

Group Work #2 - *All Quiet on the Western Front* Chapter 5



I want groups to concentrate on being specific, **STAYING FOCUSED**, and using the text to support your answer. You'll notice that if you have done a close reading (including making comments and highlighting in your books) these questions are much easier to answer and your grades are much higher (on quizzes and on these group works). Sometimes, I prefer group work – because it lets you find and discover “equations” on your own. **Time keepers:** question 3 should be given enough time (at least 10 min).

$$x = -\frac{3}{2} + \sqrt{\frac{15}{4}} \quad \text{or} \quad x = -\frac{3}{2} - \sqrt{\frac{15}{4}}$$

1a. Again, we see the men talking about their academic education versus the education that they have gotten at the front. Why are the men so cynical about their “real” education? Bring in Kantoreck (their schoolmaster) to your discussion. Look closely at page 85 (but don't stop there). When Paul says that “[w]e Germans fear God and--- [no one else]” do you think the men still believe this or are they being satirical (or even better sardonic [look it up])?

1b. **Ok – Now let's look at the same idea from a much more subtle perspective.** You have all heard the expression – “me thinks the lady doth protest too much.” In other words – there is a certain point where people are complaining that you begin to wonder if they feel the opposite of what they are saying (the little first grader who teases the girl he has a crush on). **Remember, in the first chapter how Paul divided the men into two groups – the youngsters, like himself, and the older men who signed up, like Kat and Tjaiden.** Is it possible that the men actually do miss their education; or perhaps, they miss the fact that they are not back home getting their education and that even if they survive they will never be able to return to their education. What specifics would you use to support or to refute this idea?

1c. Also, can school (here I am thinking of this class in particular, not because I am a narcissist but because I am most familiar with it) like the training that prepared them for the front, also actually be helpful when we encounter problems later in life that seem far removed from our high school classes? In Brit Lit, I end the year with a poem called Terrance, this is stupid stuff”. In that poem by A.E. Houseman, the persona (Terrance) admits that his poetry is sad and depressing but says it gives the reader an immunity for when they encounter the same sad life events that inspired him (Terrance). Comment and connect. (For your pleasure, I've included the poem on the back – look at it later!)



2a. What do the men want to do when peacetime comes (1 quote)? Why does this question irritate some of the men (1 quote)? In a class discussion, one of my students said that, “for the younger soldiers, the lack of a past – makes it impossible for them to look forward to anything”. How does this factor into your answer? How is some of the men's irritation with this question (about what to do in peacetime) similar to an earlier chapter's questions (or retelling of a dream) about food? Now, very importantly, link this to what you wrote about 1b – how is food like their schooling? (be specific and thoughtful)

2b. Link the men's ability/inability to imagine “home” with what happens to Norman Bowker in the “Speaking of Courage” (remember, going around the lake) chapter of *The Things They Carried*.



★4a. What emotions, sentiments, does Paul feel towards Kat? **Why** are they so close? Are there any emotions (VERY IMPORTANT - including one that **may seem a bit contradictory, surprising – look at the end of the chapter**) other than love? That emotion is surprising in the sense that it seems to be the opposite or at least to contradict the emotions that you just talked about in the beginning of question 3. To answer the second part of this question closely examine the second paragraph of page 95, “A little soldier...” How does this surprising emotion counteract the romantic bonding of the more endearing emotions (including love)? Use at least 2 quotes in answering this question.

4b. In a way, there is a link between this question and number 1b (and 2). As you went beyond the obvious in #1, you may have seen that it was NOT only disdain that the men felt for their education but like Paul's surprising feelings towards Kat, **there was also a bit of that same feeling towards their lost education or towards those who experienced (like Kat) that education without giving it all up for the reality of the front.** Comment on this and link the two ideas together.

What, it's 38

2-nd version: 1st paragraph I 4-10 Lie N 22, 29, 30

5 – The echo of geese: why cooking a goose – geese are mentioned earlier – in what context? What do we think of when we think of geese (see that earlier mention and the context in which it appears). How do the geese contrast or how are they similar to the animals (and insects) talked about at the beginning of the chapter (think about the cooking, the shooting of the horses, the recruits, etc.)? Find the quote about the men betting on the airplane battle (from a previous chapter). What is the plane compared to? What do the men kill in great numbers at the beginning of this chapter? Look at what happens to Paul (metaphorically) while catching that goose (ok – for those of you with really good memories, Grendel had a similar “winged transformation” in the John Gardner’s novel). What are the greater implications – given what they will be soon eating? Does anyone in your group know what the Christian practice of Communion is (notice that word is even used in describing the connection between Paul & Kat). Link that practice with this entire question as well as as much of the rest of this group work as possible. Be subtle but complete. It is SO cool.

Extra Credit (also remember tomorrow Chapter 7 only through page 153): With what you’ve just thought out and written in mind – read through the attached article that from *The Chicago Tribune*. Mark up the article as you read it based on both what you’ve done today in your group and with what you’ve read – and will read in *All Quiet*. Come up with a thoughtful, insightful, comment about the connection between this article and this novel (and our discussions and group work) AND *The Things They Carried* – and write a short essay on it (use paragraphs, have a thesis, proofread, etc.) DO NOT DO THIS WITHOUT READING the entire article. It should be at least a page long with plenty of specifics from the article and quotes *from our two war novels*.

LXII. Terence, this is stupid stuff
From *A Shropshire Lad* by A.E. Houseman

‘TERENCE, this is stupid stuff:
You eat your victuals fast enough;
There can’t be much amiss, ’tis clear,
To see the rate you drink your beer.
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make 5
It gives a chap the belly-ache.
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;
It sleeps well, the horned head:
We poor lads, ’tis our turn now
To hear such tunes as killed the cow. 10
Pretty friendship ’tis to rhyme
Your friends to death before their time
Moping melancholy mad:
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad.’

Why, if ’tis dancing you would be, 15
There’s brisker pipes than poetry.
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,
Or why was Burton built on Trent?
Oh many a peer of England brews
Livelier liquor than the Muse, 20
And malt does more than Milton can
To justify God’s ways to man.
Ale, man, ale’s the stuff to drink
For fellows whom it hurts to think:
Look into the pewter pot 25
To see the world as the world’s not.
And faith, ’tis pleasant till ’tis past:
The mischief is that ’twill not last.
Oh I have been to Ludlow fair
And left my necktie God knows where 30
And carried half way home, or near,
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:
Then the world seemed none so bad,
And I myself a sterling lad;
And down in lovely muck I’ve lain, 35
Happy till I woke again.
Then I saw the morning sky:
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;
The world, it was the old world yet,
I was I, my things were wet, 40
And nothing now remained to do
But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still
Much good, but much less good than ill,
And while the sun and moon endure 45
Luck’s a chance, but trouble’s sure,
I’d face it as a wise man would,
And train for ill and not for good.
’Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale
Is not so brisk a brew as ale: 50
Out of a stem that scored the hand
I wrung it in a weary land.
But take it: if the smack is sour,
The better for the embittered hour;
It should do good to heart and head 55
When your soul is in my soul’s stead;
And I will friend you, if I may,
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:
There, when kings will sit to feast, 60
They get their fill before they think
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.
He gathered all that springs to birth
From the many-venomed earth;
First a little, thence to more, 65
He sampled all her killing store;
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,
Sate the king when healths went round.
They put arsenic in his meat
And stared aghast to watch him eat; 70
They poured strychnine in his cup
And shook to see him drink it up:
They shook, they stared as white’s their shirt:
Them it was their poison hurt.
—I tell the tale that I heard told. 75
Mithridates, he died old.