at first, harrison controls musicians to do better and promises nobility, music improves
 - They danced and intention was to kiss the ceiling; they kissed it
- Diana comes in and fires twice, ballerina and harrison are dead
 - Aims at musicians telling them to get handicaps back on
- Television burns out
- George goes to kitchen for beer
- Hazel is crying again
- George asks why
- She can't remember
 - George says to forget sad things

Satire - use of humor, irony, sarcasm, or ridicule to criticize something or someone

- Form of social commentary in many media: novels, poems, essay, shows, etc
- Can be described as literary device and genre
- Uses is to raise awareness of social problems and apply pressure or just for fun
- Coincides with other literary devices

- Verbal irony: use of words to express something other than their literal meaning
- Anachronism: person or thing that belongs to a time period other than the one during which a piece of writing is set, show how out of touch subject is with society
- Parody: imitation of literary style for humorous effect
- Juxtaposition: author places two things next to each other to highlight contrast
- Other types (prolly not necessary)
 - Incongruity: something unexpected in an otherwise normal setting
 - Reversal : switches the positions of two things
 - Exaggeration: presenting something better or worse than it is

Essay by Carl Mowery

- Kurt Vonnegut is contemporary American writer known for satire
 - Questioned power structure due to experiences in World War 2 and General Electric job
 - Concerned with individual being victim of oppression
 - **DID NOT BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE COULD BE BETTER, BUT THAT EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY**
- **SATIRE DOES NOT LECTURE INSTEAD EXAGGERATES A PART OF SOCIETY AND LETS READER DECIDE**
- **HIS REAL POINT IN HARRISON BERGERON IS TO ATTACK IDEA OF ENFORCED EQUALITY**
- if society took declaration of independence literally with all men are created equal
- MOST EXTREME AND ABSURD CONCLUSIONS (idk she said to circle this)
- **EVERYONE IN LOWERED TO MEET THE HG STANDARD, NOT RAISED TO MEET A HIGHER STANDARD. IRONIC THAT HG HAS NO RESTRICTIONS**
- His characters are sympathetic and likable
- **IS STANDING UP TO OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT WORTH LOSING LIFE**

Surface to Depth Method

- Surface: outermost, obvious meaning of the work that nearly everyone who has read the text likely sees and agrees on
- Depth: a concept not fully explicitly in the text, something that requires recognition of what's implied, suggested, or hidden

Science fiction

- Type of genre
- Spaceships, robots, aliens, time travel
- Fiction: tells a story that came from author's imagination

- Science fiction: contains unreal things that could be real in our world or a similar world in the near or distant future;explores what if/what could be