

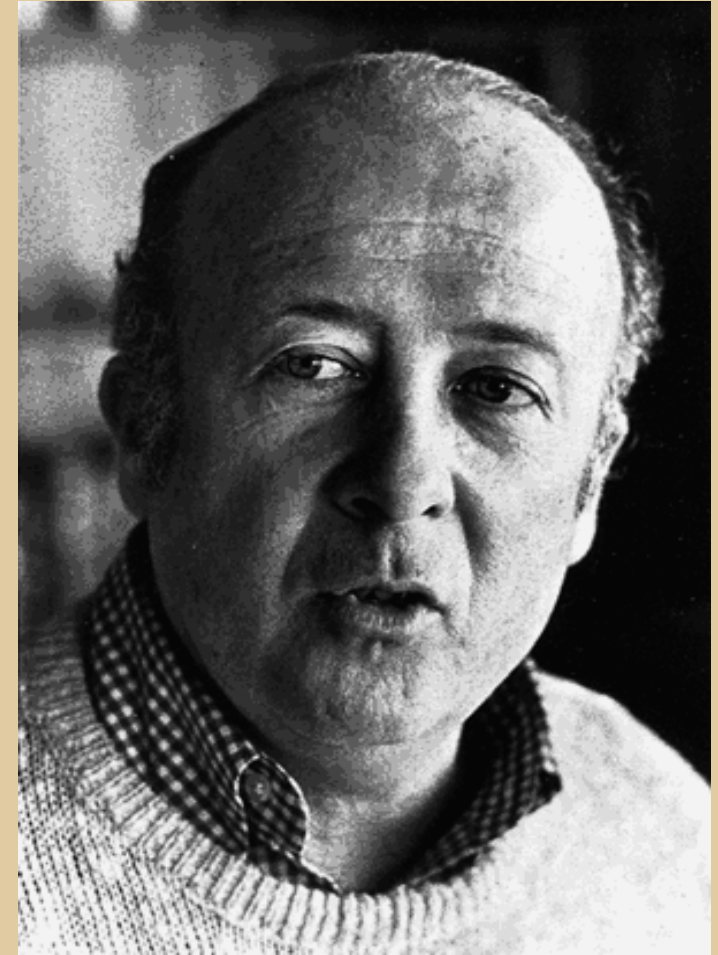


A Separate Peace

By: John Knowles

About the Author

- Born in West Virginia on September 16, 1926
- Parents were originally from Massachusetts.
- Family used to vacation there (M.A.) every summer
- Became the setting for many of his best known novels





He Had a Dream School

- At the age of fifteen, Knowles applied to an elite New Hampshire boarding school, **Phillips Exeter Academy**, after seeing it's catalogue in his family's home.
- After the entrance exams, he was held back a year; but he was admitted.
- Graduated in 1945

Phillips Exeter Academy



- Devon School, the setting of *A Separate Peace*, is based heavily on the Phillips Exeter Academy.
- ❖ A secret club really existed.



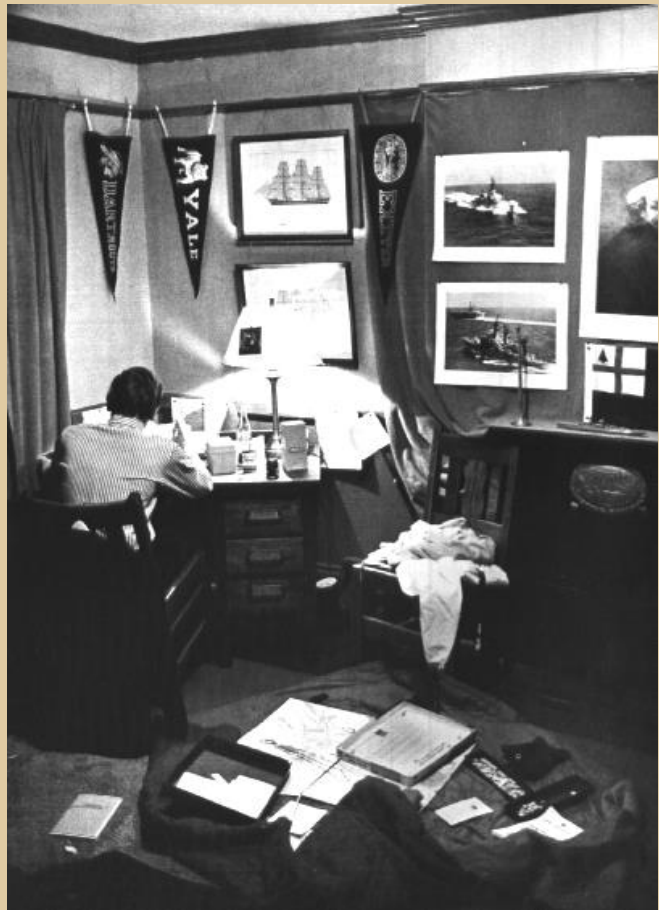
“It quickly seemed probable that I would flunk out...Then somehow or other I knuckled down, learned by myself how to study, discovered I had a brain which had more potential than a knack for writing, and by the end of that first term, I was passing every course comfortably... Meanwhile, I was falling in love with Exeter.”

- John Knowles

“All of my books are based on places, places I know very well and feel very deeply about. I begin with that place and then the characters and the plot emerge from it...A Separate Peace began with a playing field at Exeter Academy.”

– John Knowles





Boarding Schools

- ❖ Less familiar in the U.S. than in Europe, where they began
- ❖ Intended to prepare students for higher education (thus the nickname “prep” schools)
- ❖ Most enroll at 14 in U.S.
- ❖ Challenging course work





Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Students thrive in small classes❖ Students get involved in sports and other activities❖ Students learn at a young age how to get along with a variety of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Around-the-clock pressure❖ Miss out on opportunity to spend time with family❖ Live in a competitive environment❖ Can not leave peer pressure behind at end of day

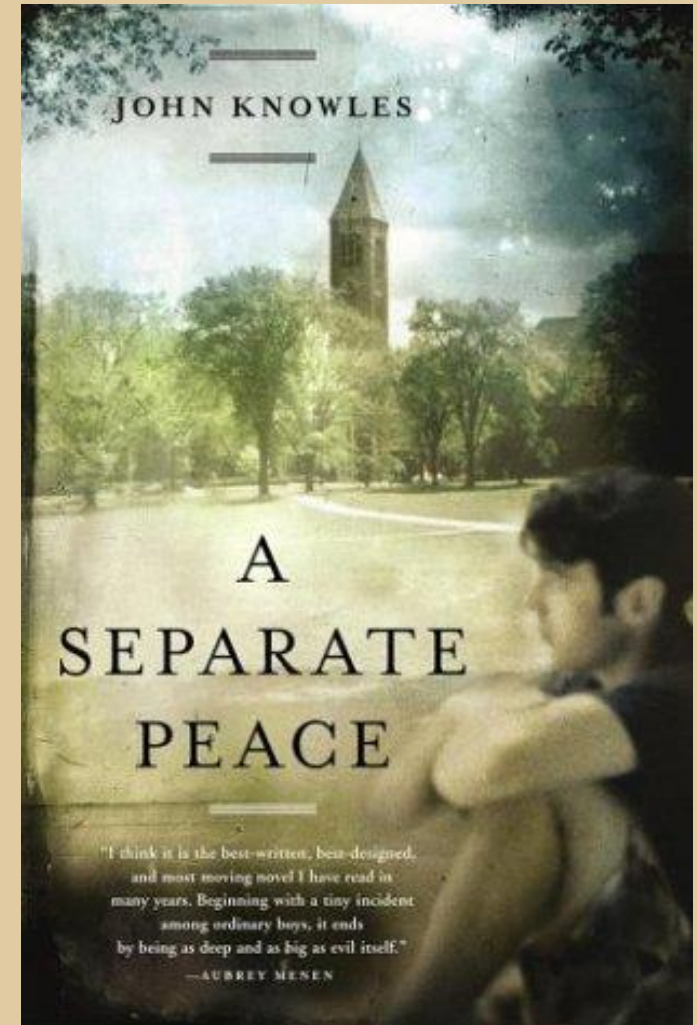


After Graduation

- ❖ Went into military after high school & trained to be a pilot for the U.S. Army Air Force
- ❖ When the war ended, he attended Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.
- ❖ Traveled & wrote during his 20s
- ❖ Wrote the novel each morning before work, reflecting upon his experiences as a teen boy during time of war

Writing the Novel

- ❖ Knowles's first novel
- ❖ First published in England in 1959
- ❖ Published in the U.S. in 1960
- ❖ So successful Knowles was able to quit his job and travel
- ❖ Knowles's most successful work
- ❖ Made into a movie ten years after being published
- ❖ This novel earned him the Rosenthal Award of the National Institute of Arts and Letters

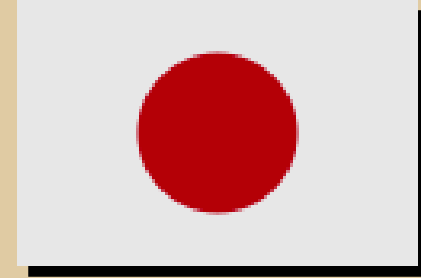
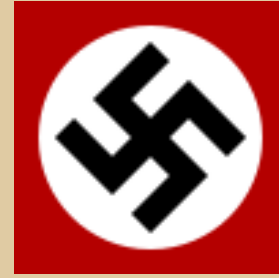




His Experiences Reflected

- ❖ Knowles put a little of himself in all of the characters
- ❖ He used classmates as models for the characters too
- ❖ Some situations in the novel are similar to events he experienced, but the novel is NOT autobiographical
- ❖ The only elements of *A Separate Peace* that were NOT present at Exeter were “anger, envy, [and] violence. There was only friendship, athleticism, and loyalty” while Knowles attended the school.

Historical Context



World War II

- ❖ Began in 1939 when the Germans invaded Poland, and officially ended in August 1945, when the Japanese surrendered.
- ❖ *A Separate Peace* takes place during the summer of 1942, directly in the center of World War II.

In America:

- ❖ In order to cope with the war, America instituted rations on books, sugar, coffee, and other goods.
- ❖ To conserve gasoline, a national 35 MPH speed limit was implemented, and driving for pleasure was banned.
- ❖ Most young women either dated older men, or didn't date at all!
- ❖ By the summer of 1942, many Americans realized that the war was far from over.

Historical Context



- ❖ Many young men couldn't wait to be drafted; patriotism was at an all-time high.
- ❖ Teenagers often felt it was their duty to enlist.
 - ❖ Enlistment age was lowered to 18.
- ❖ The war brought changes to the American economy and lifestyle.
 - ❖ Need for weapons created jobs.
 - ❖ Americans attended rallies, bought war bonds, conserved fuel and rubber by car pooling, and planted "victory gardens."
 - ❖ Society also began changing and adjusting due to the "man shortage".

Why Read It?



- ❖ During early years of America's involvement in WWII, an important time in our history
- ❖ Time when teen boys were faced with decision of whether or not to enlist
- ❖ This story is NOT about war. It more about relationships and growing up.