

Tim O'Brien captivates us with his "charming" story of a man thrown into the Vietnam War trying to get into the war. He makes the sights, sounds, and tension of war come to life. His inner **conflicts** provoke thought and are very sentimental. In a story, the **theme** is what really pulls everything together and this story is pulled together very well by various themes throughout its entirety. Readers benefit by applying those life lessons to their own lives. In any case, "Where Have You Gone Charming Billy?" is definitely a recommended read.

**Conflicts** are what complete plot lines in any story and the conflicts in this story keep readers on the edge of their seats. For example, in this story, Private First Class Paul Berlin had a hard time staying calm and his wise friend reminded him, "Half the battle, just staying calm. You'll get better at it" (O'Brien 203). In addition, Paul was conflicted on the inside by being so tense about his current situation. Furthermore, he was overwhelmed by fear. In fact, he says the following about his inner **conflict**: "...now the fear was mostly the fear of being so terribly afraid again" (O'Brien 199). Paul's body was also just not up to the physical toll of war. At every possible rest point, he imagined how good it would feel to stop and sleep, fighting his body just to stay awake. This soldier just wanted to take a break, and this is how desperately: "The graveyard had a perfumy smell. A nice place to spend the night, he thought. The mounds would make fine battlements, and the smell was nice and the place was quiet. But they went on..." (O'Brien 199).

Not only did the story have gripping conflicts, but the **themes were** important and gave readers something to consider. Thinking about this story, right away the first **theme** that comes to mind is that you never know when or how you will die. An example of this is when a fellow soldier loses his foot to a land mine and is so scared that he literally scares himself to death. This implies that being overly concerned about something can only make circumstances worse. Another **theme** found in "Where Have You Gone Charming Billy?" is that you can endanger both you and your friends simply because of your actions. For example, Paul suddenly breaks out into a fit of laughter and could have given away their position to the enemy quite easily. Lastly, the

**theme** of high expectations is present. Throughout the story, Paul has high hopes that getting to the sea will be beneficial, but upon arriving there, he still feels just as fearful as he did before.

In conclusion, there are many literary elements that make this story all the more interesting and relatable. The **conflicts** of the story give you insight into Paul's feelings and struggles which are essential in understanding what kind of person he is. For authors to include **themes** is necessary because otherwise there would be no point in reading the story because you would get nothing out of it. The addition of **similes** makes it easier to be empathetic toward the characters, to feel what they feel. As you can see, "Where Have You Gone Charming Billy?" is made so much better thanks to these literary terms.

- Intro Paragraph (bold lit techniques) – set the scene by giving an overview of the story AND mentioning the 2 lit elements in your paper – AVOID saying this paper is about or I am focusing on or I am writing about
- Body paragraph focused on one literary element w/ at least 3 supporting examples – have a clear topic sentence (bold lit tech in topic sent)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Body paragraph focused on one literary element w/ at least 3 supporting examples – have a clear topic sentence (bold lit tech in topic sentence)
- Conclusion – also provide brief summary of the story and mention the two lit elements – don't introduce new info

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