

"Drummer Boy of Shiloh" Study Guide

Vocabulary

- Immortality
- Mutely
- Benediction
- Solemn
- Askew
- Historical fiction
- Legitimately



Notes

- Author = Ray Bradbury, famous for writing science fiction such as "Fahrenheit 451"
- "Solemn night for a boy just turned fourteen" = realizes he will be in his first battle shortly
- Askew = crooked
- Basting themselves- here, letting their thoughts pour over them as they turn in their sleep
- Benediction = "Bless you, boy"
- Danger: the drummer boy feels he may be in great danger during battle because he has no weapon to use for fighting the enemy and protecting himself
- Drummer boy= the heart of the army (according to the general) the beat keeps the soldiers together as an army
- General says it's good for a soldier to cry before the fight because there won't be time to cry once the battle begins
- Minie ball- cone-shaped rifle bullet that expands when fired
- Setting: During Civil War; in a peach orchard in the middle of the night; before a battle to show how Joby learns to face his fear of the battle to come
- Shiloh- site of a Civil War battle in 1862; now a national military park in southwest Tennessee
- Theme = to face life's crises with courage and faith, everyone needs to feel connected to others, to feel pride in his/her purpose, and to believe that overcoming the problem is possible.
- Soldiers shield = devotion to family, patriotism, trust in their weapons

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- The general cried the night before because he thinks the war may last a long time
- The general realizes the boy is scared and needs some words of encouragement so he stops to talk to the drummer boy
- When Joby turns his drum to face the sky it shows he is no longer frightened by sounds of things hitting the drumskin
- Riveted- fastened or made firm
- Conflict = internal/man vs himself
- The general was based on Albert S. Johnston, an actual individual who fought in the Civil War

Literary devices

- Identify metaphor, simile, personification, allusion, and symbol/symbolism (I will give you a piece of information from the story and you must identify it). Please be sure to know the definitions of the literary devices so that you can use it to identify the literary device.

Questions for consideration

- In "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh," why does the drummer boy feel he will be in greater danger than the soldiers during battle?
- Which is the best description of the setting of "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh"?
- In "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh," why does the general say it is good for a soldier to cry before the fight?
- Why does the general stop to talk to the drummer boy in "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh"?
- According to the general in "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh," why is the drummer boy so important to the army?
- In "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh," after the general leaves, Joby turns the drum up to face the sky. What does this action show?
- The author sets "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" before a battle instead of during a battle, why might he have chosen to do so?
- What does Joby realize at the end of the story as it pertains to the war?
- What were the soldiers' "shields"?
- What does the general predict about the war? Does it come true?

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- Does the general think positively about the war? Why?
- How did the General smell? Why might this be important?

Use context clues

- Be able to use context clues to determine the meaning of a word