

## Approved for use in English I, Honors English I, Essentials English II

### Summary of the Work:

A coming of age tale for young adults set in the trenches of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, *Fallen Angels* is the story of Ritchie Perry, a Harlem teenager who volunteers for the army when his dream of attending college falls through. Sent to the front lines, Perry and his platoon come face-to-face with the Vietcong and the real horrors of warfare. But violence and death aren't the only hardships. As Perry struggles to find virtue in himself and his fellow soldiers, he confronts blatant racism and wonders why the U.S. is there at all.

### Rationale:

Like many teens today, the narrator and main character, Richard "Richie" Perry, is unprepared for what awaits him after high school. Like teens, too, Richie is unhappy at home and is looking for a chance to make a way for himself. Through his experiences, the young reader can relate as Richie begins to mature and become less egocentric. As Richie's innocence disappears, he learns to accept greater responsibility.

Themes explored in this book include; coming of age, accepting personal responsibility, coping with fear and loss, and the formation of a moral conscience.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Publishers Weekly (June 9, 1989)

A tour of duty for a young soldier in Vietnam is vividly presented in Myers's exceptional novel. Ages 13-up. Notable/Best Books (A.L.A.)

Books for the Teen Age (NYPL) 05/01/02

\* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

\* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Noted Distinction:

- Corretta Scott King Award

### Readability:

- Lexile Score: 650
- Readability Level: 8.1

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 2001

### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

In this gritty true-to-life coming of age story, Walter Dean Myers gives an accurate accounting of what life was like for the soldiers fighting in Vietnam. Myers uses graphic yet accurate language in *Fallen Angels*. Much of this language may seem very inappropriate, but it helps provide a more realistic portrayal of the men who fought during the Vietnam War. In addition, there are many very horrid descriptions of death and what the soldiers saw firsthand. *Fallen Angels* will not delicately censor what Richie Perry and his friends faced while in Vietnam.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

- First person narrative
- Historic fiction
- Themes of friendship and survival
- Coming of age

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

This novel may fit into the history curriculum.