

A Simple Enquiry

Ernest Hemingway

OUTSIDE, the snow was higher than the window. The sunlight came in through the window and shone on a map on the pine-board wall of the hut. The sun was high and the light came in over the top of the snow. A trench had been cut along the open side of the hut, and each clear day the sun, shining on the wall, reflected heat against the snow and widened the trench. It was late March. The major sat at a table against the wall. His adjutant sat at another table.

Around the major's eyes were two white circles where his snow-glasses had protected his face from the sun on the snow. The rest of his face had been burned and then tanned and then burned through the tan. His nose was swollen and there were edges of loose skin where blisters had been. While he worked at the papers he put the fingers of his left hand into a saucer of oil and then spread the oil over his face, touching it very gently with the tips of his fingers. He was very careful to drain his fingers on the edge of the saucer so there was only a film of oil on them, and after he had stroked his forehead and his cheeks, he stroked his nose very delicately between his fingers. When he had finished he stood up, took the saucer of oil, and went into a small room of the hut where he slept. "I'm going to take a little sleep," he said to the adjutant. In that army an adjutant is not a commissioned officer. "You'll finish up."

"Yes, Signor Maggiore," the adjutant answered. He leaned back in his chair and yawned. He took a paper-covered book out of the pocket of his coat and opened it; then laid it down on the table and lit his pipe. He leaned forward on the table to read and puffed at his pipe. Then he closed the book and put it back in his pocket. He had too much paper-work to get through. He could not enjoy reading until it was done. Outside, the sun went behind a mountain and there was no more light on the wall of the hut. A soldier came in and put some pine branches, chopped into irregular lengths, into the stove. "Be soft, Pinin," the adjutant said to him. "The major is sleeping."

Pinin was the major's orderly. He was a dark-faced boy, and he fixed the stove, putting the pine wood in carefully, shut the door, and went into the back of the hut again. The adjutant went on with his papers.

"Tonani," the major called.

"Signor Maggiore?"

"Send Pinin in to me."

"Pinin!" the adjutant called. Pinin came into the room. "The major wants you," the adjutant said.

Pinin walked across the main room of the hut toward the major's door. He knocked on the half-opened door. "Signor Maggiore?"

"Come in," the adjutant heard the major say, "and shut the door."

Inside the room the major lay on his bunk. Pinin stood beside the bunk. The major lay with his head on the rucksack that he had stuffed with spare clothing to make a pillow. His long, burned, oiled face looked at Pinin. His hands lay on the blankets.

"You are nineteen?" he asked.

"Yes, Signor Maggiore."

"You have ever been in love?"

"How do you mean, Signor Maggiore?"

"In love—with a girl?"

"I have been with girls."

"I did not ask that. I asked if you had been in love—with a girl."

"Yes, Signor Maggiore."

"You are in love with this girl now? You don't write her. I read all your letters."

"I am in love with her," Pinin said, "but I do not write her."

"You are sure of this?"

"I am sure."

"Tonani," the major said in the same tone of voice, "can you hear me talking?" There was no answer from the next room.

"He cannot hear," the major said. "And you are quite sure that you love a girl?"

"I am sure."

"And," the major looked at him quickly, "that you are not corrupt?"

"I don't know what you mean, corrupt."

"All right," the major said. "You needn't be superior."

Pinin looked at the floor. The major looked at his brown face, down and up him, and at his hands. Then he went on, not smiling. "And you really don't want—" the major paused. Pinin looked at the floor. "That your great desire isn't really—" Pinin looked at the floor. The major leaned his head back on the rucksack and smiled. He was really relieved: life in the army was too complicated. "You're a good boy," he said. "You're a good boy, Pinin. But don't be superior and be careful someone else doesn't come along and take you."

Pinin stood still beside the bunk.

"Don't be afraid," the major said. His hands were folded on the blankets. "I won't touch you. You can go back to your platoon if you like. But you had better stay on as my servant. You've less chance of being killed."

"Do you want anything of me, Signor Maggiore?"

"No," the major said. "Go on and get on with whatever you were doing. Leave the door open when you go out." Pinin went out, leaving the door open. The adjutant looked up at him as he walked awkwardly across the room and out of the door. Pinin was flushed and moved differently than he had moved when he brought in the wood for the fire. The adjutant looked after him and smiled. Pinin came in with more wood for the stove. The major, lying on his bunk, looking at his cloth-covered helmet and his snow-glasses that hung from a nail on the wall, heard him walk across the floor. The little devil, he thought, I wonder if he lied to me.

A Very Short Story

Ernest Hemingway

One hot evening in Padua they carried him up onto the roof and he could look out over the top of the town. There were chimney swifts in the sky. After a while it got dark and the searchlights came out. The others went down and took the bottles with them. He and Luz could hear them below on the balcony. Luz sat on the bed. She was cool and fresh in the hot night.

Luz stayed on night duty for three months. They were glad to let her. When they operated on him she prepared him for the operating table; and they had a joke about friend or enema. He went under the anaesthetic holding tight on to himself so he would not blab about anything during the silly, talky time. After he got on crutches he used to take the temperatures so Luz would not have to get up from the bed. There were only a few patients, and they all knew about it. They all liked Luz. As he walked back along the halls he thought of Luz in his bed.

Before he went back to the front they went into the Duomo and prayed. It was dim and quiet, and there were other people praying. They wanted to get married, but there was not enough time for the banns, and neither of them had birth certificates. They felt as though they were married, but they wanted everyone to know about it, and to make it so they could not lose it.

Luz wrote him many letters that he never got until after the armistice. Fifteen came in a bunch to the front and he sorted them by the dates and read them all straight through. They were all about the hospital, and how much she loved him and how it was impossible to get along without him and how terrible it was missing him at night. After the armistice they agreed he should go home to get a job so they might be married. Luz would not come home until he had a good job and could come to New York to meet her. It was understood he would not drink, and he did not want to see his friends or anyone in the States. Only to get a job and be married. On the train from Padua to Milan they quarreled about her not being willing to come home at once. When they had to say good-bye, in the station at Milan, they kissed good-bye, but were not finished with the quarrel. He felt sick about saying good-bye like that.

He went to America on a boat from Genoa. Luz went back to Pordonone to open a hospital. It was lonely and rainy there, and there was a battalion of arditi quartered in the town. Living in the muddy, rainy town in the winter, the major of the battalion made love to Luz, and she had never known Italians before, and finally wrote to the States that theirs had only been a boy and girl affair. She was sorry, and she knew he would probably not be able to understand, but might some day forgive her, and be grateful to her, and she expected, absolutely unexpectedly, to be married in the spring. She loved him as always, but she realized now it was only a boy and girl love. She hoped he would have a great career, and believed in him absolutely. She knew it was for the best.

The major did not marry her in the spring, or any other time. Luz never got an answer to the letter to Chicago about it. A short time after he contracted gonorrhoea from a sales girl in a loop department store while riding in a taxicab through Lincoln Park.

Notes on Annotating

Follow these steps and annotate the assigned readings. You do not need to provide annotations for every single bullet point, but you should have multiple comments for each number in the list, some more than others; I'd suggest making most of your comments in regard to sections 4-7.

1. Look at the text on the page:

- How would you describe its shape?
- Is it split up into stanzas or paragraphs?
- How long or short is the text?
- How long or short are the lines?
- Does it seem to present itself in a consistent, formal manner - or one that is more fluid, inconsistent?

2. Look at the title:

- What does it suggest the text is going to be about?
- How does the language or phrasing of the title lead you to think in a particular way?

3. Read for first impressions:

- What things do you notice the first time you read it through?
- What does it seem to be 'about'? This means - what is the literal subject of the text, but also what seem to be its thematic concerns?
- What things seem problematic, which elements are hard to understand?

4. Read for content

- Read the text and only concentrate on the 'what'.
- How does the text present the narrator? Characters? Relationships?
- In what ways does the text make use of setting?
- What kinds of action are presented?
- Does the passage create a particular kind of atmosphere?
- What kinds of ideas, motifs or themes does it seem to present and explore?

5. Read for language and style

- Diction - nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs?
- Syntax - sentence structure/length
- Sentence type (declarative/imperative/interrogative/exclamatory)
- Paragraph form/structure
- Dialogue?
- Imagery
- Metaphor/Simile
- Tone
- Repetition
- Narrative voice (first person, third person limited, third person singular)
- Sound
- Rhythm
- Structure

6. How does the passage create narrative interest?

- Does its power depend on one or more key contrasts?
- Is there a strong sense of development?
- How important is opposition to its overall impact?
- Is the passage, in the end, somewhat ambiguous?
- Does the passage gain strength from the way it manipulates the reader, e.g. by creating an intimate relationship with them - or by keeping them at a distance?

7. What kind of overall meaning does the passage communicate?

- Does there seem to exist some kind of "message"?
- Is there a particular theme being presented? What, ultimately, is being 'said' about that theme?
- Is the effect of the extract one that invites us to feel, to think, a mixture - or something else?

Name: _____

IB Senior English Summer Assignment

1. Read the "Notes on Annotating" document.
2. Read the two short stories, "A Very Short Story" and "A Simple Enquiry" by Ernest Hemingway.
3. Annotate each of the stories, using the "Notes" as a guide.
4. Complete the graphic organizer to compare/contrast the two stories. (If you write big and need more room, feel free to use notebook paper.)
5. Identify three key quotes from each story. Explain why you chose those three quotes as significant and how they impact your understanding of the text in some way.

	A Very Short Story	A Simple Enquiry
Plot – Briefly summarize the plot. Include what you consider to be the most important details.		
Setting – What do we know about when and where the story takes place? Does this seem to have any larger impact on the story as a whole?		

<p>Narration – Describe the narration style the story. From whose point of view is the story told? What does this narration provide us? What are the limitations of the narration?</p>		
<p>Characters – Who are the characters in the story? What do we know about them? What is their relationship with each other?</p>		
<p>Style – What is the writing style like? How does the author use language, sentence structure, literary elements like imagery and figurative language?</p>		

<p>Interest – How does the author create intrigue/interest in the story? What is the most interesting or intense part of the story? Why?</p>		
<p>Tone – What is the narrator’s attitude toward the subject? What specific words and phrases contribute to the development of this tone?</p>		
<p>Meaning – What do you believe is the underlying message, meaning, or theme behind the story? What led you to this conclusion? How do the various literary elements used in the story work together to convey this meaning?</p>		

Quotes from "A Very Short Story"

Quotes from "A Simple Enquiry"