



Enduring Freedom

Trent Reedy and Jawad Arash

Tome Society It List Discussion Guide



Pre-reading questions

1. *Enduring Freedom* tells the story of two young men whose lives are changed by the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Click this [link](#) to take a moment to explore the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York. You may choose your path as the virtual experience moves through the museum. Feel free to restart the experience in order to see all available parts of the museum.
2. Operation Enduring Freedom is the official name used by the American government to refer to the war in Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism. What do you know about this war? Ask your parents, older siblings or family member, or teachers if they remember where they were when the planes struck the Twin Towers. Why do you think almost everyone can remember what they were doing at that exact moment in time?

Post-reading questions

1. Why did Joe Killian enlist in the Iowa Army National Guard? Do you think he would have enlisted after the events of 9/11?
2. Discuss this problem Baba Jan mentions on page 9: "growing problem of a generation of young people raised on bullets instead of books...Afghanistan's many problems grew from a lack of education". What does Baba Jan believe about the power of education and its ability to heal Afghanistan?
3. What choice did Baba Jan present to Baheer and Rahim? What did they choose, the shovel or the book? How did each boy feel about their choice throughout the book? Did either regret their decision? Explain your answer.
4. Compare and contrast Baheer's and Joe's opinions of each other and their countries. How does their opinions change throughout the book? Use specific examples from the book to explain how Joe and Baheer became friends and came to understand each other's culture.
5. What does everyday life in Afghanistan under Taliban control look like for young girls and women like Maryam? Why is Maryam often upset with her brothers for complaining about school?
6. Joe says, "The Army provided enough food and water for him to stay alive but the book's first pages helped him realize that it was not enough to simply exist. Human beings require more, or they begin to die inside." How does *Bridge to Terabithia* save Joe? How do Joe and Baba Jan's beliefs about books compare?
7. How does Joe feel about the medal he is awarded for befriending Baheer or according to the Army, "developing useful relationships with intel sources"?
8. How does Joe react after learning of Shaista's death? Was his treatment of Baheer understandable? Do you feel like Joe betrayed Baheer when he told THT about Haji Dilawar?
9. Reread Baheer and Joe's argument on 312-313 about Baheer's family living the war and the Americans being able to leave the war behind. How is the war different for Baheer and Joe? Why does Baheer not want to work with the Army? What motivated Baheer to share information with Joe even though he wasn't hoping to work with the Army or get a reward?
10. How was Baheer able to convince Baba Jan to let Maryam go to school? What argument did he make? What gave him the courage to speak up for his sister and all the girls in Afghanistan?
11. How did Baheer feel about becoming first in his class? How did the Taliban poison that dream?

Post-reading activities

1. After finishing *Enduring Freedom*, read the notes from the authors at the back of the book. How did their own experiences impact the story they co-wrote together? Were there any moments you were surprised to learn actually happened during their time in Farah, meeting each other, and becoming friends?
2. According to his excerpt at the end of the book, Trent Reedy, like the fictional Joe Killian, believes that the book *Bridge to Terabithia* saved him while he was at war and had a profound impact on his life. If you had to pick five books that have changed your life, what would they be and why? Create a 2-3 minute video sharing these books and ask your advisor to submit your finished product to the [Tome Society Book Print Video](#) competition.
3. Before deployment and numerous times throughout his time in Afghanistan, Joe asks himself if he will change, if he will survive, and how will he return to real life. How do you think combat impacts soldiers returning from war? What is PTSD? If you're interested, research the [Wounded Warrior Project](#) and ways to help.

More About This Book

Author's Website: www.trentreedy.com