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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Soldier's Heart

by Gary Paulsen

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



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Soldier's Heart

Introduction

Soldier's Heart is a third-person narrative about Charley Goddard and his experiences as a Union soldier during the Civil War. The story centers around the events in Charley's life from the time he decides to enlist in the First Minnesota Volunteers (1861) until two years after he is discharged (1867) at the end of the war (1865).

Gary Paulsen also deals with the universal concepts of hatred, pride, fear, death, survival, disillusionment, disappointment, depression, suffering, futility, perseverance, courage, and valor.

The stark realities of the war and all the horrors and disillusionments that come with it are juxtaposed against the simple naïveté of an honest, trusting, loyal, loving boy who simply wants to become independent and have some fun in the "shooting war."

Note to Teacher: The battle scenes are realistic and graphic; therefore, the maturity level of the class should be taken into consideration.

All references come from the Laurel-Leaf Edition of *Soldier's Heart* © 1998.

Soldier's Heart

Objectives

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

1. define and use vocabulary words from the novel.
2. identify and locate the cities and states of Charley's travels from Minnesota to Maryland.
3. describe the battle conditions and locations of four different Civil War battles.
4. discuss the battle strategies of four different Civil War battles.
5. define simple battle terms of the Civil War.
6. discuss Charley Goddard's internal struggles and conflicts between loyalty and humanity.
7. discuss the significance of the use of dialect in the story.
8. understand the basic issues that cause the Civil War.
9. identify the two warring sides in the Civil War.
10. cite and explain the use of irony within the text.
11. discuss the use of Charley's travels from Minnesota to Maryland as symbolism.
12. discuss the external conflict in the novel.
13. compare and contrast the views of the war held by Charley and his mother.
14. compose a character analysis of Charley Goddard.
15. identify and discuss the characteristics of a soldier suffering from Soldier's Heart.
16. comprehend the significance of symbolism in the text.
17. distinguish between the internal and external conflicts that Charley Goddard struggles with.

Chapter One - June 1861

Vocabulary

slogans – catchwords or rallying mottoes
roster – a list of military personnel showing the turns of duty
hullabaloo – loud noise and confusion
violated – disregarded; broke (a law)
respect – holding in high regard
Fort Sumter – Federal fort off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina
Fort Snelling – Federal fort in Minnesota, along the Mississippi River
regiment – a large military unit
company – the body of soldiers united under the command of a captain
section – a subdivision of a military force
runner – a person who runs errands or carries messages
assemble – to call together an army corps
cowlick – a patch of hair that does not lie flat

1. What is Charley Goddard's family life like?

2. What has influenced Charley's feelings about the war? What kind of war does he say it is going to be?

3. How does Charley plan to join the war?

4. Why does Charley not want to enlist near his home?

Chapter Three – Toward Manassas

Vocabulary

plush – luxurious

coloreds – slang for black people

wrongheadedness – stubbornness; refusal to agree

Johnny Reb – a Confederate

pastures – fields used for grazing

conscious – being aware of one's sensations, feelings, or external things

profanity – irreverence toward God or holy things

immoral – violation of accepted principles of right behavior

initially – at the beginning

1. What do Charley and the other soldiers think of the train ride?

2. Where does the train ride begin and where does it end? What states does the train pass through on the way?

3. What is it that Charley sees for the first time once the train moves into Maryland?

4. What does Charley think about slavery? What aspect of slavery does he question?

5. How do the “coloreds” look to Charley?

4. Why does Charley not go out onto the battlefield to look for men he knows?

5. How does Charley feel as he watches the lanterns and candles move around the battlefield?

6. What does another officer tell Charley to do?

7. What is Charley given to eat?

8. What does Charley see in the small creek when he goes the next morning to get water? How did this sight make Charley feel?

9. After the sergeant tells Charley to clean his weapon, what can Charley not believe?

10. Charley cleans his rifle mechanically, although he knows he does not mean to. What does Charley think is making him do these things?
