

# Ann petry's "in darkness and confusion" essay



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Ann Petry's short fiction "In Darkness and Confusion" is set in 1940s Harlem, New York. The United States is involved in World War II, which was the first war to initiate the Draft in the US. Although New York is in the Northern part of the country, racism is just as alive as it is in the South, just not as brutal. Riots break out throughout the city as the result of racial incidents. Ann Petry incorporates historic events of this time into her fictional story "In Darkness and Confusion". One event in "In Darkness and Confusion" that coincides with the time period is the initial incident that started the Harlem Riots. When William was at the bar, he witnessed a white police officer assaulting a black woman.

A black soldier tries to stop him, but the police officer shoots and kills the soldier. As a result, the people at the bar move to the streets and begin looting and breaking the windows of white-owned businesses. Another event that coincides with this time period is the mention of conscription, most commonly known as the military draft. William and Pink's son, Sam, was drafted into the Army out of high school.

He was sent to Georgia, where racism and prejudice make it hard for black people to stay, even if they are in service to their country. He was sentenced to twenty years of hard labor because he refused to move to the colored section of the bus he was on.