



Stand Tall

by Joan Bauer

Teacher's Guide

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Synopsis

Chapter 1

Sam Benton is six feet three and a half inches tall – and still growing. This makes him the tallest seventh grader in Eleanor Roosevelt Middle School.

Being tall leads to many problems. The kids tease him—hence his nickname “Tree.” However, his most upsetting problems come as a result of his parents’ recent divorce. Since his parents have joint custody, living arrangements are often changing and confusing. When the novel opens, Mrs. Pierce, the school administrative assistant, asks Tree where he is living. After school, Tree walks through the park, where he sees Mrs. Clitter, a widow who wants to get closer to Tree’s grandfather, Leo Benton.

Chapter 2

Tree accesses the web page his mother keeps for her three sons: Curtis, Larry, and Tree. Although his mother is trying to provide quality on-line time, Tree misses his former way of life when his parents were together and his mother was home, not working. Tree thinks about his best friend Sully Devo, who is hearing impaired. Tree gets comfort from his elderly dog Bradley.

Chapter 3

Tree visits his beloved grandfather Leo at the VA hospital, where he has had his leg amputated. Leo was injured in Vietnam and the leg never healed properly. Tree’s father Mark is late to pick him up, as usual. His father manages a sporting goods store and is poor at time management.

Chapter 4

Coach Glummer cannot understand why Tree is such a poor basketball player. After all, his brothers were cham-

pions and Tree is so tall. That night, Tree visits his grandfather at the VA hospital. Mona Arnold, the physical therapist, explains about phantom pain and how the prosthetic leg will fit. Tree recalls how classmate Jeremy Liggins mocks his height.

Chapter 5

Although he is terrified, Tree gives an oral report on the Vietnam War. It is a huge success, in part because Tree has recorded his grandfather’s first-hand experiences. At home, Tree rigs up a pulley so his grandfather will have access to food and other supplies.

Chapter 6

Tree is supposed to be at his mother’s apartment for Christmas, but he wants to be home when his grandfather moves back from the hospital. His mother reluctantly agrees.

Chapter 7

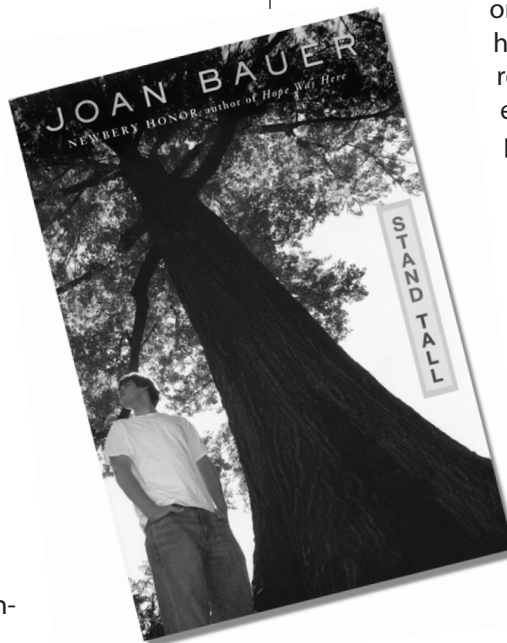
Tree returns home and helps his father get his grandfather home. It is the first Christmas since the divorce and the family is sad and fragmented.

Chapter 8

Tree meets Sophie Santack, the new girl in school. When the popular girls mock her, Tree comes to her aid, inviting her to eat lunch with him and his friends. Sophie explains that her parents are divorced and her family has moved often.

Chapter 9

Leo insists on being Santa for the children in the hospital, even though his stump causes him a great deal of pain. Meanwhile, Coach Glummer decides that the basketball players should learn ballroom dancing to become more graceful. At home, Tree’s brothers play handball with their father, who had been a champion. Tree cannot play well enough to join the game.



Chapter 10

Ballroom dancing is a nightmare, especially because of Tree's height. Tree talks with his brother Larry about the divorce. Leo compares divorce to war, in that both blow things up and leave empty spaces.

Chapter 11

Tree meets Sophie's Aunt Peach. The kids go to give Sophie's father his Christmas gift at the muffler shop where he works. Sophie's father demands that Tree show his birth certificate to prove he's not much older. "I'm tall for my age," says Tree. "You're tall for my age," says Sophie's suspicious father.

Chapter 12

Leo is Santa at the hospital.

Chapter 13

Tree's brother Larry is drinking heavily to numb his pain over the divorce. Since no one has thought to get a Christmas tree, Leo, Tree, and Larry take the tree from the sporting goods store that Tree's father manages. They are able to laugh over the fact that none of them has gotten gifts for each other, either.

Chapter 14

Christmas at Tree's mother's house is just as much a disaster. Larry reveals that he is flunking two courses in college. The blender doesn't work because Tree had disassembled it, the little dog vomits, and the room fills with smoke because no one opened the fireplace flue.

Chapter 15

Tree baby-sits his friend's parrot. Bradley, the dog, is getting very old.

Chapter 16

It is February. When Jeremy mocks Tree at the basketball game, Tree stands up to him for the first time. Leo's prosthetic leg is delayed because of the bad weather.

Chapter 17

Leo's leg finally arrives. Leo, Tree, and Leo's friend the Trash King drive to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. It is an emotional time for them all, as the veterans pay tribute to their fallen friends.

Chapter 18

Sophie auditions for a flute solo and gets it.

Chapter 19

The cruel girls write "Garbage Girl" on Sophie's locker and scatter trash around it. Sophie confronts them and

is called into the principal's office as a result. Dr. Terry, the principal, promises to stop the girls' cruelty.

Chapter 20

The kids attend ballroom dancing again. The tango is a real disaster since Tree and Sophie have to replace hand-in-hand with hand-in-elbow, and cheek-to-cheek with cheek-to-chest.

Chapter 21

The parrot is returned to its owner. Tree's mother comes for a visit, and the evening starts off as a disaster. Sophie joins them, bringing her iguana Lassie. Mrs. Clitter comes over as well. The Trash King comes, bringing a salami. The evening turns out to be a great success.

Chapter 22

Bradley the dog is very ill and the family thinks they will have to put him down. They bring him to the veterinarian. At the last minute, he rallies, chasing a cat. The whole town buzzes with Bradley's near-death experience.

Chapter 23

Tree is giving Grandpa a shower when he hears over the radio that the town is being evacuated because the levees have failed in the teeming rain. Grandpa stays calm.

Chapter 24

Dad arrives home and they get Grandpa out of the house and to the shelter at the school. When officials won't let Bradley into the shelter, Tree convinces them to let him put Bradley in the school basement. Grandpa helps keep everyone calm.

Chapter 25

Jeremy wants to shelter his hamster in the school as well and Tree intercedes on his behalf— even though Jeremy has always been cruel to him. The parrot finally utters the words that Leo had been trying to teach him: "You're a genius."

Chapter 26

The townspeople spend two days in the shelter before the flood ends. The basement and first floor of the Benton house is totally destroyed.

Chapter 27

With Grandpa's encouragement, the family starts to clean up. Every day they make progress. Sophie's iguana dies. Tree's mother Jan invites them all to stay with her while the house is being repaired. Tree hopes that this means that his parents will reconcile.

Chapter 28

Nothing could be further from Jan's mind: she has a date. Richard Blunt, the date, seems nice, but his presence shatters any illusion Tree has about a reconciliation. His parents argue bitterly.

Chapter 29

Larry and Curtis come home to help with the clean-up. Tree cleans his brother's trophies.

Chapter 30

Curtis and Larry are very touched when Tree returns these treasures to them. Tree realizes that he is healing from the divorce because the pain is so much less.

Chapter 31

The town holds its annual Memorial Day Parade. All of Ripley has turned out. Grandpa marches on his prosthetic leg; Sophie plays her flute solos. When the candle of hope won't light in the wind, Tree stands in front of it, blocking the wind. Tree feels like he had just made a winning free throw in the fourth quarter.

Timeline of the Vietnam War

- 1945** Ho Chi Minh creates a provisional government and declares Vietnam's independence.
British forces land in Saigon, return authority to French.
- 1946** France recognizes Vietnam as a "free state" within the French Union.
Indochina War begins.
- 1947** Viet Minh move north of Hanoi.
- 1949** Elysee Agreement signed.
- 1950** The United States sends \$15 million in military aid to the French for the war in Indochina.
- 1953** France grants Laos full independence.
Viet Minh forces push into Laos.
- 1954** Battle of Dien Bien Phu
Eisenhower cites "Domino Theory" regarding Southeast Asia.
Provisional demarcation line is drawn at the 17th parallel which will divide Vietnam until nationwide elections are held in 1956.
- 1955** Diem becomes President of Republic of Vietnam.
- 1956** French leave Vietnam.
- 1957** Communist insurgency into South Vietnam
- 1959** Weapons move along Ho Chi Minh Trail.
Sergeant Chester M. Ovnand becomes the first American to die in the Vietnam War.
- 1960** North Vietnam imposes universal military conscription.

Kennedy is elected President.

Viet Cong formed.

- 1961** Battle of Kienhoa Province
Vice President Johnson tours Saigon.
- 1962** U.S. military uses Agent Orange.
- 1963** Battle of Ap Bac
President Kennedy assassinated.
- 1964** General Nguyen Khanh seizes power in Saigon.
Gulf of Tonkin incident
Lyndon Johnson is elected president.
- 1965** Operation "Rolling Thunder"
First American combat troops arrive in Vietnam to defend the U.S. airfield at Danang.
U.S. troops exceed 200,000.
People protest against U.S. policy in Vietnam by holding "teach-ins" at universities.
American B-52s bomb North Vietnam for the first time.
Veterans stage anti-war rally.
- 1967** Operation Cedar Falls begins.
Martin Luther King speaks out against the war.
- 1968** North Vietnamese launch Tet Offensive.
My Lai incident in which American forces massacre innocent civilians in raid.
Martin Luther King slain in Memphis.
Paris peace talks begin.
Robert Kennedy assassinated.
Richard Nixon is elected President.
- 1969** Nixon begins secret bombing of Cambodia.
Ho Chi Minh dies.
Massive antiwar demonstration in Washington, DC.
- 1970** Sihanouk ousted in Cambodia.
Kent State incident
- 1971** Lt. Calley convicted of murder.
Pentagon Papers published.
- 1972** Break-in at Watergate Hotel
- 1973** Cease-fire signed in Paris.
End of draft announced.
Last American troops leave Vietnam.
- 1974** Thieu announces renewal of war.
Nixon resigns.
- 1975** Communists capture Phuoc Long Province.
President Ford calls Vietnam War "finished."

Author Sketch

Joan Bauer was born in River Forest, Illinois, the eldest of four sisters. The girls were raised by their mother, a single parent. Bauer's father was not involved in the family. Bauer describes her father as "...an alcoholic [who was] married four times, a chronic gambler."



Bauer had a trying adolescence. Her beloved grandmother, who lived with the family, suffered from Alzheimer's disease, and when Bauer was twenty, her father committed suicide. She remembered that event as "the saddest day of my life." Bauer started working young, as a waitress. In her early twenties, Bauer began a ten-year career in advertising sales. Although she was successful, she eventually grew frustrated with the job and quit to devote herself full-time to writing newspaper articles and young adult novels. Bauer's writing took off quickly: her first novel, *Squashed*, won the 1992 Delacorte Press Prize for a first novel. Bauer's career has continued to blossom.

Critic's Corner

Joan Bauer is the critically acclaimed author of Newbery Honor and Christopher Award winner *Hope Was Here*. *Stand Tall* also received excellent reviews. Patty Campbell, reviewing the novel for Amazon.com, said: "Joan Bauer's great heart and dry wit is always a delight, especially in *Hope Was Here* and *Rules of the Road*. In *Stand Tall* she gives us wonderfully interesting characters, funny scenes, zingy lines, and a story that has something warm and beautiful to say to kids." *Publishers Weekly* called *Stand Tall* "heartfelt and humorous.... Bauer once again creates a clan of believable characters scrambling to make the best of their particular brand of dysfunction. Her swiftly paced story artfully blends poignant and outright funny moments, resulting in a triumphant tale that will resonate with many young readers."

School Library Journal was equally enthusiastic. Critic Delia Fritz said: "The depictions of Tree and his colorful family are candid and endearing, and much of the writing is leavened with the author's special brand of humor, albeit bittersweet in this case. The story moves fluidly as the author reminds readers of the small towns that stand tall and of the veterans that fought in a war that not even they understood."

Other Books by Joan Bauer

Backwater (1999)
Best Foot Forward (2005)
Hope Was Here (2001)
Rules of the Road (2000)
Squashed (1992)
Sticks (1996)
Thwunk (1995)

Bibliography

ALAN Review, winter, 1996, Joan Bauer, "Humor, Seriously."
Los Angeles Times Book Review, February 26, 1995, Suzanne Curley, "A Few Well-Placed Arrows," p. 9.
New York Times Book Review, June 20, 1999, p. 21.
Publishers Weekly, February 27, 1995, p. 104; February 23, 1998, p.77; September 4, 2000, p. 109.

General Objectives

1. To see how people are judged by their appearance
2. To understand the importance of role models
3. To analyze the novel's title
4. To explore the effects of divorce
5. To review the Vietnam War and its aftermath
6. To assess each character's personality
7. To recognize the novel's theme
8. To find examples of compassion
9. To understand the importance of family
10. To describe the author's use of humor

Specific Objectives

1. To analyze how being so tall affects Tree
2. To understand the close relationship between Tree and his grandfather Leo
3. To understand how Tree learns to stand up for himself and deal with the difficulties that life has placed in his path
4. To analyze why Tree's parents have divorced
5. To see how Tree's brothers react to their parents' divorce
6. To examine how the Vietnam War has affected Leo and his friends, especially the Trash King
7. To see the effect of setting on a person's life
8. To understand the plot structure
9. To explore parallels between Tree and Sophia
10. To understand what Bradley the dog comes to symbolize

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Joan Bauer's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

conflict in literature: a struggle or fight. Conflict makes a story interesting because readers want to find out the outcome. There are two kinds of conflict. In an external conflict, characters struggle against a force outside themselves. In an internal conflict, characters battle a force within themselves. Novels often contain both external and internal conflicts. In *Stand Tall*, Tree experiences external conflicts when his classmates pick on him because of his height. He experiences an internal conflict when he grieves over the end of his parents' marriage and his life as he knew it. Readers see this on page 49, for example: "Tree wondered if divorce was like war and always had a lasting effect on the people who went through it."

characterization: the different ways an author tells readers about characters. Sometimes, writers tell about characters directly. Other times, writers let readers reach their own decisions by showing the comments, thoughts, and actions of the other characters. Bauer uses indirect characterization to suggest that Tree is self-reliant and intelligent. He is the glue that holds his fragile family together. We see this when he takes the time to clean his brothers' trophies and mitt so they will not lose everything of their past. Tree's brothers are very touched by his efforts on their behalf, as shown on page 174.

style: an author's distinctive way of writing. Style is made up of elements such as word choice, sentence length and structure, figures of speech, humor, and tone. An author may change his or her style for different kinds of writing and to suit different audiences. In poetry, for example, an author might use more imagery than he or she would use in prose. Bauer uses a long sentences, rich figures of speech, and gentle humor to tell her story.

The Importance of Setting

Stand Tall has two settings. The first is the make-believe town of Ripley. A close-knit community, it includes all the trappings of small town life (parades, a pretty park, a mayor) as well as the amenities of larger cities (a veterans administration hospital). Nonetheless, the community is not able to substitute for Tree's own family. The help he receives is mainly from his grandfather, not his neighbors.

The second setting is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, located in Washington, DC. Although only one chapter of the book is set in this locale, it has great impact on their entire novel because Tree's pain at his parents' divorce is paralleled to Leo's injuries in Vietnam decades ago. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was founded by Jan Scruggs, who served in Vietnam from 1969-1970 as an infantry corporal. The Memorial is dedicated to the 2.7 million men and women who served in the U.S. military in the designated war zone. On July 1, 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed the legislation to provide a site in Constitution Gardens near the Lincoln Memorial. It took three-and-half-years to build the memorial and to create a celebration to salute those who served in Vietnam. The Memorial (the Wall) was completed in late October, 1982, and dedicated on November 13, 1982.

The Memorial was designed by an undergraduate at Yale University, Maya Lin. She acted as a consultant with the architectural firm of Cooper-Lecky Partnership on the construction of the Memorial. She wanted to create a park within a park— a quiet protected place onto itself, yet harmonious with the overall plan of Constitution Gardens. The walls have a mirror-like surface, created by polished black granite reflecting the images of the surrounding landscape and visitors. The names of the dead soldiers are inscribed on the Wall's surface. The names are arranged in chronological order, according to the date of casualty. Within each day, the names are alphabetized. This is shown on several pages in Eve Bunting's book *The Wall*. With the addition of four names added in 2005, there are a total of 58,249 names listed on the Memorial. Approximately 1,200 of these are listed as missing (MIA's, POW's, and others).

The walls seem to stretch into the distance, directing the eye toward the Washington Monument in the east and the Lincoln Memorial to the west. This brings the Vietnam Veterans Memorial into a historical context.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Novels

David Almond, *Skellig*
Edward Bloor, *Tangerine*
Beverly Cleary, *Dear Mr. Henshaw*
Sharon Creech, *Walk Two Moons*
Roddy Doyle, *The Giggler Treatment*
Jack Gantos, *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*
Hilary McKay, *The Exiles*
Richard Peck, *A Long Way from Chicago: A Novel in Stories*
Daniel Manus Pinkwater, *The Werewolf Club: The Magic Pretzel*
Louis Sachar, *Holes*
Elizabeth George Speare, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*
William Steig, *Abel's Island*
Mildred D. Taylor, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
Ted Schaefer, *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*

DVDs and Videos

Dear America: Letters from Vietnam (1988)
Exploring Vietnam (2003)
Ferris Bueller's Day Off
Good Morning, Vietnam (1988)
Pretty in Pink
Sixteen Candles
Stand By Me
Vietnam: The Year of the Pig (1969)
Vietnam: A Television History (1983)
Vietnam: Ten-Thousand-Day War (1998)
Vietnam: Chronicle of a War (1981)
Vietnam War Story (1988)

Audio Books

Hope Was Here (Random House, 2002) Read by Jenna Lamia
Stand Tall (Random House, 2003) Read by Ron McLarty

Internet

Achuka: Special Guest—Joan Bauer
www.achuka.co.uk/guests/joanbint.htm
Author Profile: Joan Bauer
www.teenreads.com/authors/au-bauer-joan.asp
Joan Bauer's official web site
www.joanbauer.com
Penguin-Putnam Web site, April 18, 2001), Joan Bauer, interview.
<http://www.penguinputnam.com>

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Joan Bauer's *Stand Tall* should include these aspects:

Themes

- amputation
- bullying
- divorce
- extreme height
- family problems
- floods
- friendship
- grief
- pets
- Vietnam War

Motifs

- recovering after having a leg amputated
- dealing with bullying and cruelty from classmates
- showing love and support
- coping with joint custody arrangements
- learning to ballroom dance
- dealing with stereotypes about height and athletic ability
- having self-awareness and maturity
- experiencing growth and change
- dealing with anger in a healthy way
- recovering after a disastrous flood

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. To everything there is a season. (Headnote)
(*Bauer opens the novel with the famous passage from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. As readers will discover, Tree must experience a time of grief over his parents' divorce before he can heal.*)
2. Now you know why people called him Tree.
(Chap. 1, p. 4)
(*At slightly more than six feet three inches, Sam Benton is the tallest twelve-year-old boy in the history of his school. Because of his extreme height, Sam has earned the nickname "Tree." In addition, coaches assume he must be good at sports, even though he is not. People mock him and point out his height. Tree's height makes his life difficult.*)

3. There had been multiple surgeries to try and fix it, but like the Vietnam War, that leg just wouldn't behave. (Chap. 3, p.16)
(Leo Benton, Tree's paternal grandfather, had his leg shot up with shrapnel when he was on a night patrol in the Mekong Delta during the Vietnam War. After multiple surgeries, Leo decided it was time to amputate the leg. Bauer parallels Leo's injuries to the Benton's marriage. After years of trying to repair the marriage, the time has come to "amputate," to divorce. Both situations are unavoidable but entail significant pain for anyone in the vicinity, not just the immediate participants.)
4. "When that happens, nothing works," Grandpa said. "Kind of like life." (Chap. 3, p. 17)
(Tree recalls when he and his grandfather took a lamp apart. The wires had been broken and the power could not get to the bulbs. The lamp's condition becomes a metaphor for Grandpa's amputated leg and his son's marriage.)
5. Finally he came up with *Treat people the way you want to be treated.* (Chap.8, p. 54)
(When Sophie shares her motto with Tree, he decides that he needs a motto as well. He comes up with the Golden Rule. This shows Tree's wisdom and understanding of the basis for all healthy human interactions.)
6. "War does that – it blows things up and leaves an empty place where something important used to be." (Chap. 10, p. 73)
(While sorting socks, Grandpa explains to Tree how he and his fellow soldiers all lost a piece of themselves in the war. He lost his leg, for instance. In a similar way, Tree has lost his family's unity after their divorce, as his mother is living in an apartment and his father in the family home. Grandpa reassures Tree that empty places fill in eventually, which is what happens to Tree as he begins to heal and comes to grips with his new reality.)
7. "No, I'm not." He squared his shoulders and looked down at Liggins, who looked away first. (Chap. 16, p. 103)
(Star athlete Jeremy Liggins has long derided Tree for his lack of athletic ability. In this scene, Tree stands up for himself for the first time. This is a big step in his maturity.)
8. "You can keep them down here, but *only* because Tree asked. I hope you appreciate a friend like him." (Chap.25, p. 149)
(In this scene, Tree steps in to help Jeremy shelter his hamster in the flood. Mr. Cosgrove is well aware that Jeremy has been very mean to Tree and so grants Jeremy this favor on Tree's behalf. This scene shows that Tree has the ability to forgive, which makes him a noble person.)

9. Phantom pain does get better. (Chap. 30, p. 175)
(Phantom pain is the pain that amputees often experience after a limb has been severed. Tree experiences this pain when his parents are cut off from each other through divorce. This metaphor suggests that Tree is recovering from the pain of his parents' divorce.)
10. And a tall boy can stop the wind so a candle of hope can burn bright. (Chap. 31, p. 182)
(Tree blocks the wind so the community can light their candle. This shows that Tree has a purpose: to help others. The last line of the novel, it provides an uplifting note.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. How did Tree get his nickname?
(Jeremy Liggins gave Tree his nickname because of his extreme height. The nickname was not intended to flatter him.)
2. Why is Tree's grandfather Leo in the hospital?
(Leo had his leg amputated because of an old war wound.)
3. How is Tree similar to his brothers Larry and Curtis? How is he different?
(The brothers are alike because they are all suffering the effects of the divorce. They are different because Larry and Curtis are very good at sports and Tree has no athletic ability at all.)
4. What happens to Bradley the dog?
(Bradley has a "near-death" experience: Tree, Leo, the rest of the family, and even the veterinarian assume that he has to be put down because he is dying. However, Bradley rallies to chase a cat and appears thereafter to have a new lease on life.)
5. How does the flood affect the town?
(Citizens must take refuge in the school for two days to avoid the rising floodwaters. Many people suffer damage to their homes and property; they must work together and help each other making the townspeople closer and more grateful.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. Why do Tree's parents get divorced?
(Tree's mother feels that her husband lacks ambition; she moves on without him.)

7. Tree realizes that there is a big difference between a "house" and a "home." What is the difference? (*A house is merely a shelter; a home, in contrast, conveys a feeling of safety, family, and warmth.*)
8. How does Tree change during the course of the novel? (*He learns to stand up for himself and for others who are bullied, such as Sophie. He learns that sometimes divorce is inevitable and even desirable. He recovers from the pain of his parents' divorce.*)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. What does Tree's nickname symbolize? How does it fit his character? (*Bauer often uses the characters' names as a shorthand for their personalities. Tree's name, for instance, symbolizes his strength and endurance.*)
10. Did you find the girls' behavior toward Sophie believable? Why or why not? (*Students are likely to say that the bullying and cruelty are very believable and happen often in schools.*)

Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. Writing as Tree, draft a journal entry that describes your life ten years in the future.
12. Make a model of the oak tree that symbolizes Tree Benton.

Across the Curriculum

Art/Music

1. Make a model of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
2. As you learned in *Stand Tall*, people leave gifts at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. List four gifts that you would like to leave at the Wall.
3. Using scenes from the novel, create a mural that shows its main events.
4. Play or sing a solo, as Sophie does. Choose music that honors America's war veterans.
5. Find a song that was popular when the Vietnam War was being fought. Play the song for the class. Evaluate whether or not it still has appeal for a new generation.

Language Arts

1. Find out more about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Send your letters to:
Mail Operations/Vietnam Veterans Memorial
National Park Service
National Capitol Parks-Central
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242
2. Read another book by Joan Bauer. Divide a sheet of paper in half. On the left side of the page, tell about *Stand Tall*. On the right side of the page, summarize the other book.
3. Explain the quote from Ecclesiastes that opens the novel. In an essay, argue that it does or does not fit the novel's theme.
4. Tree writes a motto for himself. Write your motto and explain how it fits you.
5. In the last chapter, Mayor Diner reads a poem that begins, "In Flanders fields the poppies blow. Between the crosses, row on row." Find the complete poem, read it, and explain why it is appropriate for sharing on Memorial Day.

History/Social Studies

1. This book tells about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Choose another famous man-made monument, such as Mount Rushmore or the Sears Tower and report on it.
2. Write a travel brochure for Ripley, the town where the novel is set. Include words and pictures that make people want to visit Ripley for a vacation.
3. Make a timeline showing five important events from 1967 to the present. Explain why you chose these events.
4. Draw a Vietnam Memorial monument for your town. Then see if your town already has a Vietnam Memorial. If so, how is it the same as the one you drew? How is it different?
5. Show where Vietnam is on a world map. Write a brief report on its history.
6. Write a report on the history of Memorial Day. Explain who or what the holiday honors.

7. Explain who Eleanor Roosevelt was and why a school has been named after her.

Speech/Debate

1. Give a speech telling why you would like to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.
2. Pretend that you are Tree. Make a speech telling about your visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial with your grandfather and his friend.
3. Pretend that you are a teacher. Give a lesson telling what you learned about the experiences of the Vietnam veterans.
4. The constant encouraging words from Tree's grandfather help him see that while life is not always fair, it is best to give it your all. Write a speech to encourage a friend to succeed.
5. Give an oral report, as Tree does. Choose a topic that interests you.

Science/ Math

1. Make a chart showing the range of heights for boys and girls your age.
2. Explain how levees work and speculate how they failed in the town, causing the flood.
3. Find out more about Veterans hospitals. What are the requirements for treatment? What are the fees? Locate the Veterans hospital closest to your home and find out what services it offers.
4. One doctor suspects that Tree's extreme height may be a result of Marfan's syndrome. Find out what this condition is and what relationship it bears to height. Also note the link between Marfan's syndrome and Abraham Lincoln.
5. Find out how to gauge the age of a tree without harming the tree. Share your findings with the class.
6. Tree thinks that trees keep on growing forever. Do they? See if you can find the answer to this question.

Alternate Assessment

1. Sophie shares her career plans with Tree. Explain to a small group of classmates what careers you would like to pursue after you complete your education.
2. Give Sophie some advice for dealing with the cruel girls in her class.
3. Learn the basics of ballroom dancing, as Tree does. Demonstrate some simple steps for your classmates.
4. Make a character list and describe each character.

Vocabulary

squad invoice nondenominational nutrients dysfunctional
cogent alienation shrapnel prosthetic grenade
stalwart morose

Complete each sentence with the correct vocabulary word. Write your choice in the space provided. You will have words left over.

1. After Leo had his leg amputated, he received a _____ leg so he could walk.
2. Leo's leg had been injured by a type of weapon called a(n) _____.
3. This weapon filled his leg with small, sharp pieces of metal called _____.
4. Tree felt that his family had become _____ after the divorce because people no longer worked together.
5. Since Bradley the dog was old, Tree made sure that he got food packed with vitamins and _____.
6. After the divorce and his changed living conditions, Tree often felt sad and _____.
7. Tree felt cut off from his classmates, too. Much of his _____ came from the fact that he was not good at sports.
8. Tree was always given a place on the basketball _____ because of his height. The other team members hoped that he would suddenly develop athletic ability.
9. Tree and his family did not have a specific place of worship; they were _____.
10. When people bought things at the sporting goods store that he managed, Tree's father Mark always made out a(n) _____ to go with the sale.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| A. Samuel Benton | F. Lassie |
| B. Leo Benton | G. Jan Benton |
| C. Bradley | H. Dr. Terry |
| D. Sophie Santack | I. Richard Blunt |
| E. Mona Arnold | J. The Trash King |

- ___ 1. The new girl, whom the other girls mock as "Garbage Girl"
- ___ 2. Sophie's pet iguana
- ___ 3. Leo's friend and fellow war veteran
- ___ 4. The school principal
- ___ 5. Leo's physical therapist
- ___ 6. Tree's grandfather
- ___ 7. Tree's mother
- ___ 8. Tree's real name
- ___ 9. The man who dates Tree's mother
- ___ 10. Tree's beloved elderly dog

Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

Circle the correct term to complete each of the following statements.

- 1. Tree reads the **(lists, web page)** his mother keeps for her three sons.
- 2. Sully Devo, Tree's best friend, is **(blind, hearing impaired)**.
- 3. Leo was injured in **(Italy, Vietnam)** and his leg never healed properly.
- 4. Coach Glummer cannot understand why Tree is such a poor **(baseball, basketball)** player.
- 5. At home, Tree rigs up a **(pulley, elevator)** so his grandfather will have easy access to food and other supplies.
- 6. Coach Glummer decides that the athletes should learn **(ballet, ballroom dancing)** to become more graceful.
- 7. The cruel girls put **(trash, flowers)** all over Sophie's locker.
- 8. Tree cleans his brother's **(trophies, soccer cleats)**.
- 9. The town holds its annual **(Columbus Day, Memorial Day)** Parade.
- 10. When the candle of hope won't light in the wind, **(Tree, Larry)** stands in front of it, blocking the wind.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- 1. At nearly six feet four inches tall, Tree is the tallest seventh grader in Eleanor Roosevelt Middle School.
- 2. Tree's mother has sole custody of him after her recent divorce from Tree's father.
- 3. Tree's father manages a sporting goods store and is poor at time management.
- 4. Leo insists on being Santa for the children in the hospital, even though he is in a great deal of pain.
- 5. Tree's father Mark is drinking heavily to numb his pain over the divorce.
- 6. Leo, Tree, and Leo's friend drive to the Statue of Liberty in New York City.
- 7. Tree auditions for some tuba solos and gets them.
- 8. The townspeople spend two days in the shelter during the flood.
- 9. The parrot finally utters the words that Leo had been trying to teach him: "You're a genius."
- 10. Tree's mother invites them all to stay with her while the house is being repaired. Tree hopes this means that his parents will reconcile.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Should couples stay together for the sake of their children? Make your point with specific details from the novel.
2. Which character in the book has the greatest influence on Tree? Include at least two examples to make your point.
3. Describe what function Sophie plays in the novel.
4. Analyze why Tree's name suits his appearance and character.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Quotations (20 points)

Explain the significance of each of the following quotations from the novel.

1. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to uproot.
2. Now you know why people called him Tree.
3. "Take it off," Grandpa finally said to his doctor. "It's more trouble than it's worth."
4. "I'll tell you something about empty places. They don't get filled in right away."
5. Phantom pain does get better.

Part II: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each and explain why it is important in the story.

1. the big oak tree _____

2. "Garbage Girl" _____

3. "You're a genius" _____

4. the flood _____

5. Leo's leg _____

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Motivation (20 points)

Complete each phrase below with a reason or justification.

1. Sam Benton ("Tree") gets teased because _____
2. Tree is most upset because _____
3. Leo is in the hospital because _____
4. Tree is supposed to be at his mother's apartment for Christmas, but he wants to be home because _____

5. Coach Glummer decides that the basketball players should learn ballroom dancing because _____

6. Sophie's father demands that Tree show his birth certificate because _____
7. Tree's brother Larry is drinking heavily because _____
8. Leo, Tree, and Larry take the Christmas tree from the sporting goods store that Tree's father manages because _____

9. Bradley the dog is not put down because _____
10. The townspeople are evacuated from their homes because _____

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

1. Compare and contrast Tree in the beginning of the novel and the end. How has he changed? How has he stayed the same?
2. Explain the novel's theme or main idea. What lesson does it teach?
3. Describe two instances of cruelty in the novel. Then explain why the characters act this way toward each other.
4. Analyze what role Leo plays in Tree's life.

Answer Key

Vocabulary

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. prosthetic | 6. morose |
| 2. grenade | 7. alienation |
| 3. shrapnel | 8. squad |
| 4. dysfunctional | 9. nondenominational |
| 5. nutrients | 10. invoice |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. B |
| 2. F | 7. G |
| 3. J | 8. A |
| 4. H | 9. I |
| 5. E | 10. C |

Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. web page | 6. ballroom dancing |
| 2. hearing impaired | 7. trash |
| 3. Vietnam | 8. trophies |
| 4. basketball | 9. Memorial Day |
| 5. pulley | 10. Tree |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Quotations (20 points)

- Bauer opens the novel with the famous passage from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. As readers will discover, Tree must experience a time of grief over his parents' divorce before he can heal.
- At slightly more than six feet three inches tall, Sam Benton is the tallest twelve-year-old boy in the history of his school. Because of his extreme height, Sam has earned the nickname "Tree."
- Leo Benton, Tree's paternal grandfather, had his leg shot up with shrapnel when he was on a night patrol in the Mekong Delta during the Vietnam War. After multiple surgeries, Leo decided it was time to amputate the leg. Bauer parallels Leo's injuries to the Benton's marriage. After years of trying to repair it, the time has come to "ampu-

tate," to divorce. Both situations are unavoidable but entail significant pain for anyone in the vicinity, not just the immediate participants.

- While sorting socks, Grandpa explains to Tree how he and his fellow soldiers all lost a piece of themselves in the war. He lost his leg, for instance. In a similar way, Tree has lost his family's unity after their divorce, as his mother is living in an apartment and his father in the family home. Grandpa reassures Tree that empty places fill in eventually, which is what happens to Tree as he begins to heal and come to grips with his new reality.
- Phantom pain is the pain that amputees often experience after a limb has been severed. Tree experiences this pain when his parents are cut off from each other through divorce. This metaphor suggests that Tree is recovering from the pain of his parents' divorce.

Part II: Identification (20 points)

- The big oak tree is a symbol for Tree. Both are sturdy and symbols of hope.
- "Garbage Girl" is the terrible nickname that the cruel girls give Sophie. They pile garbage around her locker and write "Garbage Girl" on a banner above her locker.
- "You're a genius" are the words that Leo teaches Fred the Parrot to say. The parrot says them during the flood, earning himself a place in the shelter.
- The flood becomes a testing ground for the town's strength. The town pulls together just as Tree's family pulls together. This experience not only shows Tree's strength but also demonstrates his maturity.
- Leo's amputated leg becomes a symbol for the Benton's marriage. Leo feels "phantom pain" for his missing limb as Tree feels pain that his family has been torn apart. Eventually, both Leo and Tree get used to their new reality. A part of them is missing, but their pain lessens with time.

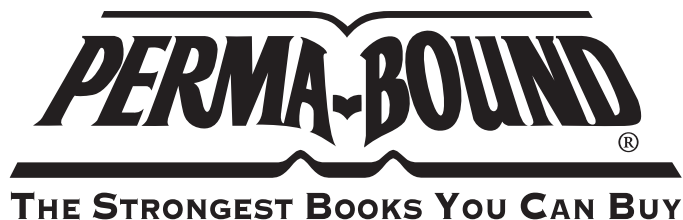
Part III: Motivation (20 points)

- he is six feet four inches tall, the tallest seventh grader in the school. In addition, he is poor at sports, despite his height.
- his parents have recently gotten divorced and he mourns the break-up of his family.
- his leg has been amputated and he needs physical therapy to get ready for his prosthetic leg
- he wants to greet his grandfather on his return home from the VA hospital
- he thinks it will make them more graceful

6. he thinks that because of Tree's height, he must be much older than Sophie
7. he is upset over his parents' divorce
8. no one has thought to get a Christmas tree
9. at the last minute, he rallies, chasing a cat. The town buzzes with Bradley's near-death experience.
10. the levees break and the town floods

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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