



Like Shaking Hands With God: A Conversation About Writing

By Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Lee Stringer

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In this elegantly produced, extended conversation celebrating the writing craft, Kurt Vonnegut and acclaimed "Grand Central Winter" author Lee Stringer explore what it means to be a writer -- and what it means to be human. It is an increasingly rare occasion these days to find two writers willing to speak candidly, thoughtfully, and concretely about the intersection of life and art. And that these two writers happen to be Kurt Vonnegut and Lee Stringer makes "Like Shaking Hands With God" a truly historic and joyous occasion. The setting is a bookstore in New York City in October 1998. Before a crowd of several hundred, Vonnegut and Stringer jump into the aesthetic fray, taking up humanity, writing, salvation, art, and the challenge of living, day to day. As Vonnegut would say, "It was a magical evening." A passionate and inspiring discourse between two extraordinary writers, "Like Shaking Hands With God" is a book for anyone interested in why the simple act of writing things down can be so much more important than the amount of memory in our computers.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4108754 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Washington Square Press
- Published on: 2000-12-01
- Released on: 2000-11-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .25" h x 5.04" w x 8.04" l, .25 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 80 pages



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Kurt Vonnegut (*Breakfast of Champions*): writer of wild, satiric, outrageous fiction. Lee Stringer (*Grand Central Winter*): one-time homeless crack addict who discovered that pencils are not just drug implements. Kurt Vonnegut and Lee Stringer: a mutual admiration society. *Like Shaking Hands with God*: a transcription of two moderated conversations between Vonnegut and Stringer--one before a bookstore audience, one over lunch.

Shaking Hands has a slender profile and a pretty cover. But the only thing slight about these conversations is that they leave the reader wanting more. The book is billed as "a conversation about writing," but it is as much about life as about writing. Neither Vonnegut nor Stringer is interested in holing up in a garret to write. Vonnegut makes any excuse to go out and rub elbows with the folks who buy lottery tickets. Stringer wonders, "Can you write anything on Park Avenue, really?" Vonnegut laments his happy childhood as "no way for a writer to begin." Stringer panics--while he wrote his first book as if on a high, the next one may emerge from an awareness of Oprah and marketability.

Vonnegut and Stringer are passionate about one another's work, passionate about life, and passionate about writing, but not so much so that they ever, for a moment, lose their sense of irony or humor. In the age of the sound bite, literature can be deemed, on some level, useless. Stringer praises writing, in that context, as "a struggle to preserve our right to be not so practical." And Vonnegut? "We are here on Earth to fart around," he proclaims in *Timequake* (excerpted here). "Don't let anybody tell you any different!" --Jane Steinberg

Review

American Society of Journalists and Authors Newsletter An enthusiastic conversation about why and how they write...One of those brief dips into the psyche of very good authors that can be so motivation to all of us at various stages of our careers, no matter what we write or aspire to write. -- *Review*

About the Author

Kurt Vonnegut is the legendary author of dozens of books, including *Timequake*, *Breakfast of Champions*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and, with Lee Stringer, *Like Shaking Hands with God*, which is available from Washington Square Press.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Percy Brown:

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With looking at you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. Lots of author can inspire all their reader with their story or maybe their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the books. But also they write about the ability about something that you need case in point. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your sons or daughters, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors these days always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some study before they write to their book. One of them is this Like Shaking Hands With God: A Conversation About Writing.

James Esparza:

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