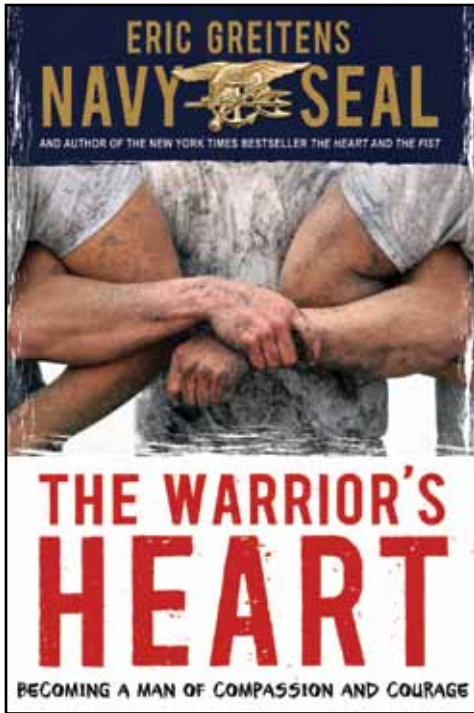


The Warrior's Heart: Becoming a Man of Courage and Compassion

by ERIC GREITENS



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About the Book

In this adaptation of his best-selling book *The Heart and the Fist*, Eric speaks directly to teen readers, interweaving memoir and intimate second-person narratives that ask readers to put themselves in the shoes of himself and others. Readers will share in Eric's evolution from average kid to globe-traveling humanitarian to warrior, training and serving with the most elite military outfit in the world: the Navy SEALs. Along the way, they will be asked to consider the power of choices, of making the decision each and every day to act with courage and compassion so that they grow to be tomorrow's heroes. Sure to inspire and motivate.

Pre-Reading Activities

Invite students to discuss ways in which they serve their community as individual volunteers, students, or as members of a club, organization, or house of worship.

Ask students to list and share what qualities one would need to be a great warrior. After reading *The Warrior's Heart*, ask students what additional qualities they would add to their list.

Discussion Questions

How do the heroes of history and legend that Greitens reads about in his youth shape his later interests?

What values does Greitens learn from working for Roger?

What does Greitens mean when he says that after a few weeks of attending college, he felt as if he'd been lied to? (14) Why is he disappointed in public policy studies?

Greitens applies for and receives a grant that enables him to travel to China. What does he learn from his experiences there? What does he mean when he says: "I began to think that I'd been born at the right time after all"? (36)

When Greitens returns from China, why does he decide to take up boxing? In addition to boxing, what are some other things Greitens learns from his trainer, Earl Blair?

When he sees his grandfather for the last time, what does Greitens not do that leaves him disappointed in himself?

While he is traveling on a train to Zagreb, a Bosnian woman asks Greitens: "If you're going to help, why don't you *do* anything?" (65) To what is the woman referring? How does her question come to haunt Greitens?

While he is volunteering in war-torn former Yugoslavia, why does Greitens refuse to take pictures of a donor who has come to hand out gum to refugee children? What did he dislike about the aid organization's advertisements for refugee children?

What important realizations does Greitens come to while working in the refugee camp in Gasinci?

When Greitens visits a local church congregation to show slides of photographs he took in Bosnia and Croatia, the questions the audience asks lead him to a sort of epiphany. What does he realize?

What about Greitens's experience in Bolivia challenges him with what he calls "a different kind of test"? (110)

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After traveling to Rwanda, Bolivia, India, and other places around the world, Greitens concludes that aid is not enough. He writes, "Nations are not parents to the world's people. Yet the basic fact remains: we live in a world marked by violence, and if we want to protect others, we sometimes have to be willing to fight." (106) How does this realization lead him to enlist in Navy SEAL training?

What does Greitens mean when he says that it was through his fellow officer candidates that he began to rediscover America? (154)

What is the "wisdom" that Greitens comes to see in his OCS training?

What are the various reasons the men in Greitens's group want to be SEALs? Is Greitens's motive unique?

What do you think is the most grueling part of Greitens's Navy SEALs training?

What does Greitens consider to be the "vicious beauty" of the BUD/S training? (222)

What effect does the death of Lieutenant Travis Manion have on Greitens?

Greitens writes: "On the frontlines—in humanitarian crises, in wars overseas, and around some kitchen tables here at home—I'd seen that peace is more than the absence of war, and that a good life entails more than the absence of suffering. A good peace, a solid peace, a peace in which communities can flourish, can only be built when we ask ourselves and each other to be more than just good, and better than just strong" (246–47). What is needed to create and maintain the "good peace, a solid peace" that Greitens speaks of?

What motivates Greitens to found The Mission Continues? What does he want the organization to do for veterans?

Post-Reading Activities

Throughout *The Warrior's Heart*, Greitens describes several difficult situations and asks what you would do in them. Choose one of the scenarios and explain in a few well-developed, detailed paragraphs what action you would take in the situation.

Have students work in groups to research one of the following topics and create a PowerPoint or other multimedia presentation on it for the class: Bolivian street children, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and Navy SEALs missions, other armed forces special forces, Rwandan genocide, and United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR).

If you are willing to accept Eric's challenge to find a mission of your own, begin by exploring Youth Service America at www.ysa.org.

Visit www.ericgreitens.com/warriorshheart, where you can download and complete your Mission Planning Guide.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Ellis, Deborah. *Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees*. Greenwood, 2009.

———. *I Am a Taxi*. Greenwood, 2006.

———. *Kids of Kabul: Living Bravely Through a Never-Ending War*. Greenwood, 2012.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Sunrise over Fallujah*. Scholastic, 2008.

Paterson, Katherine. *The Day of the Pelican*. Clarion, 2009.

Reedy, Trent. *Words in the Dust*. Scholastic, 2011.

A D I S C U S S I O N G U I D E
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Suggested Web Sites

Do Something

www.dosomething.org

The Mission Continues

www.missioncontinues.org

Mobilize.org

mobilize.org

Peace Jam

www.peacejam.org

Student World Assembly

www.studentworldassembly.org

Youth for Human Rights

www.youthforhumanrights.org

This guide was written by Edward T. Sullivan,
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