



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE BY STEPHEN CRANE

1. What is the significance of the fact that Henry's "red badge of courage" comes not from being wounded in battle but from being assaulted after deserting his regiment?
2. When he realizes that he may run from battle, why does Henry feel that "in this crisis his laws of life were useless" (p. 10)?
3. Why can't Henry find another soldier who shares his emotions?
4. Why does Henry come to believe that "he had not enlisted of his free will" (p. 23)?
5. Why does the narrator never refer to the characters by name?
6. Why is the use of metaphor so prevalent in the novel?
7. When talking to the tattered man, why does Henry believe that it is "not within the power of vigilance" to keep his crime a secret (p. 65)?
8. Why is Henry unaware "of the process" that made him "a barbarian, a beast," and "a knight" in battle (p. 101)?
9. After overhearing the general say that few from Henry's regiment will survive, why does Henry stay and fight?
10. Even more than the enemy he faces in battle, why does Henry hate the officer who, "not knowing him, had called him a mule driver" (p. 115)?
11. Why does Henry go from deserting his regiment to bearing the flag in battle?
12. What does the narrator mean by saying that Henry "had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man" (p. 139)?
13. At the end of the novel, what does the narrator mean by saying that Henry "saw that the world was a world for him, though many discovered it to be made of oaths and walking sticks" (p. 139)?
14. Is it possible to do something voluntarily and yet not do it by one's own free will?
15. Should acts of bravery, as the term is commonly understood, be regarded as aberrations from our essential nature or as the fullest manifestations of it?

Discussion questions provided by the publisher.



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