

Session Four: Remains

- 1.) Who was the Prime Minister during the time Blood Brothers was set? **Margaret Thatcher.**
- 2.) Which poem was written by a real WW1 soldier? **Exposure.**
- 3.) True or false? A key theme of Blood Brothers is social class. **True.**
- 4.) Which Ghost takes Scrooge to see his own funeral? **The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come.**
- 5.) How does Juliet respond to the idea of marriage in the opening of the play? **She says 'it is an honour I dream not of', meaning she doesn't want to get married.**



Remains

What is the poem about?

The speaker, along with some other soldiers, has been given an order to go out and investigate a group of thieves stealing from a bank. The speaker and two other unnamed soldiers make a quick decision, and all three of them begin shooting at the looter.

After the soldiers have shot the man a dozen times, he's lying on the ground in agony. One of the speaker's fellow soldiers walks up to the man, picks up his exposed intestines, and throws them back into the cavity of the man's stomach. The man is then placed into the back of a truck that drives away.

This is where the story ends, but for the speaker the story isn't actually over- he struggles to move on from his guilt. The poem then continues to explore the impacts of PTSD on soldiers.



Remains

Let's read the poem!

On another occasion, we got sent out
to tackle looters raiding a bank.
And one of them legs it up the road,
probably armed, possibly not.

Well myself and somebody else and
somebody else
are all of the same mind,
so all three of us open fire.
Three of a kind all letting fly, and I swear

I see every round as it rips through his life –
I see broad daylight on the other side.
So we've hit this looter a dozen times
and he's there on the ground, sort of inside
out,

pain itself, the image of agony.
One of my mates goes by
and tosses his guts back into his body.
Then he's carted off in the back of a lorry.

End of story, except not really.
His blood-shadow stays on the
street, and out on patrol
I walk right over it week after week.
Then I'm home on leave. But I blink

and he bursts again through the
doors of the bank.
Sleep, and he's probably armed, and
possibly not.
Dream, and he's torn apart by a
dozen rounds.
And the drink and the drugs won't
flush him out –

he's here in my head when I close my
eyes,
dug in behind enemy lines,
not left for dead in some distant,
sun-stunned, sand-smothered land
or six-feet-under in desert sand,

but near to the knuckle, here and
now,
his bloody life in my bloody hands.



Remains:

Meaning/main messages of the poem:

- The suffering of soldiers after war- Armitage believed that more needed to be done to support ex-soldiers.
- The psychological effects of war, particularly guilt and trauma.
- The desensitisation to war.



Remains:

Complete the cloze activity in your booklet:



Remains:

| | |
|------------|------------|
| Alcohol | mind |
| Guilt | taken away |
| Armed | story |
| Bank | innards |
| Flashbacks | Haunts |
| Agony | Peace |

The poem begins with the speaker recalling an incident where he, along with some other soldiers, were sent to tackle a thief who had been robbing a _____. The looter tried to escape in his vehicle, and it was unknown whether he was _____ or not. After about twelve shots to the thief's body, he was crumpled on the ground with no distinctions between his insides and the outside. The image was disturbing and painful, full of _____. One of the narrator's fellow soldiers tosses some of the fallen _____ back into the dead thief's body, and then he is placed into the back of a lorry to be _____. And that should be the end of the _____, but for the narrator, it is not. The splatters of the thief's blood remain on the street, and the shadow of the incident _____ the narrator every time he is on patrol, for he needs to walk past that area weekly. Finally, the narrator is at home on his break. But even then, he has no _____. When he blinks, he can see the image of the thief bursting through the doors of the bank. He cannot sleep peacefully and his dreams are full of gory _____. These recollections disturb the narrator to the point that he turns to _____ and drugs, in hopes of forgetting his _____ and the picture of the thief's body. Yet in the end, even the drinks and drugs are not enough to flush the image of the thief out of the narrator's _____.

Remains:



| | |
|------------|------------|
| Alcohol | mind |
| Guilt | taken away |
| Armed | story |
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| Flashbacks | Haunts |
| Agony | Peace |

The poem begins with the speaker recalling an incident where he, along with some other soldiers, were sent to tackle a thief who had been robbing a **bank**. The looter tried to escape in his vehicle, and it was unknown whether he was **armed** or not. After about twelve shots to the thief's body, he was crumpled on the ground with no distinctions between his insides and the outside.

The image was disturbing and painful, full of **agony**. One of the narrator's fellow soldiers tosses some of the fallen **innards** back into the dead thief's body, and then he is placed into the back of a lorry to be **taken away**. And that should be the end of the **story**, but for the narrator, it is not. The splatters of the thief's blood remain on the street, and the shadow of the incident **haunts** the narrator every time he is on patrol, for he needs to walk past that area weekly.

Finally, the narrator is at home on his break. But even then, he has no **peace**. When he blinks, he can see the image of the thief bursting through the doors of the bank. He cannot sleep peacefully and his dreams are full of gory **flashbacks**. These recollections disturb the narrator to the point that he turns to **alcohol** and drugs, in hopes of forgetting his **guilt** and the picture of the thief's body. Yet in the end, even the drinks and drugs are not enough to flush the image of the thief out of the narrator's **mind**.

Remains:



Golden Quotations:

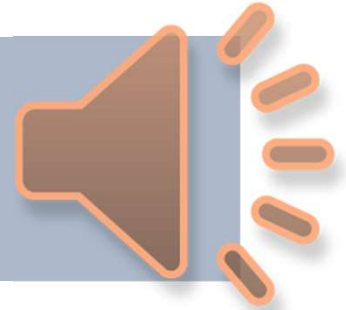
Media res – initially confuses the reader as they are unsure of the events taking place which could mirror the uncertainty of soldiers once they have left active war zones – they are unsure of what ‘missions’ await them back home.

‘On another occasion we get sent out’

The casual tone implies that there have been others before this, and there is a certain weariness to the image that comes up: the soldier, exhausted, having seen more than his share of dead bodies, going along his way.

Colloquial language – the soldier is used to the day-to-day missions they are sent on. Soldiers are repeatedly exposed to pain and trauma without any help/support.

Remains:



Golden quotations:

‘His bloody life in my bloody hands’

The final line of the poem is structurally charged with multiple emotive meanings. The adjective "bloody" here has a dual meaning, both the angry, frustrated swearing of a soldier and his literal blood-soaked "life" and "hands" as a result of the incident which has caused the immense guilt he is feeling.

The repetition of ‘bloody’ implies that the speaker’s guilt has blurred the normal process of logic in his mind.

Remains:



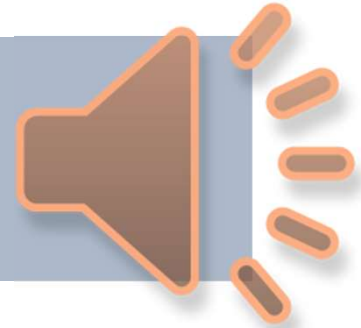
Structure:

Enjambment – causes tension in the build up to violent imagery.

'and I swear // I see every round as it rips through his life'

The use of enjambment also suggests that the speaker is unable to separate the past from the present, causing events of the past to move into the present – symbolising his PTSD as the events force their way into his present, and he is unable to control this.

Remains: plenary/exit ticket.



Imagine this is your exam question:

'Compare how the effects of conflict are presented in 'Remains' and one other poem.

- 1) Decide which poem you would compare with.**
- 2) Write down one point of comparison between the poems.**