

Throughout the novel



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Throughout the novel, *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles, a significant theme arose that may or may not relate to someone in the real world: a war within the heart. The piece occurred during the time of World War II; however, the novel did not involve any violence or war, except for one war: the war between two friends.

Several times during the novel, two best friends, Gene and Phineas, hit rough battles in the relationship. Certain things like the Suicide Society, a club in which a member must accomplish risky dares to be invited in, realization and adventures trigger the battles to begin. When Gene fell off the branch as a part of the dare, Gene was most certainly conflicted as to what he should feel towards Phineas. He had practically saved my life. He had also practically lost it for me. I wouldn't have been on the damn limb except for him (Knowles page 33). Indubitably, Gene should be grateful, yet he also has the right to be frustrated and disappointed with Phineas. Not only was Gene battling Phineas externally, but internally, was a war within the heart.

Without a doubt, there are situations that compare to Gene's problem. For instance, if a person wanted to take their friend to a party, but the friend got into trouble because of the surroundings of the party, yet the person got the friend out of it, the friend would most likely be in the same position as Gene.

Additionally, throughout chapter four, a main question is risen: Is a friend really a friend, if the only reason they are with you is to make themselves the bigger, brighter star? Gene believed Finny was his truest friend until he opened his eyes and saw the manipulator Phineas really was. On page 53, Gene realizes, he hated Phineas for breaking that school swimming record

and how Finny hated Gene for getting an A in every course but one last term. Corresponding with the theme, the battle the two friends were carrying out was jealousy. Gene wanted the athleticism Phineas had and Phineas wanted the brains Gene had, so they sabotaged one another.

From the beginning of time, jealousy has conflicted relationships in situations such as getting a promotion to a job, or a person getting jealous over someone had that they did not. In this case, Gene had the smarts and Phineas was athletic and they envied one another for their talents.

Although the friendship between Gene and Finny involved battles, there were also time when they had peace. Knowles wrote on page 102, The light should have been off. Instead, as though alive itself, it poured in a thin yellow slab of brightness Metaphorically speaking, the light is the bond between Finny and Gene, while the think yellow slab is a voice in Gene telling him to forgive his best friend, which he did.

At the end of the novel, Phineas passes on and Gene states, I did not cry then or ever about Finny. I did not even cry when I stood watching him being lowered into his family's strait-laced burial ground I could not escape a feeling that this my own funeral, and you do not cry in that case.

Undoubtedly, Finny's death caused Gene to not only lose someone in his life, but also a separate piece of him was missing. The war ended with everybody dead and no life to live.