

“The Man I Killed” Test Study Questions

1. What is the 1st paragraph of the story about?
2. What did the young man hope to become some day?
3. What is Kiowa doing throughout the story?
 - a. What is Tim doing?
4. What did the boy fear about his performance in battle?
5. How did the other boys at school treat him?
6. What does Tim’s examination of the boy’s body tell us about Tim’s feelings about his death?
7. What was the boy carrying?
8. What does Kiowa keep insisting Tim do?
 - a. How does Tim respond?

A. How did the narrator react to the fact that he killed another human being? What evidence in the story leads you to this conclusion?

B. This story describes fairly intimate aspects of the dead man’s life. Where do these details come from? How can Tim O’Brien know them? What is going on here?

“Ambush” Test Study Questions

1. Why did Tim throw the grenade at the young man?
 2. What could Tim have done instead?
 3. What is the significance of the story’s final image?
- A.** Tim O’Brien’s daughter, Kathleen, asks if he ever killed a man: “You keep writing these war stories,” she said, “so I guess you must’ve killed somebody.” Following this, O’Brien relates two possible scenarios of the death described in “The Man I Killed” to explain “This is why I keep writing war stories.” In your opinion, why does O’Brien keep writing war stories?
- B.** Where does truth reside in this book? What is the connection between O’Brien’s actual experiences and the events in this book? Why is O’Brien using lies to get at “the truth”?