“Ambush” by Tim O’Brien

**DIRECTIONS:** Mark identifications on your story copy as indicated. Then, make your analytical notes in the margin to explain your notations.

**Paragraphs 1 and 2**

* GREEN: Note two examples of characterization. Make a note in the margin about what those examples reveal.
* Identify POV in the margin, noting how that could affect the story’s credibility
* As you move into the flashback in paragraph 2 and then into 3, use PURPLE to mark evidence of that technique. Then, make inferences about the narrator/his experience even though explicit details are not directly stated.

**Paragraphs 3 and 4**

* YELLOW: Note two examples of time and/or place. Why/how do those choices matter?
* Paragraph 3 includes a one-sentence description to account for a five-hour span of time. Even though details are sacrificed, what feelings about the experience are still evoked through this collapse of time and action?
* RED: Underline three examples of imagery. Identify type and articulate the mood that these instances of imagery foster.

**Paragraphs 5 and 6**

* ORANGE: Annotate two instances of characterization of the narrator and what they reveal about him.
* BLUE: Annotate two instances of characterization of the Vietnamese soldier and what they reveal about him.
* There is a detached tone toward both soldiers. What does that detachment intimate about Tim the author’s own attitude about war?

**Paragraphs 7, 8, and 9**

* BROWN: Underline the simile and note why it has been employed.
* GREEN: Indicate evidence of a conflict. Identify the type and explain.
* Review paragraphs 8 and 9 about the grenade. Annotate the passages to consider:
* How including these paragraphs heightens the consequence of Tim the soldier’s actions
* How deleting these paragraphs would reduce the introspection of both Tim the soldier and Tim the narrator
* Take a stand: is it more effective to keep those paragraphs or to omit them?

**Paragraphs 10, 11, 12, and 13**

* Review sentence structure in paragraph 10; explain why Tim the author/Tim the narrator relies on a mixture of:
* short, simple sentences
* long sentences punctuated with hyphens and/or commas
* If O’Brien were to develop characterization of the Vietnamese soldier by providing him a history/background, what effect would that have on the reader in terms of:
* The reader’s opinion of Tim the narrator
* The reader’s opinion of the Vietnamese soldier
* The reader’s opinion of war in general

**Paragraph 14**

* RED: Identify evidence that illustrates the dominant conflict, label it, and explain.
* PURPLE: Note words/phrases that define Tim the narrator’s mood/tone about his experience. Articulate a word to describe the mood/tone as well.

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