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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Killer Angels

by Michael Shaara

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the students will be able to:

1. Identify the two sides that fought in the Civil War.
2. Describe the goals and results of combat for each side during the three days of the battle.
3. Recognize and define simple battle terms of the Civil War.
4. Discuss the basic issues that caused the war.
5. Compose a character analysis of three major characters in the book.
6. Discuss and differentiate external and internal conflicts in the major characters.
7. Describe the difficulties of decision-making under pressure.
8. Discuss racial attitudes that were a part of the war, especially from Joshua Chamberlain's point of view.
9. Analyze military mistakes made at Gettysburg, particularly by Lee, Stuart and Longstreet.
10. Use and define vocabulary words from each chapter.
11. Appreciate the importance of music to soldiers in the Civil War.
12. Compare and contrast Lee's expectations for Pickett's charge with the actual results.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Describe the decision that General Buford has to make at Cemetery Hill when he first arrives in Gettysburg and analyze the decision he makes.
2. Discuss the differences of opinion between the North and the South about the reasons for the war.
3. Describe the relationship between Joshua Chamberlain and his brother. How is this affected by the experience of war?
4. Discuss the meaning of the title in relation to the central theme of the book.
5. Explain the differences between Lee and Longstreet about how the coming battle should be fought.
6. Discuss the role of Freemantle in the story and the perspective he provides.
7. Discuss the effect of Jeb Stuart's absence on the Army of Northern Virginia at the Battle of Gettysburg.
8. Describe and analyze Longstreet's decisions on the second day of the battle.
9. Analyze and explain Chamberlain's decisions while he is defending Little Round Top.
10. Discuss the meaning and importance of "honor" to soldiers on the Confederate side of the battle.
11. Give specific examples of references to music, especially among the Confederates and explain the effect of the particular type of music on the men.
12. Explain Lee's final decision to attack the Union center on the third day of the battle.
13. Describe Garnett's attitude and behavior during the attack of Pickett's division.

The Killer Angels

Foreword

The Foreword introduces the reader to the general nature of the two armies that will face each other at Gettysburg in July of 1863. It also provides brief biographical sketches of the men who will be the major characters in this book. The story deals with conflict, not only between the armies, but also between officers and sometimes within individuals as well. Students may find it helpful to refer to the Foreword from time to time as new major characters are introduced.

1. Why is a careful reading of the foreword important?

2. Describe the Army of Northern Virginia as they moved to invade the North.

3. What does Shaara mean when he says that the Southern Army is fighting for “disunion”?

4. Describe the Army of the Potomac.

Monday, June 29, 1863

Chapter 1: The Spy

VOCABULARY

fatigue – extreme tiredness
inarticulate – not able to communicate effectively
lickety-split – in a great hurry
phantomlike – like a ghost
warily – cautiously

1. The story opens with a rebel spy looking into a valley. What does he see?

2. The spy describes the marching army as looking like a snake. What literary term is used? Why is this an appropriate one?

3. As the spy heads towards Longstreet's headquarters, what is his main concern?

Chapter 3: Lee

VOCABULARY

disengage – stop the battle by moving away from the enemy
docile – quiet, meek, and not going to cause trouble
enveloped – having the enemy attacking on both flanks
galling – irritating, annoying
incoherent – not logical or not understandable
indisposition – the state of not feeling well, unable to function effectively

1. When Lee joins Hill, Hill claims he has a touch of the Old Soldier's Disease. What does that mean?

2. Why does Lee begin to work on a plan for withdrawal?

3. What does General Heth say in his report to Lee?

Chapter 3: Longstreet

VOCABULARY

en echelon – the attacking force lines up diagonally to the main line of the enemy and then attack in staggered order down the line so that the battle steadily moves from left to right or from right to left
enfilade fire – firing at the end of an enemy battle line rather than the front
reconnoiter – to scout ahead to find enemy positions
Skirmishers – a thin line of soldiers placed in front of the main battle line to warn of the approach of the enemy

1. Lee tells Longstreet to attack *en echelon*, to create an opening to take Cemetery Hill from the rear. What is Longstreet’s response?

2. Why is Captain Johnson nervous about leading Longstreet’s men into position to fight?

3. What happens during Longstreet’s march which complicates the situation?

4. When General Hood wants to take his men around to the right of the Union forces, what is Longstreet’s response?
