

JOURNEY'S END

BY

R.C. SHERRIFF



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PRESENTS

Journey's End

By

R.C. Sherriff

This study guide for *Journey's End* contains background information for the play, suggested themes and topics for discussion, and curriculum-based lessons that are designed by educators and theatre professionals.

The lessons and themes for discussion are organized in modules that can be used independently or interdependently according to your class's level and time availability.

THIS GUIDE WAS WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY BARBARA WORTHY, DEBRA MCLAUCHLAN, AND DENIS JOHNSTON. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS WERE PROVIDED BY CHRISTOPHER NEWTON AND CAMERON PORTEOUS.

COVER: EVAN BULIUNG WITH PETER HUTT AND EVERT HOUSTON
PHOTO BY SHIN SUGINO

JOURNEY'S END

Running time: 2 hrs 40 mins approx.

including one intermission

Previews May 13

Opens May 27

Closes October 8

For a calendar of performances visit:

www.shawfest.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Players	3
The Story	4
The Playwright	5
Director's Notes	6
Designer's Notes.....	7
Military Uniforms WWI.....	8
Costume Notes /Production History	9
Background:Overview WWI/Useful Links ...	10
Background: Date/Military Ranks.....	11
Background: Western Front/Trenches.....	12
Recommended Reading	12

Classroom Application

Before Attending the Play	13-18
After Attending the Play.....	19-26
Glossary of Theatre Terms.....	27

The Players

The Colonel	Anthony Bekenn
Private Mason.....	Simon Bradbury
Captain Stanhope	Evan Buliung
Bert	Andrew Bunker
Lieutenant Osborne.....	Patrick Galligan
German Soldier	Evert Houston
Company Sergeant-Major	Douglas Hughes
Second Lieutenant Raleigh	Jeff Lillico
Second Lieutenant Hibbert.....	Jeff Meadows
Broughton.....	Sam Strasfeld
Second Lieutenant Trotter.....	William Vickers
Captain Hardy	Blair Williams

Directed by Christopher Newton
Designed by Cameron Porteous
Lighting designed by Louise Guinand
Stage Manager: Joanna Jurychuk
Assistant Stage Manager: Barry Burns
Technical Director: Jeff Cummings



Evan Buliung as Capt. Stanhope
Photo by David Cooper

The Story

The play takes place in March 1918 -- the fourth year of the war -- and is based on the real-life war experiences of its author, R.C. Sherriff. The setting is a dugout in France, just fifty yards behind the front lines; this serves as an officers' quarters for the adjoining trenches.

As the play begins, one company is just being relieved by another, which is commanded by a young but highly-respected officer named Captain Stanhope. His company will spend six days defending this front-line position before the next relief arrives. Lieutenant Osborne, an older soldier and Stanhope's steady second-in-command, greets a new young officer named Raleigh who has just arrived from England. Evidently Raleigh has used some family influence to get himself assigned to Stanhope's unit -- the two were friends at school and spent some time together on school holidays. Raleigh, three years younger than Stanhope, looked up to him as a kind of boyhood idol, and Stanhope is all-but-engaged to Raleigh's sister Madge.

One might expect Stanhope to be pleased to see his young friend here, but we quickly see that he is

not. For one thing, a major German offensive is expected in the next few days, and Stanhope hardly needs the added responsibility of a young officer who has never been under fire -- indeed, who is only a few months out of school. But Stanhope's apprehension is really rooted in his own failing self-image: his years in the trenches have rattled his nerves so badly that he drinks a great deal of whiskey just to get through each day. Stanhope is haunted by the fear of not living up to his own high ideals -- and now he's afraid that word of his decline will inevitably get back to his family, or worse, to Madge.

Like all wars, the Great War was fought not by old hands, but by these young men with their unspoken fears, and their courage.

A Canadian Chronology of World War I

August 1914 First World War begins

October 1914 First group of Canadian soldiers arrives in Great Britain

April 1915 Second Battle of Ypres begins

September 1916 Battle of Courcellette, part of the Somme offensive

November 1916 Canada's war art programme begins, first artists hired

April 1917 Canadians capture Vimy Ridge

June 1917 Canadian Sir Arthur Currie commands Canadian Corps

October 1917 Canadians begin attack at Passchendaele

August 1918 Start of the final victory offensive known as The Hundred Days

November 1918 First World War ends

June 1919 Peace treaty signed at Versailles, France

July 1936 Vimy Memorial unveiled in France.



Map of the Western Front, 1914-18: Courtesy Canadian Archives

The Playwright: Robert Cedric Sherriff (1896-1975)

R.C. Sherriff was born in Kingston-on-Thames near London in 1896, the son of an insurance agent. He graduated from Kingston Grammar School, with aspirations of becoming a physical education teacher. But university was beyond his reach financially and (he believed) intellectually, and so he joined his father's company as an insurance clerk.

The war changed everything. Sherriff had just turned eighteen when war was declared and he immediately volunteered for service and joined the East Surrey Regiment. He became a second lieutenant, fought in the trenches, and spent six months in hospital after being wounded at Ypres. During the war he began to keep a war diary, which later proved to be an invaluable resource for *Journey's End*.

After the war Sherriff returned to his job in the insurance office, where he stayed for the next ten years. But he was a dedicated oarsman, and to raise funds for his local rowing club, he began writing plays as annual fundraisers. He learned his craft from reading extensively in modern drama, by studying William Archer's book *Play-Making*, and by attending plays in London. In 1927 Sherriff began writing a play

based on his war experiences, at first calling it *Suspense*, then *Waiting*, and finally *Journey's End*. After a slow initiation, the play began to enjoy enormous success, and soon Sherriff was earning over £1,000 a week from royalties. The success of the play changed his life for ever.



Photo: R.C. Sherriff
(Mander & Mitchenson Theatre Collection, London)

He took a permanent leave from his insurance job and enrolled at Oxford, intending to become a schoolmaster. But he was lured away by an offer from Hollywood, and the rest is history, as they say.

Among his other plays are *Badger's Green* (1930), *Windfall* (1933), *St Helena* (1935) a play about Napoleon, written in collaboration with Jeanne de Casalis, *Miss Mabel* (1948), *Home at Seven* (1950), *The White Carnation* (1953), and *The Long Sunset* (1955), a vivid picture of the last day of Roman civilization in Britain.

His many screenplays include *The Invisible Man* (1933), *Goodbye Mr Chips* (1939), *Odd Man Out* (1947), and *Quartet* (1948), a film based on four short stories by Somerset Maugham. Sherriff also wrote several novels and plays, but none of them attained the success of *Journey's End*. His autobiography, entitled *No Leading Lady*, was published in 1968. Sherriff died in 1975.

Director's Notes

by

Christopher Newton

Ordered to climb out of filthy trenches to face machine guns, ordered to march slowly towards the enemy, ordered not to stop even to help a wounded comrade, why didn't these men shoot their officers? Why didn't they simply turn their guns on the men who commanded them to die so stupidly? Insurrections

broke out in the Russian and French lines but, apart from quite minor instances, neither the British nor the Germans cracked. There were no major revolts. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers simply walked towards their death. It has been suggested that the highly industrialized nature of



Jeff Lillico as Raleigh
Photo by Andrée Lanthier

German and British society meant that the ordinary soldiers were already a tightly organized force, unlike the farmers and farm labourers who made up the bulk of the French and Russia armies, that the discipline of the factory simply mutated into the authoritarianism of the military.

There's obviously an element of truth here, but a larger truth is perhaps revealed in *Journey's End*. No one talks about "king and country"; heroism is respected but finally relegated to the rugby field, not embraced in the wasteland of northern France. There is no cynicism. When Stanhope pleads with Hibbert he talks about friends, about decency, about doing right by a chum.



Christopher Newton
Photo by David Cooper

There's an echo of school in this play. One officer is a schoolmaster, one is an eighteen-year-old who has just left school, his school friend is captain of the company. Playing the game, doing the right thing, telling the truth, looking after the younger ones, making an adventure out of ordinary life, obeying the rules -- these were the inculcated values that seem to have got the old Empire through this war.

The war destroyed or changed almost everything that went before. It was unbelievably vile, horrific, filthy. Men descended into a hell of mud, body lice and violence, but they clung to an idea of what life might be: gardening, *Alice in Wonderland*, a Roman road, tins of apricots, the comedian George Robey, the importance of a clean dishcloth. Small decencies, whiskey and memories seem to have helped these men through the madness. Sharing and luck, innocence and affection hold civilized life together in a rough hole in the ground while Armageddon approaches.

The honesty of this play's vision reaches out from the horror of 1918 and reminds us of our own vulnerability. It is a remarkable achievement.



Evan Bulung as Stanhope and Jeff Lillico as Raleigh
Photo by David Cooper

Designer Notes

by

Cameron Porteous



Cameron Porteous
Photo: Shin Sugino

It is March 18, 1918, just before the battle of St Quentin. The set is a fragment of a World War I dugout in the British trenches. It should appear as a war painting, but the audience should feel the utter dismal conditions that these men lived under.

History tells us that the trenches were filled with water, mud, rotting flesh and rats. And in this set there must be a look of mud and water that seeps into everything, making all clothing damp and dirty. The smell of mildew in the air is mixed with fried bacon and decomposing bodies. There is very little light. The dugout is lit by a few candles in bottles and the sound of the war outside is muffled by the earth walls. The floor is nothing but mud, with the footprints of the men stamped in, and it is filled with water. There is a set of rough steps coming down from the trench above, and two avenues lead to other parts of the gloomy dugout. The ceiling is low, not more than six feet; in fact, in reality

the ceiling was so low that no-one could stand upright.

This is a monochromatic world, like old sepia-toned photographs, where all the colours are of the earth, of mud and clay. No other colours exist. The khaki uniforms and the bottles of scotch lend themselves to this concept well. Mud covers everything, men and equipment. All that remains clean are the weapons used by the men, and the new officer, but even his boots are mud-clogged.

There is very little furniture -- ammunition crates serve as chairs and the support for a wood-planked table-top. The beds are wooden framed on low legs; there is wire mesh fixed to the frame to support the sleeping bodies. This is the world of men who live like rodents in the ground, burrowed into wet clay with hell raining down on them without warning. A world of madness created by mad men.



Set Model for "Journey's End" by Cameron Porteous
Photo by Shin Sugino

Military Uniforms of World War I

The infantryman's uniform changed considerably during the war years. He was known throughout the army as the "PBI" (Poor Bloody Infantry), and in 1914 he looked more like a country game-keeper, equipped for mobility and concealment and armed for his role as rifleman. But by 1918 he looked more like an industrial worker, with steel helmet and protective items such as flack jacket, gas mask, and rubber waders. And he was now a trained specialist with machine guns and hand grenades.

His standard uniform was made of khaki, and he wore a peaked cap, a tunic with large pockets, shirt and trousers (flared breeches for mounted men), bound below the knee by "puttees", long strips of cloth wound spirally round the leg from angle to knee. He wore his "greatcoat" and stout leather ankle-boots, and would carry his spare boots, tunic, trousers, shirt, socks and underwear, rations, cutlery, mess tin, his washing and shaving



*Costume Design for Evan Buliung
by Cameron Porteous*



*Costume Design for Simon Bradbury
by Cameron Porteous*

equipment and a ground sheet, all in the kit bag on his back. He also wore weather-proof equipment that consisted of a belt, braces, several buckles and clips. Attached to this he had a leather harness with pockets for ammunition, a bayonet scabbard, a water bottle and an entrenching tool. In all, this totaled 27.7 kg and was called 'the personal pack'.

Helmets were not issued until late 1915; and it wasn't until 1916 that box respirators (called "gas satchels") were issued as standard protection against poison gas. Unfortunately, this was too late for many men.

During the frigid winter months uniforms became varied and less conventional. Men started wearing non-standard issue such as goatskin fleeces or leather jackets. Many forms of headgear and gloves were coveted for warmth – balaclavas, scarves, and all types of gloves.



*Costume Design for Jeff Meadows
by Cameron Porteous*

Officers were always better tailored than their fellow infantrymen, and their packs weighed a lot less than the PBI's. They wore breeches rather than trousers and in their "haversack" they would have a compass, water bottle, mess tin, wire cutters and binoculars. They also carried a sword and a pistol in a leather holster. The sword was replaced by a cane in 1915. An officer's spare kit was carried in a leather valise by the transport. Staff officers also sported a bright red tab on their jacket collars. The immaculate condition of the officers was a source of amusement and resentment to the fighting men, but losses were high amongst these conspicuously attired men, and eventually they often went into action wearing the uniform of another rank.

On Costumes

Designer Cameron Porteous was asked why are the uniforms in *Journey's End* not made of heavy khaki, as the originals would have been?

“Authentic World War I and II uniforms are becoming scarce and difficult to buy from war-surplus stores. Therefore there is a need for the Shaw Festival to protect our stock of real khaki uniforms. I asked that all the uniforms be made out of cheaper khaki wool that could easily be “broken down” with paint and glaze. This is the only deviation from authenticity that I would consider. My attitude towards military uniforms is that they must be correct down to the last detail, because people have died believing in them.”



Jeff Lillico as Raleigh, William Vickers as Trotter and Evan Buliung as Stanhope
Photo by David Cooper



Evan Buliung as Stanhope and Jeff Meadows as Hibbert
Photo by David Cooper

Production History

Journey's End, R.C. Sherriff's first professional play, premiered in London on December 9, 1928 for two performances only, with a young Laurence Olivier as Captain Stanhope. The following year it was successfully remounted in the West End for a total of almost 600 performances, with the part of Stanhope played by Colin Clive. By the end of the year there were some thirty productions of the play world-wide, including 500 performances on Broadway, and a production in Germany which was renamed *The Other Side*. *Journey's End* is widely considered the greatest war play of the twentieth century, and it seems to have arrived just when audiences were finally ready to look back at the horrors of the Great War.

The Canadian premiere came in September 1929, in a touring production that played Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre. Other notable Canadian

productions: National Arts Centre (1982) featuring Ben Campbell and Neil Munro; the Arts Club in Vancouver with Norman Browning; and the Stratford Festival (1987) with Albert Schultz, Peter Donaldson and John Ormerod.

But for originality, here's a report of a 1930 production in Peace River, Alberta. The *Peace River Record* noted that *Journey's End* under the direction of Dr William Greene used several hundred rounds of shotgun ammunition with 3,000 shots actually fired. He also insisted that the entire cast be World War I veterans, including “The German Soldier” who was played by August Thompson, a veteran of the German army at St Quentin. The editor notes, “Twelve years ago these men were battering each other in deadly earnest... now they meet in friendship and play the grim reality of a few years ago... in the vast melting pot of this great north country.”

Overview of World War I



Map showing the Allied Line as of August 1918, and as of November 1918.

Courtesy The Long Long Trail: www.1914-1918.net/

Cause of the War: In 1914 a war was declared between two European countries, Austria-Hungary and Serbia. It began with the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The Allies of each country soon joined in the war, turning one little dispute into a multi-country war between the Allied Forces (Serbia, Britain, France, Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary). Canada had no connections to the murdered prince, nor did Canada have any quarrel with anyone in the war. Yet when Britain asked for help with the war effort, Canada choose to fight alongside the allied forces.

World War I Useful Links

The Long Long Trail: www.1914-1918.net/
www.worldwar1.com
www.warmuseum.ca
www.civilization.ca
www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone
www.teacheroz.com/wwi.htm
www.around.ntl.sympatico.ca/~toby/ww1.html
www.collectionscanada.ca
www.firstworldwar.com

Before the War: Decades before the Great War the Germans knew they would one day fight a major war in Europe. They faced the possibility of encirclement, a threat which became real when France allied with Russia. Germany had been quietly building immense railway systems able to deploy millions of men to the borders with easy access to Northern France and Flanders. The German plan was quite well known by the French, who had begun entering secret planning with their new allies, the British.

During the War: From the moment the German Army moved into Luxembourg on August 2, 1914 to the Armistice on November 11, 1918, the fighting on the Western Front in France and Flanders never stopped. There were quiet periods, just as there were the most intense, savage, huge-scale battles; some were won, many were lost. Break-through never came until August 1918, when in the last hundred days of the war the British army spearheaded the defeat of the Germany.



Wounded Canadian soldiers en route to dressing station via light railway, 1916.

Photo Courtesy: Library and Archives, Canada

Death in the War: The death toll in the war was astronomical. In total there were approximately 13,000,000 people killed. Out of that about 60,000 were Canadian soldiers, and another 175,000 Canadians were seriously injured. Lives were ruined and entire generations of young men were lost.

March 21, 1918

Germany's Last Gamble

Director Christopher Newton was asked about the significance of the date of this play. He replied: "In ninety years' time, how will people respond to the date '9/11'? Will they know what happened? On the opening night of *Journey's End*, everyone in the audience knew that March 21, 1918 meant the beginning of the last great German offensive of the Great War. They knew that the British trenches at St Quentin had been overrun, with terrible casualties, just as we know the dreadful events of September 11, 2001."

In his book *The Experience of World War I*, J.M.

Winter calls this furious assault "Germany's last gamble":

No preliminary barrage announced the attack well in advance. Artillery was vital but it was now used in a different way. No frontal assault was planned, but rather 47 divisions were deployed in a vast attack along diagonals which constituted a massive thrust to cut behind the front lines. The British Fifth Army under Sir Hubert Gough [which included Captain Stanhope's company] virtually collapsed in the face of the initial onslaught of the German Eighteenth Army...Within a week the Germans had advanced 65 kilometers.'

Military Ranking

Military Rank is a system of grading seniority and command within military organizations. Ranks in foreign military services may vary significantly, even when the same names are used.

The importance of Military Rank is more than just who salutes whom – it is also a badge of leadership, and with each increase in rank there is more responsibility for personnel, equipment and the success of a mission.

Below is a list of commissioned officers, from senior to junior ranking:

Field Marshall
General
Lieutenant General
Major General
Brigadier
Colonel
Lieutenant Colonel
Major
Captain
Lieutenant
Second Lieutenant



EVAN BULJUNG WITH PETER HUTT AND EVERT HOUSTON
PHOTO BY SHIN SUGINO

On the Western Front

The Western Front was the name applied to the fighting zone in France and Flanders, where the British, French, Belgian and later American armies faced that of Germany. There was an Eastern Front too, in Poland, Galicia and down to Serbia, where Russian armies faced those of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Western Front was not the only theatre of war that saw the British Army in action during the Great War, but it was by far the most important.

When war broke out, the German plan began to be executed and Luxembourg and Belgium were invaded. The belief was that Russia would be slow to mobilize, which would give Germany time to attack and defeat France before turning its attention to Russia. The French army was slaughtered in the first weeks of the war, and the German army moved relentlessly forward. The great move west had begun, with what became known as the “Race to the Sea”. This was the war that both sides had been planning for: it was expected to be a short, sharp war. How wrong they were.

Recommended Reading

The Western Front, 1914-18 by John Terraine

Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks

The Middle Parts of Fortune by Frederic Manning

The Regeneration Trilogy by Pat Barker

Memoirs of an Infantry Officer by Siegfried Sassoon

Parade's End by Ford Madox Ford

The First World War by John Keegan

Goodbye To All That by Robert Graves

The Trenches of World War I



German soldiers in trenches during the Battle of the Marne, 1914
Photo Courtesy: Library and Archives, Canada

The trenches were not distinct parallel lines, but a rabbit-warren of fire, communication and supply lines where getting lost was a very real possibility. Most of us think of the Great War in terms of life and death in the trenches, but in fact only a relatively small proportion of the army actually served there. The majority of the troops were employed in the mass of support lines that ran behind the front lines. These lines were used for carrying out the wounded, moving supplies, training establishments, stores, workshops, and headquarters. Nowhere was considered safe, but the front lines were the most dangerous places to be, and that's where soldiers of the infantry were sent.

The trenches stretched in a continuous line covering an astonishing 400 miles from the English Channel to the Swiss border. There was no way round. Trench positions became formidable fortresses protected with barbed wire and sandbags, and often concrete shelters below ground level.

Both sides had very similar systems of trenches, and the space between them became known as “No Man's Land”. It could be as narrow as a few meters, or as large as a soccer field. Often the soldiers called out, taunting each other. And sometimes they just listened as someone sang a song.

Classroom Applications

The following pages suggest questions and activities students might explore

BEFORE attending the play.

Theme One GUESS THE SITUATION

ACTIVITY

In pairs, read the situations provided below.

For each situation: (a) decide on the most likely setting and characters, and (b) create an improvised version of the events described.

- Compare different versions of the scenes.
- Compare your depictions to scenes in *Journey's End*.

Situation #1

Person A is singing a happy song and drying laundry. Person B arrives and takes off his hat. Person A offers him a drink. Person B describes events of the day. The two of them talk about food, clothes, and people they see regularly.

Situation #2

Person A and Person B have just met each other and are about to have dinner together. They discuss the quiet of the evening and the fireworks in the distance. Person B calls the flaring lights romantic; Person A agrees. A member of the kitchen staff arrives to apologize that apricots are going to be served for dessert instead of pineapple.

Situation #3

Person A and Person B are on one end of a stretch of land 100 yards long. On both sides, group leaders plan strategies for physically invading the opposite group's area. Group members, all men, carry out these strategies without question.

Theme Two

IMAGES OF HEROISM

Journey's End depicts a few days in the life of men who face horrific circumstances. The idea of heroism is a dominant theme in the play.

ACTIVITY

Qualities of Heroism

- Individually, have students anonymously write a completion to the following sentence: “When I think of a hero or heroine, I think of someone who _____.”
- Assign the class into groups of approximately four members each. The group task is to combine ideas in the sentences they have written in order to create an imaginary but realistic “hero” or “heroine”.
- Pretend that the “heroes” and “heroines” attend a formal banquet to receive awards for their deeds.
- Each group must determine what their hero/heroine has done to deserve the award. The awarded actions should be believable, not super-human.
- Groups now prepare a speech about their hero/heroine to deliver at the banquet; the tone should be serious but congratulatory.
- When giving the speech, group members must take the role of characters who know the award recipient well.
- After the speeches, divide the class into pairs, labeled A and B.
- Character A will take the role of the hero or heroine created by his or her group.
- Character B will take the role of a reporter covering the award banquet.
- As a class, brainstorm questions that a reporter might ask an award recipient.
- Conduct a short interview between the reporters and the heroes/heroines. How did they view their own actions? Would they change anything?
- Discuss similarities among the heroes/heroines.

Theme Three

FEET OF CLAY

The phrase “feet of clay” expresses a weakness or flaw in the character of a greatly admired person. The term originated in the Biblical story (Daniel 2: 31-40) that describes a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. In the dream, the king saw a statue with a head of gold, arms and chest of silver, stomach of brass, legs of iron, and feet of clay. When a stone was aimed at the statue so that it hit the feet, the entire figure fell into pieces.

DISCUSSION

- What modern heroes in popular culture, sports, or world events have revealed their “feet of clay”?
- How do people react when their heroes behave as less than perfect people?

ACTIVITY

- Return to the heroic characters created by the class in the previous activity.
- In pairs, ask students to select one of the heroes or heroines created by the class.
- Each pair decides what their chosen hero’s “feet of clay” might be.
- Standing back to back, each pair creates a statue of the hero or heroine for display in a local government building or park. The “public” side of the statue will display the person’s heroism; the “private” side of the statue will display the person’s “feet of clay”.
- Assign half the class to observe the statues created by the other half; then switch.
- Discuss how well the statues communicated the human aspects of heroism.

Theme Four

WAITING

Much of the action in *Journey's End* involves characters who are waiting for an unpleasant event that might or might not happen.

DISCUSSION

- What images do you associate with the word “waiting”?
- Why is waiting a stressful activity?

ACTIVITY

- In groups of about 5 members each, decide on a public location that involves waiting for an important and potentially unpleasant event to occur.
- What imaginary event is your group awaiting?
- What activities occupy people while waiting for such an event in a public place?
- What do people talk about while waiting?
- Create and rehearse a 2-minute scene that demonstrates your group “waiting” in its decided location.
- Show the scenes to the class.
- Discuss common features of waiting expressed in the scenes.
- Compare your depictions of waiting with those you view in *Journey's End*.

Theme Five

WORLD WAR I REFERENCES

Journey's End, first performed in 1928-29, is based on playwright R.C. Sherriff's World War I experience as a Captain in Britain's East Surrey regiment. Set in the rat-infested trenches near St Quentin, France, in March 1918, the play makes reference to several World War I battles, weapons and combat terms.

RESEARCH

In groups, research an assigned WWI reference, one of the following for each group:

Lewis gun - Mills bomb - Trench mortar - Gas mask

Phosgene - Military Cross - No Man's Land - Vimy Ridge

Theme Six

WORLD WAR I POETRY

RESEARCH

The play's title is taken from a poem by Humbert Wolfe, (1885-1940):
Journey's End

What will they give me, when journey's done?

Your own room to be quiet in, Son!

Who shares it with me?

There is none shares that cool dormitory, Son!

Who turns the sheets?

There is but one, and no one needs to turn it, Son!

Who lights the candle?

Ev'ryone sleeps without candle all night, Son!

Who calls me after sleeping?

Son! You are not called when journey's done.

In groups, research poetry and diaries written by soldiers, often while in the trenches. Present to the class.

Theme Seven

ANALYZING A PASSAGE

The following dialogue from *Journey's End* occurs between a seasoned veteran of war, 45-year-old Osborne, and an 18-year-old new recruit named Raleigh.

- Ask for volunteers to read the passage aloud.
- Ask for a second set of volunteers to read the passage again. This time, focus on holding the two pauses written into the script for about 5 seconds each. What do the pauses add to the scene?
- In pairs, read the passage twice more, switching parts for the second reading.
- What words are repeated several times in the passage?
- What atmosphere is created?
- What emotions do you suspect the two men are feeling?

A British dugout near St Quentin, France. Monday evening, March 18, 1918.

- Raleigh:** Are we in the front line here?
- Osborne:** No. That's the support line outside. The front line's about fifty yards further on.
- Raleigh:** How frightfully quiet it is!
- Osborne:** It's often quiet -- like this.
- Raleigh:** I thought there would be an awful row here -- all the time.
- Osborne:** Most people think that. *(Pause)*
- Raleigh:** I've never known anything so quiet as those trenches we came by. Just now and then I heard rifle firing, like the range at Bisley, and a sort of rumble in the distance.
- Osborne:** Those are the guns up north -- up Wipers way. The guns are always going up there; it's never quiet like this. *(Pause)* I expect it's all very strange to you.
- Raleigh:** It's -- it's not exactly what I thought. It's just this - this quiet that seems so funny.
- Osborne:** A hundred yards from here the Germans are sitting in *their* dugouts, thinking how quiet it is.
- Raleigh:** Are they as near as that?
- Osborne:** About a hundred yards.
- Raleigh:** It seems uncanny. It makes me feel we're -- we're all just waiting for something.
- Osborne:** We are, generally, just waiting for something. When anything happens, it happens quickly. Then we just start waiting again.
- Raleigh:** I never thought it was like that.

AFTER attending Journey's End

Theme Eight
COPING WITH CHAOS AND ABSURDITY

Killing millions of young men, World War I was a conflict fought largely in European trenches where success was measured in feet and inches. *Journey's End* captures elements of the chaos and absurdity of the war's horrors:

- Osborne claims that the new officer, Raleigh, has “hundreds of strange things to learn” including that “men are different out here”.
- Osborne describes a time when the enemy allowed his men to carry a wounded soldier to safety, and then “next day we blew each other’s trenches to blazes”.
- After one shift of duty, Raleigh states about the war: “It all seems rather silly, doesn’t it.”
- Planning a raid with the Sergeant-Major, Stanhope realizes that several men might be killed, but hopes to “delay the (enemy) advance a whole day”.
- Stanhope claims that following orders is very important, despite the circumstances. “Our orders are to stick here. If you’re told to stick where you are, you don’t make plans to retire.”
- When evidence suggests that a raid will be a suicide mission, the Colonel refuses to call it off because the Brigadier has ordered it to happen.
- Young men, new recruits of 18 years old, are selected for the most dangerous missions because they are fresh and not yet afraid of war.

/Continued



DISCUSSION

- What strategies did each character in the play adopt in order to cope with their present reality?
- Why did Stanhope claim that men without imagination are best able to cope with war? What aspects of Stanhope's imagination tortured him?
- When Stanhope fears that he might be going insane, Osborne attempts to reassure him by saying: "When people are going potty, they never talk about it; they keep it to themselves." Do you agree with Osborne's statement?
- *Catch-22*, a novel written by Joseph Heller in 1961, deals with an ironic rule in the air force. The rule suggests that a pilot cannot use insanity as a means to escape flying dangerous missions. If a pilot asks to be grounded because he is concerned for his safety, then he must be sane and therefore capable of flying. If a pilot flies without fearing for his safety, then he must be insane, but still flies because he hasn't asked to be grounded. If possible, read *Catch-22*, or watch the movie version of the novel, and compare it to *Journey's End*.



ACTIVITY



The Poker Game

- Imagine that Osborne, Trotter, Hibbert, and Stanhope are playing poker while waiting to hear about a raid. Mason the cook is in the background but not part of the game.
- In groups, enact the poker game. The purpose of the game is to pass the time while waiting. While playing, however, each officer should demonstrate his own coping strategies for war.
- At the end of the game, one player will say something that sets Stanhope off in a rage. What will the comment be? How will the game end?

Theme Nine

THE HUMANITY OF WAR

Although set in the midst of cruel and deadly conflict, *Journey's End* portrays simple acts of kindness, comradeship and humanity. The play reveals the strength of human spirit and character that kept the officers from total barbarism and chaos.



ACTIVITY

Letters from the Front

Throughout the play, characters write home to their families. As Raleigh's letter to his sister demonstrates, the men often shield loved ones from the harsh truth about life in the trenches.

- Imagine that you are either one of the officers in the play or Mason the cook.
- Imagine that you expect a major German attack within the next day or so.
- In role, write a letter to a family member of your choice. Keenly aware that this is the last letter you may ever write, avoid gruesome facts that might upset the recipient.
- Focus your letter on acts of friendship and sacrifice that you have witnessed among your wartime comrades. Use examples from the play.
- Include descriptions of the strong leadership your regiment possesses.
- End your letter on a note of hope.
- In groups portraying different characters, take pictures in role to send with the letters. Make sure the pictures don't include horrible sights.

Theme Ten

THE WASTE OF STANHOPE

The character of Stanhope illustrates the emotionally debilitating effects of war on young men of great talent and promise.

- Hardy, the officer replaced by Stanhope at the beginning of the play, is intimidated by Stanhope's attention to detail about cleanliness, but also condemns his drinking.
- Osborne calls Stanhope "the best company commander we've got".
- Raleigh worships Stanhope as his boyhood role model, who severely punished schoolboys caught drinking or smoking.
- Stressed by the war, Stanhope continues to perform strong acts of leadership and heroism.
- Tormented by images in his mind, Stanhope uses alcohol to dull his imagination.
- Stanhope lashes out in uncontrollable anger when his officers displease him.

ACTIVITY

A Docudrama

- Imagine that the war is over and Stanhope has survived. At 22 years old, he has been active in combat for almost 4 years. With his medals and citations, he is sent home to his family.
- Now imagine that it is 3 years later and Stanhope is 25. What do you predict would have happened to him since the war? Has he conquered his alcoholism? Is his temper under control? Is he plagued by memories of the trenches?
- Imagine that a documentary film maker has decided to create a movie about Stanhope as a war hero. The movie's working title is *The Making of a Hero*.
- Divide the class into three groups.
- The first group will focus on Stanhope as a school hero before the war.
- The second group will focus on Stanhope's exploits during the war.
- The third group will focus on Stanhope's life after the war.
- Each group will create a section of the docudrama, using techniques such as interview, monologue, and short depictions of events.

Theme Eleven

RALEIGH'S JOURNEY

From the time of the ancient Greek playwrights, the image of a journey has been a major theme in western drama. In many cases, the journey represents a transition from innocence to experience, ignorance to knowledge, naïve idealism to mature appreciation of the complexities of life.

DISCUSSION

The title of the play may be taken from the final act of Shakespeare's *Othello*, in which the title character, a war hero, summarizes the end of his tragic life.

- What is the significance of the title *Journey's End* to Sherriff's play?
- How have each of the play's characters been changed by the experience of war?

ACTIVITY

This activity will focus on Raleigh's journey in the play. The technique used in the activity is called *Voices in the Head*.

- In the *Voices in the Head* technique, group members devise sentences that the central character might hear at a stage of the journey. In presenting their section of the journey, group members:
 - (a) decide on the most appropriate sentences to include,
 - (b) decide who will say each sentence,
 - (c) decide on the best order for the sentences to be presented,
 - (d) decide whether any sentences will be repeated or overlapped.
- Each group member should create several sentences to include in the presentation.
- The group should select recorded music to accompany their presentation.
- Each group should be assigned one stage of the journey from Stage 1 to 8.
- After these stages have been presented, all groups will create their own depiction of Stage 9.



Raleigh's Journey, continued

Stage One:

At age 18, Raleigh is completing his final year of high-school. Stanhope, a former high school athletic champion serving in World War I, has risen to a captain's rank at age 21. On leave, Stanhope visits the school wearing his uniform. His presence influences Raleigh to enlist in the army.

To display this stage, group members will take the roles of students at the school, including Raleigh. Their sentences will reveal the students' reactions to Stanhope's visit.

Stage Two:

Raleigh tells his family that he plans to enlist in the war and hopes to get into Stanhope's regiment. His family knows Stanhope because the two fathers are friends and Stanhope has stayed with the family during summer vacations. Raleigh's sister has been writing to Stanhope throughout the war. Raleigh's uncle, a general, says that he can't show favoritism to his nephew by assigning him to the regiment of his choice, but secretly arranges for Raleigh to be sent to Stanhope's company.

To display this stage, group members will take the roles of Raleigh's mother, father, sister, and uncle. Their sentences will reveal the family's reactions to Raleigh's decision to enlist and their feelings about his hope to be assigned with Stanhope.

Stage Three:

In France, Raleigh arrives at Stanhope's regiment by traveling through a maze of trenches called Lancer's Alley. He meets Stanhope's second in command, Osborne, who immediately offers him a whiskey and a cigarette. Osborne tells Raleigh about routines in the trench: officers go on duty for three hours and off for six, officers never undress on the front line in case they're needed immediately, it's always eerily quiet unless there's an attack, and the enemy is 100 yards away feeling the same way we do. Osborne tries to prepare Raleigh for changes he might notice in Stanhope.

To display this stage, group members will all take the role of Osborne. Their sentences will introduce Raleigh to life in the trenches and warn him that Stanhope has changed from the youthful athlete that Raleigh once knew.

Raleigh's Journey, continued

Stage Four:

Raleigh meets Mason the cook and 2nd Lieutenant Trotter, who enter the trench with Stanhope. The officers and the cook discuss the difference between apricots and pineapples. Stanhope is not welcoming to Raleigh. He calls for whiskey and reacts angrily to the news that there is no pepper for the supper. A signaler is sent to another company to borrow pepper. The officers discuss serious war strategy and dinner at the same time. Trotter creates a chart to mark off the hours. Trotter shows Raleigh the gear he needs to go outside: a revolver to shoot rats, a hat, a gas mask, but nothing to get in the way if you need to run fast to escape a mortar shell. Trotter accompanies Raleigh on his first shift of duty.

To display this stage, group members will take the roles of Mason, Trotter, and Stanhope. Their sentences will teach Raleigh the day-to-day realities of his situation.

Stage Five:

Raleigh returns from his first shift above ground and talks to Osborne about life back home. Osborne tells him about a time when the British and the Germans “blew each other’s trenches to blazes” the day after the Germans allowed his regiment to bring a wounded soldier safely back to base. Raleigh realizes that war “seems rather silly”. Stanhope erupts in anger when he discovers that Raleigh has written a letter home. He demands that Raleigh give him the letter unsealed. The letter praises Stanhope as a hero.

To display this stage, group members will take the roles of Osborne, Stanhope, and Raleigh. Their sentences will reveal that Raleigh is starting to learn about the absurdity of his situation, but still maintains his former opinion of Stanhope.

Stage Six:

Raleigh is excited and proud when he discovers that he has been chosen to lead a raid on the Germans with Osborne. A colonel explains that the mission might win the war and promises a medal if the men succeed. Raleigh and Osborne wait until the assigned time to leave the trench. They decide not to drink the rum they are offered because it might affect their thinking. Raleigh wants to talk about the raid, but Osborne keeps changing the subject. They discuss their preferences for breakfast, they recite *The Walrus and the Carpenter* from *Alice in Wonderland*, and they imagine streams and forests back home. Raleigh invites Osborne to visit him in England when the war is over. As they are about to leave the trench, Raleigh notices that Osborne has left his wedding ring on the table. Mason the cook wishes them luck and promises a fancy chicken dinner when they return.

To display this stage, group members will take the roles of the colonel, Osborne, Raleigh, and Mason. Their sentences will show that Raleigh’s excited optimism is not shared by those with more experience in war.



Raleigh's Journey, continued

Stage Seven:

The raid that Raleigh and Osborne lead is met with machine-guns and shells. Osborne is killed in the turmoil. Raleigh captures a German soldier and carries him back to the trench. The Colonel declares the raid a success, congratulates Raleigh and promises him a Military Cross. Raleigh doesn't answer; instead, he sits on Osborne's bed looking at his hands with his head lowered. Mason cooks the celebration dinner, but Raleigh doesn't eat with the officers. Instead, he has bread and cheese with the regular soldiers.

To display this stage, group members will take the roles of Osborne, the Colonel, the German soldier, Mason, and Raleigh. Their sentences will show that Raleigh has now learned an important lesson about the reality of war.

Stage Eight:

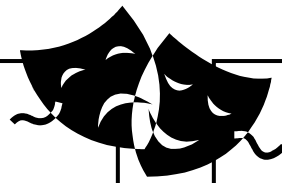
Stanhope is violently angry because Raleigh ate rations with the regular soldiers instead of celebrating the raid with the officers' dinner and champagne. Raleigh asks Stanhope how he can celebrate when Osborne's body is lying in the mud. Stanhope explains that celebrating allows him to cope with what he has to deal with every day.

To display this stage, group members will all take the role of Stanhope. Their sentences will explain that seemingly uncaring actions are really coping techniques that deal with the horrors of war.

Stage Nine: Remember: This stage is to be portrayed by all groups after they have watched the performances of the other stages. The purpose of this stage is to summarize Raleigh's journey to its end.

At the end of the play, Raleigh goes onto the field with Trotter. Shells are fired and Raleigh gets shot in the back. With a broken spine, he's lost the feeling in his legs. Raleigh loses consciousness and wakes up in the trench. He tells Stanhope that he has to get back outside because he feels guilty lying safely in the trench while everyone else is fighting. Stanhope tells Raleigh that he has to go to the hospital. Raleigh asks for water and then for some light. He feels cold and asks Stanhope to stay with him. While Stanhope is getting a blanket for him, Raleigh dies alone.

To display this stage, group members decide which voices Raleigh would likely hear as he lies dying. These voices might go back to his school days or to his family saying good-bye. They might include Osborne and the other officers. They might involve memories of home and childhood. They might relive parts of the raid and the attack. Sentences spoken will summarize Raleigh's path from innocence to experience.



BLOCKING: The actor's movement on stage is known as "blocking". The Stage Manager writes the blocking notation into the Prompt Script.

COSTUME: Anything that an actor wears on stage is referred to as a costume. The Wardrobe department (the department responsible for creating costumes) provides clothes, shoes, hats, and any personal accessories such as umbrellas, purses and eyeglasses.

DROP: A drop is a large piece of painted canvas that is "flown in" by the flyman (see FLYMAN).

GREEN ROOM: The green room, usually near the entrance to the stage, is where the actors and crew sit while waiting for their turn to go on stage. One possible explanation of how the green room got its name is that actors used to wait for their entrances at the back of the theatre in an area where the scenery was stored. Perhaps the scenery was green, or the name "scene room" evolved into "green room".

ORCHESTRA PIT: The orchestra pit is the place where the musicians perform during a musical. Usually the orchestra pit is between the front row of the audience and the stage.

PROPS: A property or "prop" is anything that the audience sees that is not worn by an actor and is not a structural part of the set. Some examples are: tables, chairs, couches, carpets, pictures, lamps, weapons, food eaten during a play, dishes, cutlery, briefcases, books, newspapers, pens, telephones, curtains and anything else you can imagine.

PROSCENIUM: A term describing the physical characteristics of a theatre. A proscenium theatre is one in which the audience and the actors are separated by a picture-frame opening that the audience looks through to see the actors. Surrounding this opening is the PROSCENIUM ARCH. If there is an acting area on the audience side of the proscenium arch, it is referred to as the APRON or FORESTAGE.

SCRIM: A scrim is a piece of gauze that is painted and used as part of the scenery. When a scrim is lit from in front it is opaque, you cannot see through it. When a scrim is lit from behind it is transparent, you can see through it. This allows for many different visual effects to be created by the lighting and set designers.

THRUST STAGE: A thrust stage is a stage that is surrounded on three sides by the audience.

DIRECTOR: The person who guides the actors during the rehearsal period. The director decides what the important messages of the play are and how they will be conveyed to the audience.

DESIGNERS: The people who work with the director to decide what the production will look like. Designers must choose the colour, shape and texture of everything you see on the stage. There are several areas that need to have designers: costumes, set, lighting and sometimes sound. The designers work very closely with the director to create the environment in which the play will take place.

DYER: The person who dyes fabrics for the Wardrobe department.

FLYMAN: The person responsible for the manipulation of the scenery which is in the fly gallery (the space above the stage). The scenery is manipulated by ropes attached to a counterweight system.

MILLINER: The person who makes the hats which the actors wear on stage.

PROPS BUYER: The person who buys items that will be used or adapted to become props. Props buyers also purchase the raw material used to build props.

SCENIC ARTISTS: The people who are responsible for painting and decorating the surfaces of the set. Some of the techniques they use include: wood graining, stenciling, marbling and brickwork. They also paint the drops and scrims that are flown in.

STAGE CARPENTER: The person who ensures that everything runs smoothly on stage during a performance. The stage carpenter and stage crew are responsible for changing the sets between scenes and acts.

STAGE MANAGER: The person who makes sure that all rehearsals and performances run smoothly. During a performance the stage manager also makes sure that all of the technical elements (e.g. lights, sound, curtains flying in and out) happen at exactly the right time.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: The person who is responsible for coordinating all of the technical elements of a production. Technical directors work with the people who build the sets, props, costumes, wigs and special effects to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

Journey's End

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Did you make use of the following elements of this Study Guide? If so, please make any comments you feel might be useful:

- The Players:** YES _____ NO _____
- Running Time:** YES _____ NO _____
- The Story:** YES _____ NO _____
- The Playwright:** YES _____ NO _____
- Director's Notes:** YES _____ NO _____
- Designer's Notes:** YES _____ NO _____
- Production Notes:** YES _____ NO _____
- Background Information:** YES _____ NO _____
- Lessons before the play:** YES _____ NO _____
- Lessons after the play:** YES _____ NO _____
- Glossary of Jobs and Terms:** YES _____ NO _____

Please feel free to make any other comments or suggestions:
