

No glory in war



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

War increases conflicts causing relationships to break revealing one's true nature. In the historical fictional novel *Three Day Road*, Joseph Boyden uses the character's Xavier and Elijah to explain how conflicts lead to devastating effects in war. The contrasting personalities and different cultural values between Xavier and Elijah, the need to be superior, and Elijah's fixation with terminating enemies advance the plot; ultimately leading to disastrous effects on war which affects relationships.

The first clash is the cross cultural conundrum Elijah and Xavier face against each other. Elijah is seen to embrace the western side with welcome arms while Xavier finds it strange. A prime example of the western side is the use of morphine: "Just a little bit? A push to get me through, this difficult evening?" (Boyden 146). Here, Elijah is seen desperate for morphine to which Xavier, disapproves. In fact, Xavier tells Elijah that he [Elijah] will no longer have any morphine, to which Elijah dismisses later on in the novel, and becomes addicted, thus, a wedge is driven between them. Another difference is Elijah's ability to speak English, while Xavier can not. Due to Elijah's experiences in residential schools, Elijah learns English. As a result, Elijah finds it easier to converse with his fellow soldiers, while Xavier is seen as a social outcast. Moreover, Elijah and Xavier have different perspectives on the indigenous cultures. Xavier views the indigenous culture in high regard while Elijah views the culture distastefully. As a matter of fact, Elijah insults Xavier numerous by calling Xavier a heathen, even though he himself is indigenous. On the other hand, the attention Elijah receives drives the wedge between his relationship with Xavier further since Xavier is

treated as if he invisible. Moreover, Elijah's ability to make friends and conversation causes Xaver to feel envy.

Due to Elijah's skill in English, Elijah receives attention from his comrades. However, Xavier does not receive any attention, giving way to jealousy and a need to compete. Since Elijah has taken the spotlight, Xavier feels that he has become " a brown ghost" (Boyden 65). Thus, Xavier has become more competitive to gain recognition for his efforts and attention. This is seen in the shooting competition where Xavier competes to be acknowledged as the best shot. Xavier is tired of being ignored and being in Elijah's shadow, so he takes this as an opportunity to show that he is capable of the same skills of Elijah. Xavier even thinks about revealing to the other soldiers that he taught Elijah how to hunt. Moreover, when Xavier eliminates the German sniper that had been slaying Xavier and Elijah's allies, he picks up the German's Mauser. Here Xavier and Elijah's are in disagreement of who uses the Mauser. Elijah tries to convince Xavier to give him the Mauser, but Xavier denies him the weapon. Furthermore, the murderous rampage Elijah fulfills himself with; along with his disappearances increases the distance between them and sets the novel for the final battle: Xavier versus Elijah.

Elijah's addiction to slaying German soldiers causes Xavier to be wary for him. Elijah wanders off by himself numerous times, and causes Xavier to worry for his safety as well as what he is doing. The two differ in morals as well. Xavier understands that it his duty to kill the enemy, and even prays for forgiveness after murdering. However, Elijah has become obsessed with killing, and can not come back to his normal self. Xavier realizes this through the death of a innocent woman and her child. He even scalps an enemy's

head after slaying him. Elijah tries to justify his actions by telling Xavier was in trouble, but one can tell that it was a civilian, not a soldier. As a result, Xavier tries to distance himself from Elijah and worries what to do to help him. On the other hand, Elijah's stories of his adventures into German lines causes Xavier to realize that Elijah has become mentally unstable and must be stopped. Moreover, Xavier held suspicions that Elijah had gone Windigo from the moment Elijah offered Xavier horsemeat, which is not possible since there are no horses near. However, what truly reinforced this suspicion was the confrontation from Xavier to Elijah: " I think you did more than just kill that young soldier yesterday" (Boyden 370). Elijah does not answer the question, but insteads poses a question on his own : " Why do you say that" (Boyden 350). He then proceeds to threaten Xavier to get out of his way, which shows that the relationship between Xavier and Elijah has become fragile. Therefore, it is no surprise when Elijah tells Xavier that only one of them will survive in the battle. Furthermore, Xavier comes from a line of Windigo killers, meaning that Xavier must do what is needed of him. Xavier then takes it upon himself to eliminate Elijah, to free him from the evil Windigo spirit, and to stop further madness.

The differing and evolving characteristics between Xavier and Elijah move the plot forward concluding that war ravages relationships, which is shown with the bond between Xavier and Elijah. The dissimilarities in Xavier and Elijah's cultures, competitive natures, and Elijah's excessive murders are all results of the pressures war puts upon the soldiers. To put it simply, war ends in bonds breaking and causes one to reveal his or her true nature.

There is no victor in war; what is left is a broken individual that has lost everything.