

Study Guide prepared by
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Barter Playwright-in-Residence

The Red Badge of Courage

Adapted by Catherine Bush from the novel by Stephen Crane

*Especially for Grades 7-12

By the Barter Players, Touring January - March, 2020

(NOTE: standards below are included for reading the novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, seeing a performance of the play, and/or completing the study guide.)



Virginia SOLs

English – 7.1, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 8.1, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.6, 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6, 11.1, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 12.1, 12.3, 12.6

History and Social Science – VS.7, USI.9, VUS.7

Theatre Arts – 7.6, 7.10, 7.18, 7.20, 8.5, 8.18, 8.22, TI.4, TI.6, TI.11, TI.13, TI.17, TII.6, TII.9, TII.12, TII.15, TII.17, TIII.5, TIII.6, TIII.11, TIV.12, TIV.13

Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts – Reading Literacy: 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 7.7, 7.10, 8.1, 8.4, 8.7, 8.10, 9-10.1, 9-10.3, 9-10.4, 9-10.7, 9-10.10, 11-12.1, 11-12.4, 11-12.7, 11-12.10

English Language Arts – Writing: 7.1, 7.3, 7.7, 7.9, 8.1, 8.3, 8.7, 8.9, 9-10.1, 9-10.3, 9-10.7, 9-10.9, 11-12.1, 11-12.3, 11-12.7, 11-12.9

Tennessee Curriculum Standards

Theatre -7.T.P3, 7.T.Cr1, 7.T.Cr2, 7.T.Cr3, 7.T.R1, 7.T.R3, 8.T.P3, 8.T.Cr1, 8.T.Cr2, 8.T.Cr3, 8.T.R1, 8.T.R2, 8.T.R3, HS1.T.PT, HS1.Cr1.B, HS1.T.R1, HS1.T.R3, HS2.T.PT, HS2.Cr1.B, HS2.T.R1, HS3.T.PT, HS3.Cr1.B, HS4.T.PT, HS4.Cr1.B

History and Social Studies – 8.35, 8.36, 8.43, 8.56, 8.58, 8.59, 8.60, 8.61, 8.62, 8.63, AAH.08,

North Carolina Essential Standards

Theatre Arts – 7.A.1, 7.AE.1, 7.CU.1, 8.A.1, 8.AE.1, 8.CU.1, 8.CU.2, B.C.1, B.C.2, B.A.1, B.AE.1, B.CU.1, B.CU.2, I.C.1., I.A.1, I.AE.1, I.CU.2, P.C.1, P.A.1, P.AE.1, A.C.2, A.A.1, A.AE.1

History and Social Science – 8.H.2, 8.H.3, AH1.H.3, AH1.H.4, AH1.H.5, AH1.H.7

Setting

A battlefield in Virginia, 1863.



Characters

Henry Fleming – a young soldier in the Union Army

Wilson – a fellow soldier

Jim Conklin – a fellow soldier

Ma – Henry's mother, appears to him in dreams

Billy – the flag bearer for Henry's regiment

Lieutenant – an officer in Henry's regiment

General – the commander of the corps

Clown – a circus performer from Henry's memory

Tight-rope Walker – a circus performer from Henry's memory

Elephant – a circus animal from Henry's memory

Old Soldier – a wounded Union soldier

Colonel – second in command to the General

Did You Know...?

In a typical Civil War battle, the opposing armies were only a few hundred yards apart. Usually one side would attempt to advance across an open field, while the defenders fired at them from the cover of trees or trenches. Such assaults were murderous because the attackers were so exposed. Nevertheless, this tactic remained common throughout the war. Large battles consisted of countless skirmishes, or minor fights, involving small groups of soldiers. The attacking soldiers did not advance steadily toward the enemy in neat ranks. Rather, they dashed forward a few yards, fired, then lay down or hid to reload before dashing forward a few more yards to fire again.

The thick, eye-watering smoke that settled over the battlefield made combat madly confusing. Soldiers could see only a short distance ahead. It was not uncommon for troops in the second or third line to fire into their own front rank. Soldiers often felt shots coming at them from all directions. The noise of the battle – the booming explosions of cannons, the



sharp bursts of rifle shots, and the shouts and groans of those fighting and dying – added to the confusion. Gruesome deaths were common, and advancing or retreating soldiers often had no choice but to step on the dead and wounded.

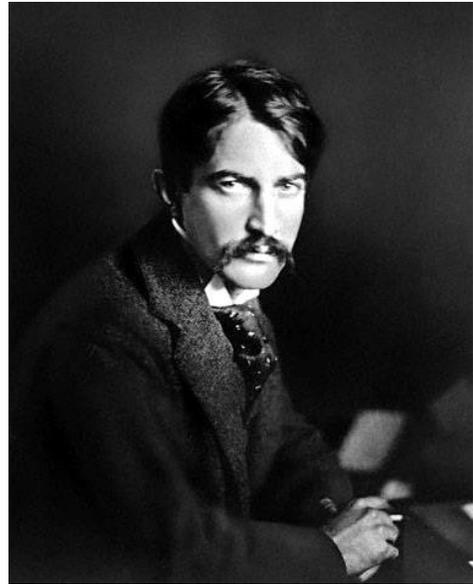
Synopsis

The Civil War has been raging for two years when young Henry Fleming, dreaming of glory, signs on with the Union Army. Soon, however, Henry is faced with the reality of war: tedious waiting and growing fear. Henry dreams of his Ma back home. He tells her he is afraid he will run in battle. Jim Conklin, a fellow soldier, arrives in camp with news that they are moving out and soon the regiment is marching into battle. Wilson, another soldier, gives Henry a letter to send to his family should he be killed. When Henry finally engages the enemy, he blindly fires into the smoke and haze, unable to see them. The enemy is repulsed and in a daydream, Henry tells Ma that his only thoughts during the fight were of the circus back home. Henry's reverie is soon interrupted by the enemy's second assault. This time Henry panics and runs from the field. Again, he imagines his mother and explains to her that it was impossible to hold the line and by running he lived to fight another day. Then Henry learns that his regiment in fact held the line and that his act was one of cowardice. Wounded soldiers from his regiment pass him, seeking medical attention. Henry meets Old Soldier who asks Henry where he was hurt. Before Henry can reply, Jim Conklin stumbles upon the scene, mortally wounded. Henry stays with him until he dies. When Old Soldier tries to drag Jim off to bury him, Henry shoves him away. Old Soldier hits Henry with the butt of his rifle and drags Jim off. Henry, now wounded, returns to his regiment. Henry tells Wilson he was wounded in battle and Wilson binds his wound. Blood appears on the bandage, giving Henry his "red badge of courage". Wilson, embarrassed that he panicked earlier, asks for his letter back. Henry, realizing that Wilson was afraid, too, regains his confidence. Ma appears to Henry and warns him against being too cocky. In the next engagement, Henry converts his fear into anger and becomes a fighting machine. Henry's regiment is chosen to charge the enemy. Henry leads the charge with the Lieutenant and assumes the role of color bearer after Billy, the color sergeant, is killed. Henry is much praised, but promises Ma that he will use the memory of his earlier cowardice to stay humble. More importantly, he promises to come home when the fighting's done.



Biography of the Author

Stephen Crane was born November 1, 1871 in Newark, New Jersey. He attended the College of Liberal Arts at Syracuse University, but did not graduate. He began writing and in 1893 self-published his first novel, *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets: a Story of New York*. The grim story of a prostitute and tenement life did not sell well. Crane then began writing sketches and short stories for newspapers, living in New York's bowery district. *The Red Badge of Courage*, which began as a serial, gained Crane instant fame and the notice of



publisher Irving Bacheller, who hired him as a reporter. Crane traveled across America, to Mexico down to Cuba to report on the Spanish-American conflict, and later to Greece. Crane's travels inspired further works including what is said to be his finest short work, *The Open Boat* (1898), a fictionalized account of his own harrowing experience adrift in a boat after the ship he was sailing in, the *Commodore*, sank. In 1896 Crane met Cora Taylor, owner of a brothel in Jacksonville, Florida, and instantly fell in love. They eventually moved to Sussex, England. In 1900, Crane became gravely ill. He died on June 5, 1900 and was buried in Hillside, New Jersey.

Biography of the Playwright

Catherine Bush lives in Abingdon, VA where she is Barter Theatre's playwright-in-residence. Her plays for young audiences include *Cry Wolf!*,



Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel, Frosty, The Scarlet Letter, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, My Imaginary Pirate, The Red Badge of Courage, All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth, The Princess and the Pea, The Call of the Wild, The Legend of Sleepy Holly, Aesop's Fables, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Mother Goose: The Musical, Antigone, Jingle All the Way, Great Expectations, Anne of Green Gables, Old Turtle and the Broken Truth, Robin Hood, Snow White

and the Seven Dwarfs, Alice in Wonderland, Clementine: the Musical, Tarzan, The Little Mermaid, and Peter Pan.



A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted that to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, “With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh.” The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading “ham for Hamlet” caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of *Cheers*, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the producing artistic director in October 1992. In that time, attendance has grown from 42,000 annual patrons to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements have also been made. Including maintenance to both theatres, and in 2006, the addition of The Barter Café at Stage II and dramatic improvements to Porterfield Square.

Barter represents three distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre Main Stage, Barter Theatre Stage II and The Barter Players. Barter Theatre, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter Stage II, across the street from Barter Main Stage and beyond Porterfield Square, offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. The Barter Players is a talented ensemble of actors, producing plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.

From the Page to the Stage!

How does a book become a stage play? Here are some of the elements that went into the Barter Players' production of *The Red Badge of Courage*...

1. Script

It all starts here. A playwright (in this case, Playwright-in-Residence Catherine Bush) turns the prose of literature into dialogue and dramatic action. This is called "adapting". Sound easy? **Try it yourself!** Pick a scene from your favorite story and adapt it into a scene for the stage. Try not to use the narrative voice – focus instead on creating "dialogue" between the characters.

2. Director/Actors

The director and actors begin the rehearsal process. The director "blocks" the play, which means he tells the actors where to move and stand and sit. The actors work on learning their lines, finding their character's motivation and creating the world of the play. The length of a rehearsal process for a Barter Player production ranges from 30 – 40 hours spread out over 3-4 weeks, depending on the play.

3. Set Design

The set designer designs a set that will not only serve the aesthetic needs of the production by creating visuals that represent the various locations in the story (i.e. the battlefield, Henry's farm, the circus) but also function as a safe environment upon which the actors will move (or be moved). A good set design will also allow the action to flow from one scene to another smoothly, with seamless transitions. **Try it yourself!** Using the scene you adapted, design a set that will both visually serve the story and function effectively for the actors.

4. Costumes/Wigs

The costume designer is responsible for creating a different look for each character while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the production. Each actor's costume must be tailored to fit and be built to take the wear-and-tear of 6 shows a week *plus* tour! Also, in a show where the actor is required to play more than one character, the design must incorporate a method to facilitate "quick changes". The wig designer is responsible for designing, building and styling the wigs that will appear in the show. Like the costumes, wigs are necessary to help distinguish characters. **Try it yourself!** Design a costume/wig for the character in your scene. Make sure your costume includes a mechanism to make "quick changes possible."

5. Props

Henry's gun! Billy's flag! These are a few examples of the props designed and built by Barter's props department for this production. A **prop** is defined as an object used on stage by actors for use in the plot or story line of a theatrical production. **Try it yourself!** Design and build the props you will need for your scene.

6. Lights/Sound

Lights not only illuminate the actors and pull focus to various spots on the stage but, together with sound, help create a mood. Lights and sound can also, along with the set, help establish location. The sound of crickets, moonlight washing over a tent and voila! We are in camp with Henry as he gazes at the North Star! **Try it yourself!** Put together a soundtrack for your scene that establishes place and mood. Feel free to use recorded music/sound effects or perform it live!

7. Stage Manager

The Stage Manager attends all the rehearsals and once the show goes into production, is "in charge", calling all the sound and light cues and maintaining the integrity of the piece during its run.

Vocabulary Words

From the play

cavalry	skedaddle	pickets
shirking	brindle	artillery
regiment	skulking	noggin
scrimmage	reserve	potshot
gourd	duty	canteen
rations	hightail	

From the novel

campaign	perambulating	ardor	sullenly
assemblage	skirmish	prowess	transfixed
secular	harangue	solemnly	valor
prolongation	brigade	tumult	vindication
speculation	flank	conjure	clamor
despondent	remonstrance	derisive	delirium
blatant	gesticulating	frenzy	despondent
commiseration	fathom	gaunt	frantic
blithe	ominous	plight	gospels
vociferous	annihilate	spectral	lurid

Define the vocabulary words above then write sentences using them. Remember: anyone reading your sentence should be able to understand the word from the context in which it is used.

Did You Know...?

The soldier, who carried the regiment's flag, or colors, was exposed to great danger on the battlefield. The regimental flag was a badge of honor and pride. Therefore, the color-bearer had to carry the flag visibly, in front of the action, as an inspiration to the fighting men. Because the flag symbolized defiance and aggression to the enemy, the color-bearer was always a first target. The color-bearer had the shortest life expectancy in the unit. Several color guards in succession might be killed in the same battle. Civil War battle accounts are full of stories of the exceptional bravery and sacrifice of the color guards.

Questions & Activities

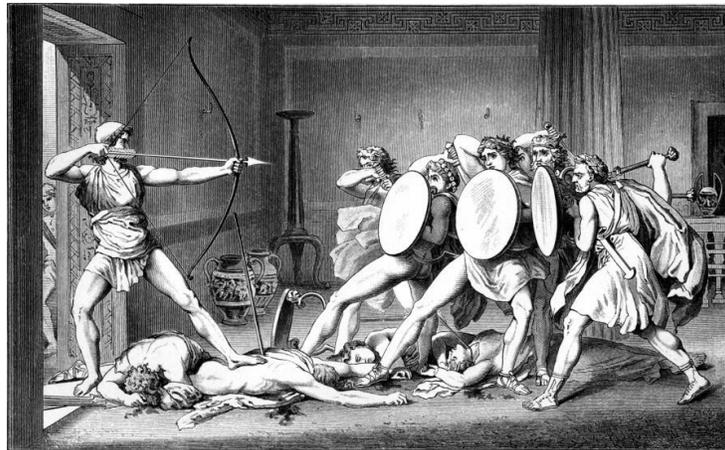
1. The American Civil war has been raging for two years when Henry Fielding enlists to fight. **Using the internet for research, make a list of the various grievances between the North and South that led up to the War.** How did these grievances affect Henry? What was Henry's life like before he enlisted? Where did he live? How did he make a living? **Discuss.**

Extra credit: How does knowing the history of the events that led up to the Civil War help you better appreciate this story? **Discuss.**

2. Why did Henry decide to enlist? What was he hoping to achieve? In the opening chapter of the novel, Henry refers to various battles and marches as "Homeric." Who is Homer? How did Homer's view of war influence Henry? **Discuss.**

WRITE IT!

Write a paper comparing and contrasting Henry Fleming with his hero Odysseus from *The Odyssey*. Cite passages from the texts to support your views.



3. What was Henry's relationship with his mother? What advice did she give him before he left for the War? Was she happy with his decision to go fight? How often do we see Henry's mother in the novel? How often do we see her in the play? Why do you think this was done? What is Henry's mother function in the play? **Discuss.**



EXTRA CREDIT: Imagine you are Henry. **Write a letter persuading** your mother to let you enlist in the army.

4. It has been said that the Army's unofficial motto is "Hurry up and wait." What does this mean? How does this apply to Henry's life in camp? **Cite examples from the book to support your answer.**

5. What was Henry's greatest fear on the eve of battle? Why was he afraid? Imagine that you are in the same situation – how would you feel? Is it okay to be afraid? **Discuss.**

6. How does Henry perform during the first attack? Why does he run from battle during the second attack? **Discuss.**



7. What is "courage?" Does it mean different things to different people? Write down your definition of courage then, searching through newspapers and magazines, **find an article about someone whose actions support your definition. Present your article to the class** and explain why this person was courageous. What is the difference between "courageous" and "heroic?"

8. Who is Old Glory? Why is she so important to Billy? What was Billy's role in the fighting? **Discuss.**

9. What is the significance of the letter Wilson gives Henry before the battle begins? The letter is contained in a yellow envelope – what does the color yellow denote? Do you think this was the author's intended purpose? **Discuss.**



10. What happens to Jim Conklin? How does Henry react to this? **Discuss.**

11. What is the “red badge of courage?” How did Henry earn his? What would you have done if you earned your badge the same way? Stephen Crane writes of Henry: “He had performed his mistakes in the dark, so he was still a man.” What does he mean by that? **Discuss.**

12. The American flag plays an important role in this story. Did the American flag look the same in 1863 as it does today? How is it the same? How is it different? **Using the internet, research the history of the American Flag. Present your findings to the class,** along with pictures of the flag over the years.



13. Assume the identity of one of the following characters: Wilson, Jim Conklin or Billy. As that character, **keep a journal.** Be sure your journal entries include your thoughts and feelings regarding these specific events: the night after your character enlisted, your character saying goodbye to his loved ones, your character meeting the others for the first time, and the eve of the first battle. **Create as many details of your character’s life as possible.**

14. How would this story be different if we were privy to Wilson’s thoughts instead of Henry’s? The Lieutenant’s thoughts? Jim Conklin’s thoughts? **Discuss how “point-of-view” affects the interpretation of a story.**

15. The play you saw was a *touring* show, therefore the set, costumes, lights, sound and props were kept to a minimum. **Pick a scene from *The Red Badge of Courage* and design a set** that would work in your school’s auditorium. Keep in mind sightlines as well as the placement of entrances and exits. Once you have designed your set on paper, make a to-scale model of it. **Present it to your class and explain how it would work.** Is it possible to design a set that would function for every different scene in the play?

16. How did Henry’s character change from the beginning of the play to the end? What made him change? **Discuss.**

WORD SEARCH

Find the following words below: **Henry, soldier, Civil War, Wilson, battle, courage, Yankee, Johnny Reb, Jim Conklin, cannon, marching, Lieutenant, Stephen Crane, Billy, circus, farm, Colonel, Old Glory, regiment, fresh fish**

W F D G R C E E K N A Y E C T
T I A X O B I L L Y Z G R B N
Z N L R H J X V Z C A J E T A
H N E S M B L Y I R S R F B N
Y V I M O D T X U L Y Q Y A E
B F G L I N U O G N W R M T T
Y I O Y K G C C N Q N A A T U
E N A R C N E H P E T S R L E
Z E G P W N O R H J C R C E I
X L D R B J O C U G F E H S L
C O L O N E L N M U S I I U G
Y R O L G D L O N I F D N C I
B S O I Z G G P P A J L G R P
F R E S H F I S H Y C O N I W
V E F V B L R V F W E S H C B

True and False

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. ____ *The Red Badge of Courage* was written by Ichabod Crane.
2. ____ Henry Fielding fought in the American Revolution.
3. ____ Old Glory was flag carried by the Confederate soldiers.
4. ____ Jim Conklin and Wilson argued incessantly.
5. ____ Before he enlisted, Henry considered war a glorious pursuit.
6. ____ Henry's mother encouraged him to enlist.
7. ____ Jim Conklin died from wounds received in battle.
8. ____ During the first skirmish Henry daydreamed of going to the beach.
9. ____ Wilson and Jim Conklin loved to march.
10. ____ The American Civil War lasted four years.
11. ____ "Fresh fish" referred to food the new recruits were forced to eat.
12. ____ Henry was shot in the head.
13. ____ The red badge of courage refers to a wound received in battle.
14. ____ Henry carries the flag after Billy is killed.
15. ____ Henry gets to return to his farm once the battle is over.

Matching

Draw a line connecting the person/place in the 1st column with the corresponding description in the 2nd.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Ma | a. Henry's daydream |
| 2. Jim Conklin | b. A young soldier |
| 3. The circus | c. Henry's home |
| 4. Henry Fielding | d. Author |
| 5. Billy | e. The flag bearer |
| 6. Stephen Crane | f. Henry's mother |
| 7. The farm | g. Dies of his wounds |

17. Scholars theorize that the battle referred to in *The Red Badge of Courage* is the Battle of Chancellorsville. Using the internet, research this battle. Where is Chancellorsville? When was this battle fought? Who won? How long did this battle last? Why do you think Stephen Crane chose this battle for the setting of his story? **Cite references in the novel that support the scholars' theory.**

18. How do people discover what their strengths and weaknesses are? How would you respond to the idea that each person is an “unknown quantity” until he or she is tested by a challenging situation? **Working with a partner, create a chart listing some challenging or stressful situations that test a person's character.** Consider using such categories as school, work, or sports. Next to create situation, create a list of actions a person might take when presented with it. **Share your chart with the class.** What might people discover about themselves in each situation? What makes a certain course of action the “right thing to do?”

19. What makes someone a “hero?” Is Henry Fielding the hero of *The Red Badge of Courage*? If so, why? Why did Henry leave his regiment? Was it an act of courage or cowardice? What would you have done in his circumstances? How did Henry perceive his own actions?



20. In the first paragraph of his novel, Stephen Crane uses the word “red” in describing the enemy campfire. What else in the book does he describe as red? **Make a list.** Is his usage of the word “red” sometimes surprising? How so? **Discuss.** Author H.G. Wells refers to this as Crane's “force of color.” What does he mean by this? What other colors does Crane use in his book? What do these colors describe? **Again, make a list and discuss.**

21. The narrator in the novel always refers to the protagonist as “the youth.” We only learn Henry's name from his fellow soldiers. Why does the author do this? How does it affect the story?

22. When soldiers were killed in battle, it was the duty of their commanding officer to write a letter home to their loved ones with the news. **Assume the role of the Lieutenant and compose a letter to Jim Conklin's family apprising them of his death.** How different would the letter be if Henry wrote it? If Wilson wrote it?

23. This play is adapted from Stephen Crane's novel and because it was written for a touring company, certain elements from the novel were left out of the script. This happens frequently when a book is adapted into a different medium. What other ways could this story be told? Through dance? Through music? Through pictures? Through a collage of current event headlines? **Working in groups, pick your favorite chapter from the book or your favorite scene from the play and recreate it using another medium of your choice. Present it to your class.** Be prepared to discuss why you picked certain elements from the story to recreate and not others

24. Note how the battle scenes were depicted in this play. Were they effective? Were you able to follow the action even though you only saw one side of the battle? How were sound and movement employed? How were they similar to the scenes in the book? How were they different? How would these scenes appear in a movie? **Discuss.**

Did You Know...?

Desertion was common during the Civil War. Some soldiers deserted out of fear during battle. Most recruits received little training and almost no guidance about what to expect in battle. Whole units were often composed of untried men, without veterans who could provide information or advice. In their memoirs, Civil War soldiers often express a fear of battle, but many were as afraid of being branded cowards as they were of being wounded or killed. "Showing the white feather," or displaying cowardice, could bring humiliation both in the regiment and back home with friends and family.

Other desertions were more calculated and for reasons other than fear. Some men left the army because of the harsh physical conditions. Others were tired of not being paid on time, or returned home to help their struggling families. Still others resented their officers, who often lacked military training. Many men deserted because they had enlisted simply for the bounty, or reward that was offered to enlistees late in the war.



Suggested Further Reading

Other novels by Stephen Crane:

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets
The Black Riders and Other Lines
The Little Regiment
The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky
The Third Violet
The Blue Hotel
War Is Kind,
The Monster and Other Stories
Active Service
The Open Boat.

To find out more about Stephen Crane, his life and his works, check out the following links on the Internet:

The Literature Network

<http://www.online-literature.com/crane>

The Stephen Crane Society

<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/crane/index.html>

