

All Quiet on the Western Front - Group Work #1 – Chapter 2

APPOINT A TIMEKEEPER & LISTEN TO THEM

1. As much as the men (and the reader) despise their (the men's) training, they later appreciate it. Why? Find out and tell me, making sure that you are specific and use at least one quote (2 are better). In *The Things They Carried* (Things), after Lavender is killed, Lt. Cross makes a number of vows – find the one that is related your answer to this question. If you don't have your book – I will have a couple up at the front – if they are being used, go to the next question, till one opens up.



2. Why do the men think that Himmelstoss abuses his power so much? What are the underlying reasons? Be specific and use at least 2 quotes in answering this question. What do you think the psychological term “projection” might have to do with the answer to this question? If you don't know what it means, try and brainstorm a possible meaning based on the question and what the word normally means. In *Things* we do NOT see a lot of that kind of abuse (Tim's training isn't even considered) – but we do see that kind of projection manifest itself **outside** of the men's circle – where? Be specific and thoughtful.

3. Ok this question should require some real thinking (not that the others don't, but...) As Franz Kemmerich is dying, Paul tells him about the great job he will get as a head forester (what Franz always wanted to do), and then goes on to describe the idyllic place (complete with poplars – always note the poplars). What does this have to do with the M & M's that the men kept with them in *The Things They Carried*? I expect a specific and profound answer here.

4. We talked about this in *Candide* in a big way as well... The power of looking forward to something is certainly not limited to the dying. Briefly connect our *Candide* discussion on “The Search” to Paul's words to Franz – and to the rest of the men and their lives as well.



5a. Franz still felt pain in his foot even when it was gone – how can the absence of something bring about pain. Look at the lyrics (either on the back or attached to this sheet)? What does Suzanne Vega use as a metaphor – comparing the soldier's lost leg to what? Ok – after you get that (gee sorry if you read ahead) – what is it that the prostitute in the song has lost – and yet still feels (be specific and think of our discussion for Chapter 1, as well the introductory text from *Slaughter House Five*). Can Paul and his younger comrades feel this “phantom loss” in the same way as their older comrades, or is it just an abstraction (and why?) – be specific, be brilliant (the question is kind of brilliant isn't it?) – if you get stuck or just want to turn to page 20 (gee I hope you took notes).



5b. What are the “phantom legs” as seen in *Things*? Find two and explain – BE VERY THOUGHTFUL – don’t stretch it, you don’t need to – make sure you understand completely what this concept means (see 5a and the song). Be specific – for instance (and no you can’t use this one) – “The pantyhoseDobbins wrapped around his face are both literally [her legs] the phantom legs for both his girlfriend who is absent from the front, and later at the end of the chapter for the love between them after she leaves him.”

6. When Franz is dying, Paul is enraged that the Doctor won’t leave what he is doing (heading into the operating room) to go attend to Franz. Before continuing with this question – poll your group members, what do you think of NOT Paul’s reaction – but the Doctor’s choice of actions. Write a brief summary of what you said. Ok – now consider our discussion (on Chapter 1) and the two set of rules that exist, respectively, for Home versus the Front. Connect this to the Doctor’s actions in a thoughtful way.

Men in a War Suzanne Vega

Men in a war
If they've lost a limb
Still feel that limb
As they did before
He lay on a cot
He was drenched in a sweat
He was mute and staring
But feeling the thing
He had not
I know how it is
When something is gone
A piece of your eyesight
Or maybe your vision
A corner of sense
Goes blank on the screen
A piece of the scan
Gets filled in by hand
You know that it was
And now it is not
So you just make do with
Whatever you've got
Men in a war
If they've lost a limb
Still feel that limb
As they did before
If your nerve is cut
If you're kept on the stretch
You don't feel your will
You can't find your gut
And she lay on her back
She made sure she was hid
She was mute and staring
Not feeling the thing
That she did
I know how it is
When something is gone

Just a cool connection – if you had me for
Brit Lit, this will be clear.

From the Celtic *Stanzas of the Graves*:

**Gwalchmai is in Perydon Ground,
His grave reproaches all mankind.**

From *All Quiet* – Chapter 2, page 29

“There he [Franz Kemmerich] lies now—but why? The whole world ought to pass by this bed and say” “That is Franz Kemmerich, nineteen and a half years old, he doesn’t want to die. Let him not die!”

A piece of your eyesight
Or maybe your vision....