Challenger Disaster Encyclopedia Article

Challenger Disaster

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



BOOKRAGS

Contents

Challenger Disaster Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Challenger Disaster.....3

Challenger Disaster

The explosion of NASA space shuttle *Challenger* shortly after liftoff on January 28, 1986, shocked the nation. The twenty-fifth shuttle flight had been dubbed the "Teacher in Space" mission; the plan was to excite children about the possiblity of space travel by having a teacher deliver televised lectures from the orbiting shuttle. Christa McAuliffe, a high-school social studies teacher, was chosen for the expedition after a highly publicized nationwide search. Other crew members included Michael Smith (pilot), Dick Scobee (commander), Judith Resnik (mission specialist), Ronald McNair (mission specialist), Ellison Onizuka (mission specialist), and Gregory Jarvis (payload specialist). None survived the disaster. The cause of the explosion was eventually traced to faulty gaskets known as O-rings. Coming at a time when the United States space program had seemingly regained its footing after two decades of decline, it forced many to grapple with the risks associated with pioneering technologies. Nowhere was the need for explanation more pressing than in the nation's classrooms, where children had gathered to witness the wonders of space travel.

Further Reading:

Coote, Rodgers. *Air Disasters.* New York, Thomson Learning, 1993.

Penley, Constance. *NASA/Trek: Popular Science and Sex in America.* New York, Verso, 1997.

"51-L (25)." http://www.ksc.nasa.gov/shuttle/mission s/51-l/mission-51-l.html. January 1999.