Analysis Of A Separate Peace- Essay, Research Paper

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The title of the novel A Separate Peace implies many insights

which show how tranquillity existed at the Devon School; that which

occurred during a specific time period, or that of certain characters.

The Summer Session of Devon served as a peaceful interval between the

spring and fall semesters, during which Gene and Phineas found peace

within themselves.

The Summer Session was a few dozen boys being force-fed

education. The rules were not enforced strictly, if they were

enforced at all. The boys had been an idiosyncratic, leaderless

band…undirected except by the eccentric notions of Phineas.

(Knowles, 66.) During the Summer Session, Gene and Phineas were also

ineligible to be drafted into the army. They were in shaky transit

from the status of Lower Middler to Upper Middler, and were not old

enough to go to war. (Knowles, 7.) Because of their playful behavior

and their age, the boys lived a separate peace, away from rules, the

rest of the world, and the war. At the termination of the Summer

Session, Gene commented that peace had deserted Devon. (Knowles,

64.)

Another example of how a separate peace had existed at Devon

was Phineas. On page 195, Gene comments on how nothing had broken

[Finny s] harmonious and natural unity. (Knowles, 195.) The one way

in which Finny achieved and maintained his state of harmony was

denial. The most evident example was his response to the war. His view

was that there isn t any war, and the whole situation was invented

by fat old men in attempt to keep the kids in line. (Knowles, 107.)

His reaction was caused by the fact that he happened to be injured,

and unable to participate. Finny s way in establishing a separate

peace for himself was in complete denial of the situation. Another

evident example of creating a state of denial was his relationship

with Gene. On page 62, Gene confesses to Finny that he deliberately

jounced the limb so [he] would fall off, and Finny responds, of

course you didn t. (Knowles, 62.) It was possible that he knew the

truth about Gene, considering he had feelings about what had

happened. He confesses these feelings to Gene, and quickly dismisses

them, and even apologizes for having them in the first place, which

shows that he observed Gene s true evil and forced himself to deny it.

(Knowles, 58.) This denial helped Finny find peace within himself, and

to be at peace with Gene.

The last example of a separate peace was that which Gene found

within himself. He had always had trouble finding his true character,

and he helped himself do so by somewhat becoming a part of Phineas. On

page 54, Gene decides to put on Finny s clothes, for no apparent

reason. He looks in the mirror and realizes that he was Phineas,

Phineas to the life. (Knowles, 54.) At his new realization of

character, Gene says that he would never stumble through the

confusions of [his] own character again. (Knowles, 54.) After Finny s

accident, Dr. Stanpole tells Gene that Phineas would never be able to

play sports again. Gene decides he wanted no more of sports, as though

when Dr. Stanpole said Sports are finished he had been speaking of

[Gene]. (Knowles, 76.) In this way, Gene felt he was a part of

Phineas, and at peace with himself. When Finny dies, Gene did not cry

then or ever about him. He felt as if he had died himself. (Knowles,

186.) This shows how Gene had found his true self and was at peace by

becoming a part of Finny.

In conclusion, there were several forms of separate peace that

existed at Devon, the most significant being that of the Summer

Session, and that which Gene and Finny established for themselves. In

all forms of peace, a world had been created apart from that of

trouble, misunderstanding of character, reality, and war.