

Free the killer angels book review example

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“ The Killer Angels” written by Michael Shaara is a unique book, which describes about the Battle of Gettysburg through imagery and accurate details. While author Shaara is aware that the legendary figures and their personality traits portrayed in the book are his creation, the historical accuracy and vivid research of the story let the readers believe the battle a fact rather fiction. Shaara covers the key events and decisions of the battle in great detail. He does not feel shy about mentioning slavery as the root cause of the war. In the book “ The Killer Angels,” Shaara characterizes the commander of the Confederate army Robert E. Lee as one of the dearest men of the south and the beloved of the society of Virginia. Lee led the army of northern Virginia at an age of fifty-seven years. Lee decides to fight the battle of Gettysburg, while already suffering from a heart trouble, which would take his life one day.

Lee is a man of confidence and tactics. However, his conventional ideas created conflicts with the policies of the Confederate General, Longstreet. In the book “ The Killer Angels,” Shaara portrays Lee as a wise old man and a brilliant commander, who is always aware of his ending career. Shaara efficiently holds the traditional ideas of Lee, while at the same time giving importance to the Longstreet’s visionary ideas. Lee is a man of inspiration, who raises the confidence of the wounded soldiers during the Pickett Charge. The men in the army desire to have the presence of Lee all the time as that would boost their morale. Shaara represents Lee as a man who neither believed in slavery nor the slaves and the Negro. Lee is optimistic in his approach about the army, but he decides to use the men boldly for the purpose of victory and lose them for a cause.

In the novel, Shaara depicts Lee as a man who blindly goes forward implementing his tactics without taking the advice of Longstreet and other men. Though Lee was blind forward in his approach, he always considered the possibilities and consequences before implementing a course of action. Throughout the war, Lee rethinks about his plans and rectifies the errors made by the men of the army. He does not stick to a particular plan as he is flexible to any plan that will accomplish the goal. He takes risks in most of the occasions and goes against the rules when time does not favor him. Shaara restates about the health condition of Lee on several occasions in the story, which reminds Lee that he does not last the war. Lee offers his first priority to Virginia as the state was in the verge of leaving the union. Lee's decisions of where and why to attack depend on the loyalties

Lee is a man who favors the offensive warfare strategies similar to Napoleon and disdains the strategies of defense. He also scorns the involvement of paid spies in the war. Lee always trusts his men to execute the orders without micromanagement. However, Lee's excess trust in the men brought him disappointed results at several instances due to the errors committed by the men. The best example is that of Stuart and Lee, when both were out of contact for several days due to which Lee had to stay back in the enemy territory. The plans propose by Lee demanded a tight control of the forces and a flawless communication between the troops. A major drawback of Lee is that he never issues orders in the written form, which gives scope for confusion during the execution of the orders. The forces lacked proper planning as the entire army was never together in coordination.

Lee's failure to organize the army, especially, the new commanders who

replaced the army post Jackson's death is a symbol of downfall. The men in the army respected Lee and followed his orders responsibly. Even in the case of failure of the battle, the men never blamed Lee and were ready to fight more. Though Lee does not consider Longstreet's ideas in the design of his plans, he values Longstreet as a man of strength and experience. In spite of Longstreet's advice, Lee chose Gettysburg as the best and safest choice according to the circumstances. Lee is a man of religion and believes that God is the one who controls the course of events. He is patient in nature and seldom behaves harsh with the army. Lee is a successful military man with no weaknesses of drinking or gambling. However, Lee could not take the right decision in the war as his honor stops him from leaving the battleground.

Lee's loyalty to old friendships results in the loss of war. His prestige brings peace which was impossible without the implementation of his tactical decisions at the battle of Gettysburg. Also, the battle quickened the peace process by marking the way for the victory of the Union. Shaara's "The Killer Angels," provides valuable information on the armies and the soldiers who fought the battle of Gettysburg. The author gives a detailed description of the condition of the army before they knew about Gettysburg. Shaara summarizes the biographies of the commanders who took part in the battle of Gettysburg. One of the best qualities of the book is that Shaara does not hide the errors of Lee. Shaara starts the novel with a spy who tracks the Union Army as the men move towards the north direction.

The chapters that follow include the description of different officers who belong to both the Union and the Confederate. The conversations, which

take place between the characters of the novel belong to the primary sources, such as the Fremantle Diary, which allows the readers a feeling of historical accuracy upon the reading the book. Shaara used a stunning prose throughout the novel. The way he describes the thoughts of the characters as the novel progresses reflect the instinctive nature of the novel. The author employs a stream of consciousness throughout the novel which makes it more attractive. Shaara represents the soldiers as youthful warriors starving without sufficient food and supplies. Though the book does not replace the historic account of the battle of Gettysburg, it enhances to add a human layer to the battle, which makes the book a special one.

At the end of the book "The Killer Angels," Shaara's impressive conclusion makes the readers feel sorry for the men of the army who lost their lives in the battle. Shaara puts his efforts in showcasing the differences in terms of causes between the two societies of the battle. The book serves the purpose as a teaching tool in the history classes. "The Killer Angels" helps the readers realize the truth that pride is the major factor, which is responsible for making irrational decisions. The book depicts Lee and Chamberlain as men leading the army, not through compulsion, but through inspiration. Shaara analyzes the traditional characteristics of the south through maps and images. In each chapter, the reader shifts from one element to another element across various troops.

With the introduction given by Shaara about the characters, the readers gain a mental hold of the character throughout the novel. The physical characteristics of the characters described by Shaara take the readers into an imaginary world of war. In some areas, the book disturbs the readers with

the presence of gruesome sights of the war. In terms of vocabulary, the military terms used in the book sound complex, however, the book makes the readers comfortable as they progress through the chapters. The civil war is one of the most important episodes in the history of the United States. The major problem lies in differentiating the myth from reality. The myths leave an impression about the civil war as a battle for protecting the homeland from evil invasions and a lost cause of Robert Lee; however, one must accept the reality that slavery was the main cause of American slavery.

Economy also played a major role in the civil war. While the south demanded for strong state governance and a weaker federal system, the north wanted the opposite. The Civil war would have turned out to be a revolution had the south won the war, but the war became a rebellion due to the defeat of the south in the civil war. By rebelling against the U. S, the south felt guilty of betrayal; however, the central issue bounces back to slavery. Thus, " The Killer Angels," written by Shaara gives an account of the Battle of Gettysburg, which took place in the year 1863 as well as the circumstances and consequences of the war.