

Stephen Crane (1871-1900) is a poet and novelist. He's best known for his novel, *The Red Badge of Courage*, about a young soldier who has a rosy idea of heroism, yet is wrecked by the Civil War. He never served in the military, but he was well educated on the atrocities of war from his time spent as a journalist covering conflicts in foreign countries.

## Read and Annotate the Poem

### "War is Kind" by Stephen Crane

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.  
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky  
And affrighted steed ran on alone.  
Do not weep  
War is kind.  
Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,  
Little souls who thirst for fight,  
These men were born to drill and die.  
The unexplained glory flies above them,  
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom –  
A field where a thousand corpses lie.  
Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.  
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,  
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,  
Do not weep  
War is kind.  
Swift blazing flag of the regiment,  
Eagle with crest of red and gold,  
Those men were born to drill and die,  
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,  
Make plain to them the excellence of killing  
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.  
Mother, whose heart hung humble as a button  
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,  
Do not weep  
War is kind.

1. Which word could replace the word, "affrighted" in the first stanza and mean nearly the same thing:
  - a. Fearless
  - b. Fearful
  - c. Flawless
  - d. Fickle
2. What does the author's use of the word "hoarse", when describing the drums, imply about the war?
  - a. War is kind
  - b. War is frightening
  - c. War is tiring
  - d. War is indescribable
3. Which of the following is a possible theme?
  - a. War wrecks relationships
  - b. Men were born to drill and die
  - c. There is glory in war
  - d. War wrecks kindness
4. Which of the following describes the author's attitude in the poem?
  - a. Capricious
  - b. Vexed
  - c. Exhilarating
  - d. Sardonic
5. The author uses the imagery in the following lines to create a central message. Which of the following can the reader infer based on the following lines:

**Those men were born to drill and die,  
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,  
Make plain to them the excellence of killing  
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.**

  - a. The author is indignant toward those who criticize the war and sees only goodness come from it – even in the midst of death and violence.
  - b. Those in leadership roles too often view soldiers as machines instead of men. The tragic pattern repeats itself.
  - c. Men were truly born for this – one's country should be their honor and their dignity. It is better to die as a martyr than as a mere man.
  - d. Soldiers should find their greatest honor in defending those who could not live to tell of their own personal greatness.