

the

WAR

that never was

Chapter Five by Kay Hively

Ethan's heart began to beat fast when he heard Uncle Albert say that war was coming. Who was going to war? Would he have to go and fight? What about his father?

Ethan threw two more ears of corn into the wagon and then walked over to his father. Ethan listened as the men talked.

Uncle Albert said the sheriff had gone to collect taxes in the area where the honey trees are. But the people said they didn't have to pay Missouri taxes. They said they lived in Iowa.

Then the people arrested the sheriff and took him away.

When Governor Boggs of Missouri heard about that, he called out the State Militia. He told every man to find a gun and a horse and be ready to fight.

Then Governor Lucas called out the Iowa militia and sent them to the boundary line. The Iowa soldiers were told to protect the honey trees in the area.

Uncle Albert told Ethan and his father that men 18 and older were supposed to join the Missouri militia. He said men with small children did not have to fight.

Ethan was glad his father would not have to go to war. Life on the farm without his father would be very hard. Uncle Albert said that he and Uncle Tom would volunteer since they didn't have any children.

When Uncle Albert left, Ethan and his father returned to work. Ethan knew his father was worried. Most of the time his father talked and sang silly songs as they worked. But now, he was silent. Ethan didn't talk either; he just filled his sack and then dumped the corn in the wagon.

By noon, there was only one long row of corn left to pick. Ethan and his father led the horses to the barn. They scooped the corn into the crib before they went to the cabin to eat.

It was quiet at the dinner table. Even the twins were quiet. Ethan had never felt so bad in all his life. He looked at the little pot of honey on the table and wished he had never seen a spoonful of honey in his life. Why didn't they just let Iowa have the honey trees? He wouldn't trade Uncle Albert and Uncle Tom for all the honey in the world.

After dinner, Ethan and his father went out to finish picking the corn. As they stepped outside, Ethan saw big snowflakes tumbling out of the sky.

Usually he liked snow, but today he couldn't find joy in anything.

That night, after the twins were in bed, Ethan helped his mother make a corn husk doll. His mother said he could give it to Alice for Christmas. In bed that night, Ethan thought about Christmas and about his uncles. Now he knew why people wanted Peace on Earth for Christmas.



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Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do –

- Why didn't Ethan's father have to join the militia? What does the word "militia" mean?
- At the end of this chapter, it began to snow. Make a big snowflake out of a piece of white paper. What makes a real snowflake? Try writing a short poem about snowflakes.

**Next Week: Chapter Six –
Here Comes the Army!**