

Word Galaxy:

1. **Foe**- an enemy
2. **Staring**- look at with great concentration
3. **Inn**- a small hotel
4. **Ancient**- very old
5. **Curious**- eager to know something
6. **Trap**- a scheme for tricking or catching someone
7. **Range**- arrange in a row or in a specified manner
8. **Half a crown**- a coin formerly used in Great Britain
9. **Infantry**- an army unit consisting of soldiers who fight on foot
10. **Nipperkin**- liquor container or vessel with a capacity of a half pint or less
11. **Quaint**- strange

Q 1. Why does the poet call war quaint and curious?

Ans: The poet calls war quaint and curious because it changes you as a person. The same fellow, whom you would have otherwise befriended and offered a drink, becomes your enemy on the battlefield. Like the speaker in the poem, many people cannot think of a valid reason why they maim, injury or kill each other and destroy property in a normal situation.

Q 2. Explain the lines “He thought he’d list, perhaps, Off-hand like-just as I- was out of work....”

Ans: The poet says that he had enrolled himself in the army just like that - without too much thinking. Similarly, he feels the other man could have joined the enemy army maybe because he was out of work, or just like that or been in real need of money. Killing, injuring, fighting must not have been in the minds of both these people.

Q 3. Read the lines given below and answer the questions that follow.

Had he and I but met

By some old ancient inn,

We should have sat us down to wet

Right many a nipperkin

1. Who are the people being referred to in the above stanza?

Ans: The two people being referred to in the above stanza are the soldier who is narrating an incident and the enemy soldier whom he had killed during the war.

2. Where does 'I' imagine that they could have been?

Ans: The soldier 'I' who is narrating an incident imagines that they could have met at some old ancient inn.

3. What would they have done?

Ans: They would have sat down together wet many a nipperkin (had some drinks together).

a) Which words in the above verse suggest that the two would have spent a lot of time together?

Ans: The words 'many a nipperkin' suggest that the two would have spent a lot of time together.

Q 4. Why did the speaker have to kill the other soldier?

Ans: The speaker had to kill the other soldier as he was fighting a battle and the other soldier was the enemy. They had faced each other on the battlefield and were firing at each other.

Q 5. What are the probable reasons the soldier thinks soldier enlisted in the army?

Ans: The soldier imagines that: -

1. The man didn't have a specific reason. He just joined the army off-hand, like himself. Perhaps he had seen others join and enrolled. It had just seemed like a good thing at that time-patriotic, duty towards motherland, etc.
2. Maybe he was out of work and wanted work-so he enlisted in the army. The work of a soldier seemed just like any other profession or occupation. It was work for salary (money) or income.
3. Maybe he was in dire straits-desperately wanted money; maybe he had to sell his belongings and traps- his tools of trade.

Q 6. What would the speaker have done if he had met the other man, in any place other than a battlefield?

Ans: In the poem, the speaker says that he would have greeted the other soldier, socialized with him and even offered him money or other help, if he had met the other soldier, in any place other than a battlefield.

Q 7. What is the message of the poem?

Ans: The poem is an anti-war poem. It brings out the futility of the war because in the poem, the soldier with whom he had no enmity. Under normal circumstances, they would have been good friends.

Q 8. Read the lines given below and answer the questions that follow.

"I shot him dead because- because he was my foe,

Just so: my foe of course he was;

That's clear enough' although...

1. How does the narrator justify his act of killing the other man?

Ans: The narrator killed the other man for no other reason than the other man being his enemy.

1. Why is the narrator not convinced that the man killed was his enemy?

Ans: The narrator is not convinced that the man he killed was his enemy because he believes that it was fate that made the other man stand against him as his enemy.

1. What does the narrator mean by the word 'although' at the end of the stanza?

Ans: The word 'although'; is the narrator's uncertainty as a result of his confused conscience. He is sure he murdered a man because his nation entitled him with the right to murder another human being, but he is convinced that war is meaningless, immoral and criminal.

1. Find a word from the extract which is the opposite of 'friend'.

Ans: Foe

Q 9. What is the purpose of the title of the poem 'The Man He Killed' being in the

third person and the poem in the first person?

Ans: The poem 'The Man He Killed' is told to us by an unnamed speaker (a man in the inn) who overhears a one-sided conversation (a kind of dramatic monologue) made by a soldier who killed a man - who was an enemy soldier. There are three persons in the poem: the soldier who killed a man, the man he killed, and the speaker. Hence, the title of the poem is in the third person and the poem (the soldier's monologue) is in the first person.

Q 10. 'Chance favours the few' Justify with reference to the poem.

Ans: There were two people with two guns who met each other face to face. The instance of two men dying at the same time was unlikely; there was just a single chance of one dying. No one could predict who would die and who would survive. It was only by chance that the narrator walked away after surviving, and the other man died.

Q 11. What tells us that the narrator is uncomfortable with his actions?

Ans: The narrator is uncomfortable with what he has done because he tries to reason with himself, to convince himself that he had done the right thing in shooting the man. The fact that he was at war was not reason enough for the speaker. He felt that he must have a deeper reason, but he could not find one.

Q 12. What feeling does this poem arouse in you about war and why?

Ans: The poem brings the reader's attention to the meaningless nature of war. War is caused by the disagreement of two administrations but affects people throughout the country. The poet speaks of the man he killed as his foe, but he is unconvinced that belonging to warring nations makes two men enemies. He had the poet met the man enemies. Had the poet met the man he killed at the inn, he would gladly have shared few drinks with him, Had the other man been in trouble, he would happily have helped him out in any way he could. The two men had joined the army because they lacked jobs and did not care why their countries were at war. They were forced to kill each other without knowing or understanding why, just because they stood on opposite sides of a battlefield.

Q 13. What do the two men-the man who killed and the man who was killed have in common?

Ans: They two men were not enemies. The two were pitted against each other in the battlefield. They did what they were told to do. In another place or time, they would have

behaved differently. They are either from working class or out of work so they feel compelled to enlist in the army. It is these men who will suffer in the war, and more likely to be killed.

Q 14. Do you think the man the speaker killed was really the speaker's foe? Why or why not?

Ans: The speaker thinks that the man he killed and himself enlisted in the army in an 'off hand' way, 'out of work' and needed the money and had 'no other reason why' again making it seem as if they had a casual attitude to the war, not really knowing what it was they were letting themselves in for. Perhaps if he had known then he would not have joined. They are 'ranged in infantry' which hints that they have been set face to face 'ranged' almost like two guns pointed at each other. The men have almost become dehumanized by the process of war. The lack of conviction in the speaker's voice about the necessity of killing the enemy man emphasises the idea that the soldiers who fight just follow orders, rather than knowing what it is they are doing.

Q 15. How has the poet explored the theme of conflict in the poem?

Ans: The poet speaks directly to the reader: 'You shoot a fellow down You'd treat if met where any bar is'. He has placed the entire poem in quotation marks to emphasise that the poet is talking directly to us, as if it is us having a nipperkin with him in an ancient inn. The language the narrator uses, such as 'fellow' and 'treat', is simple and informal. Hardy is using the voice of the narrator to make his point that ordinary, simple men do not want to fight and kill; they only do it because they are told to.