

The Killer Angels SparkNotes Literature Guide: An In-Depth Exploration of Michael Shaara's Masterpiece

About the Book



The Killer Angels (SparkNotes Literature Guide)

(SparkNotes Literature Guide Series) by Bright Summaries

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 207 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 72 pages



The Killer Angels is a Pulitzer Prize-winning historical novel by Michael Shaara, first published in 1974. The novel depicts the Battle of Gettysburg, a pivotal moment in the American Civil War, through the eyes of several key figures on both sides of the conflict.

The novel's title is taken from a line spoken by Confederate General Robert E. Lee, who referred to his soldiers as "the killer angels." Shaara's novel explores the complexities of war and the human cost of battle, while also offering a vivid and immersive account of one of the most important events in American history.

About the Author

Michael Shaara was an American author known for his historical fiction novels. He was born in 1928 and served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. After the war, he worked as a journalist and editor before turning to writing full-time.

Shaara's most famous work is *The Killer Angels*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1975. He also wrote several other novels, including *The Broken Place* and *For Love of the Game*.

About the SparkNotes Literature Guide

This SparkNotes Literature Guide provides a comprehensive overview of *The Killer Angels*, including:

- An to the novel, its author, and its historical context
- Character profiles of the major figures in the novel
- Chapter summaries and analysis
- A discussion of the novel's literary techniques and devices
- An exploration of the novel's major themes

This guide is designed to help students understand and appreciate *The Killer Angels*, both as a work of literature and as a historical document.

Historical Context

The Killer Angels is set during the Battle of Gettysburg, which took place from July 1-3, 1863. The battle was a turning point in the American Civil War, and it resulted in a major victory for the Union forces.

The battle was fought between the Army of the Potomac, led by General George G. Meade, and the Army of Northern Virginia, led by General Robert E. Lee. The battle was fought on a series of hills and ridges outside the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

The battle was one of the bloodiest in American history, with more than 50,000 casualties. The Union victory at Gettysburg marked the beginning of the end of the Civil War, and it led to the eventual defeat of the Confederacy.

Characters

The Killer Angels features a large cast of characters, including both historical figures and fictional characters. The novel's main characters include:

- **Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain:** A Union colonel who is the protagonist of the novel
- **Robert E. Lee:** The commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia
- **James Longstreet:** A Confederate general who is one of Lee's most trusted subordinates
- **George Pickett:** A Confederate general who leads the ill-fated charge on the third day of the battle

- **John Buford:** A Union general who is one of the first to arrive at Gettysburg

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1

The novel opens with a description of the Battle of Gettysburg, and it follows the Union forces as they arrive at the battlefield. The chapter introduces the main characters, including Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Robert E. Lee, and James Longstreet.

Chapter 2

The second chapter focuses on the first day of the battle, which is known as the Battle of Seminary Ridge. The chapter follows the Union and Confederate forces as they engage in fierce fighting, and it ends with the Union forces being forced to retreat.

Chapter 3

The third chapter focuses on the second day of the battle, which is known as the Battle of Little Round Top. The chapter follows Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and his regiment as they defend Little Round Top from a Confederate attack. The Union forces are victorious, and they are able to hold their position.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter focuses on the third day of the battle, which is known as Pickett's Charge. The chapter follows George Pickett and his men as they make a desperate charge against the Union lines. The charge fails, and the Confederate forces are defeated.

Chapter 5

The fifth chapter is the epilogue of the novel. The chapter follows Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain as he returns to his home in Maine after the war. The chapter reflects on the war and its aftermath, and it ends with a message of hope and reconciliation.

Literary Techniques and Devices

Michael Shaara uses a variety of literary techniques and devices to convey the complexities of war and the human cost of battle. These techniques include:

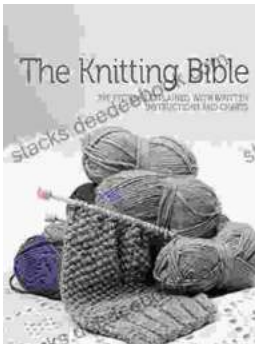
- **Point of view:** The novel is told from the point of view of several different characters, including both Union and Confederate soldiers. This allows the reader to see the battle from multiple perspectives and to understand the motivations of both sides.
- **Imagery:** Shaara uses vivid imagery to create a realistic and immersive depiction of the battle. He describes the sights, sounds, and smells of the battlefield, and he brings the characters to life with his detailed descriptions.
- **Dialogue:** The novel features a



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