

Effects of war on soldier in generals die in bed

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The Horror of war on the Soldier in Charles Yale Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed* Eng 22 PB 963 Words Some people say that war can change a man. What exactly do they mean by this phrase? What are some possible things that a soldier could experience in war? What are some things a soldier has experienced enough of that can fundamentally change his life? In Charles Yale Harrison's novel *Generals Die in Bed*, the horror of war is a vital theme and is characterized through many challenges the narrator encounters in the novel.

The horror of war is portrayed throughout the novel through things such as having a perpetual fear of the unknown, the psychological effects of war, and conclusively: death. Not knowing what is going to happen is always an intimidating feeling. The idea of not knowing what is coming up always makes us believe that something horrendous is going to take place. In *Generals Die in Bed*, a non-stop fear of the unknown is an important point throughout the novel. In war, there are only millions of things that could take place during one single day.

Charles Harrison has made this point clear to the readers by focusing on one scenario after another of unexpected events right in the narrator's face. It is through what the narrator experiences that we glimpse the true nature of war. In Chapter 4, "Back to the Round", the narrator and the rest of his company have to move around the trenches on their bellies. This is because there are snipers in the trees which causes consistent fear of death. Although they identify that there is a sniper, they still fear it because they cannot anticipate exactly when he will strike. Sooner or later this German sniper, who keeps us cowering in a cold fear, will be caught in an advance by

our troops. " Also in chapter 4, the character of Brown, is killed by the sniper. Brown's death would have made the narrator even more frightened of the unknown because he now knows what a sniper is truly capable of. This is the same fear that drove the narrator to long for a biting hunger for safety. This would seemingly show us exactly why the narrator would dismay the unknown. " The shattering explosions splinter the air in a million fragments. " " The air shrieks and catcalls. " The air screams and howls like an insane woman. " These are all statements that the narrator uses to interpret the sounds a shell makes as it collides through the sky and as it climactically annihilate anything and everything around it. These sounds would drive anyone psychotic. How can the soldiers even go through the war without going deaf? Being exposed to those noise levels would have a few long term effects on human being. In London, it is visible to us that the narrator has been affected in some way or another, by even exposure to the deafening sounds. Bang! An explosion on the street. I leap to my feet. My hearth thumps. She laughs. " That bang was in reality just a motorbike back firing. Since the narrator had been so used to the loud sounds that were made when being shelled, he started to consider that every single loud sound is either a gunshot or a sound of a shell going off. This clearly shows us that war can psychologically affect soldiers for long periods of time, maybe even for the rest of their lives. This can be considered as a horror of war because it is a lifelong consequence.

Generals Die in Bed should not all be classified as a typical war novel because all of the deaths that occur in the novel, the death of the enemy German soldier " Karl" is what stands out the most. This is because out of all

of the deaths the narrator has witnessed, Karl's death is what truly affected his life the most. " The image of Karl, he who died on my bayonet, seems to stand before my eyes. The shaking becomes worse. The movements are those one of who is palsied. " The feeling of knowing that you have killed a man would be unbearable.

The narrator himself could not take it. " I begin to sob. I am alone. " The nature of his language highlights the damage war causes. This shows psychological effect that the narrator would have had to bear with himself for the rest of his life. The constant fear of war is something that cannot be avoided. This constant fear is what drives soldiers to keep fighting. This constant fear is the fear of death and the soldiers are fighting for survival. Death is one of the distinct, recurring themes that Charles Harrison has plainly placed in *Generals Die in Bed* for a purpose.

The idea of having to witness a comrade dying is a horrible thing. Death is an important point of the horrors of war because death takes everything from an individual. It strips them of their honour, dignity, memories and their life. The narrator is stripped of his friends. The people he had considered brothers throughout the novel. " Like the hundreds of other men I had seen die, Broadbent dies like a little boy too – weeping, calling for his mother. " The most important word in that quote is " hundreds. The narrator clearly shows us that he has witnessed many men dying. Without any doubt, death summarizes " the horror of war. " The narrator, who is still nameless, is a perfect example of one of the horrors of war. The way the narrator is kept nameless throughout the course of the novel is proof that war can transfer loss of individuality and loss of one self. The way that this clearly is kept

constant throughout the course of the novel also proves that the horror of war is the underlying theme of *Generals Die in Bed*.