

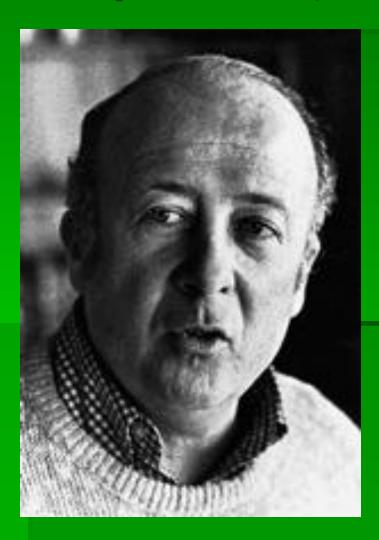
A Separate Peace

by John Knowles

Mrs. Douglas 10th Grade Honors/ Gifted English

John Knowles

September 16, 1926 - November 29, 2001



- Applied for Exeter one day because he found a catalog lying around the house
- After the entrance exams, he was held back a year; but he was admitted.
- Graduated in 1945
- Attended school during WWII; had to help with the war effort

Devon School

- Phillips Exeter Academy is called Devon School in the novel
- Knowles attended for two years, consecutive summers 1943 and 1944
- There really was a secret club in which members jumped from a tree branch into the river



Characters

- Knowles put a little of himself in all of the characters
- He used classmates as models for the characters too
- Some situations in the novel are similar to events he experienced, but the novel is NOT autobiographical
- The only elements of A Separate Peace that were NOT present at Exeter were "anger, envy, [and] violence. There was only friendship, athleticism, and loyalty" while Knowles attended the school.

Characters

- Gene Forrester
- Phineas (Finny)
- Elwin Lepellier (Leper)
- Brinker Hadley

- Mr. Hadley
- Mr. Prud'homme
- Mr. Lundsbury
- Dr. Stanpole
- Phil Latham

World War II

- WWII is the historical backdrop for the novel
- During this time it was universally accepted that all men join the service when they turned 18, were taller than 5', and weighed more than 105 pounds
- Most men were drafted into the war. These young men saw the worst of the war.
- The boys of Devon school (with educated, comfortable, respectable families) enlisted and served in more prestigious (safer) programs.

Basic Training

- Drafted and enlisted men both endured basic training
- Individual differences were discarded to make way for group goals and a group identity
- This transition from small prep school to military service was a HUGE adjustment for some young men

1950s Literature

- During this post war period, fictional adolescents became the ultimate individuals
- They constantly tested rules or were desperate to live without them
- Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger and The Lord of the Flies by William Golding combined anarchy, tyranny, and structure to create new identities for young men

"I never killed anybody and I never developed an intense level of hatred for the enemy. Because my war ended before I ever put on a uniform; I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there."

Gene ForresterA Separate Peace

Works Cited

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