



TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR *THE ONES THEY LEFT BEHIND* by ANTONIO ELMALEH

We hope students will gain a clearer understanding about The Civil War and Reconstruction by viewing the people and events that shaped our country through the eyes of the protagonist, Harriman Hickenlooper. *The Ones They Left Behind* offers students a visceral experience of war and its aftermath through realistic battlefield scenes, character's emotional and moral arcs, and period location descriptions that bring this important historical event alive. This is a Civil War story that shows an America unable to heal itself until one man chooses to revisit the horrors of war in order to find peace for himself and his country

The Ones They Left Behind is a sweeping and engrossing historically accurate account of post-Civil War America that recounts the life-changing experience of Harriman Hickenlooper, a Civil War veteran, who single-handedly begins to heal the wounds of a country, bitter and divided by war, by recreating Sherman's March to the Sea. This time, instead of carrying a gun, Harriman will carry a flag. Instead of marching for war, he will march for peace. Harriman's fictionalized journey is inspired by an actual Union veteran soldier's march for peace in post-Civil War America.

His journey is fraught with danger, pain, and healing -- not only for himself, but for an entire nation. *The Ones They Left Behind* is a story every American needs to read. The parallels of our country's bloodiest war to the current divisiveness in today's America are clear. Looking to the past may keep us from repeating the same mistakes today. *The Ones They Left Behind* is more than an historical novel, it is a blueprint for healing America today.

We hope you find this story helpful in bringing history alive for your students.

PRIOR TO READING *THE ONES THEY LEFT BEHIND*

Prior to reading *The Ones They Left Behind*, we suggest asking students the following questions:

1. Roughly 750,000 soldiers died in The Civil War, almost half of all of the American soldiers killed in all of the conflicts involving the United States. That number represents over THREE TIMES the current population of Arlington, VA. Today, that would be equivalent to approximately 7,500,000 soldiers who died during the Civil War (nearly the population of Los Angeles and Chicago today, combined!).
 - How do you think Americans today would react to a Civil War with nearly 6.2 million soldiers killed in action?
 - Do you think it would be possible for America to have another Civil War? Why or why not?
 - If we did have another Civil War, what do you think some of the causes of it would be today?
 - Would you become a soldier or would you march for peace? Why?

2. The Civil War is sometimes referred to as “A War Between Brothers” because many families fought against each other on opposite sides of the war.
 - Would you be willing to fight against another family member or relatives if they sided with the opposition to your side? Why or why not?
 - What cause would make you fight against family?
3. Also, prior to reading the novel, we suggest reading the author’s note (*see below*) and posing the following questions:
 - Do you think it is possible for one man to change a nation or the world? Why or why not?
 - What issues divide our country today that might cause a real, new, Civil War?

Author’s Note by Antonio Elmaleh

I started writing this book fifteen years ago, in part spurred by a story I read in a book waiting for a flight home from South Carolina. It was about a man who made a one-man peace march right after the Civil War ended. At first I could not believe that such a story was true, given the hard feelings that ran so deep after the war.

About that same time, I had just finished volunteering on a Presidential campaign and happened to see a graphic of the electoral map of the 2000 election. Curious, I sought out another map, this one of the Presidential election in 1860. If one lopped off every state west of the Mississippi, because that was basically what the map of our country looked like then (apologies to California), what these maps revealed was virtually the same story, namely that our nation was as divided now as it was seven hundred and fifty thousand dead and several million more wounded and homeless later.

The shooting has stopped, but the Civil War is not over. Its lessons and morals still call out to us, perhaps louder and more urgently than ever before. And its dead still ask us not just to remember them, but also to dedicate ourselves to seek the ways to unify rather than tear apart this great country, one that has yet to recover from Our War.

4. Here are some additional questions that you might pose prior to reading the novel:
 - Some people say it's harder to come home from war than go off to war. Do you agree or disagree, and if so, why?
 - Is there anything that you could imagine putting everything on the line for?
 - What does our flag mean to you?

AS THEY READ THE ONES THEY LEFT BEHIND

Here are some questions or discussion points that you might find helpful to pose as the students read the novel:

Chapter 6

The bet stipulates that Harriman find a suitable place for a monument. Do you think it should be where relatives of the fallen can easily visit it, or should it be where the soldiers laid down their lives?

Chapter 7

Harriman risked his life many times during the war because it was his duty. No one is shooting at him now, so why is he risking it again on a bet, when he is safe?

Chapter 8

Jakob Dreisler doesn't want Harriman to go, yet he gives Harriman more money than he asked for. Why?

Chapter 10

Harriman initially refused to let Rufus come along when the bet was made. Why do you think he changed his mind?

Chapter 12

Was Walter Ridley a coward for hanging back when his soldiers rushed forward against his orders during the Battle of Lookout Mountain?

Chapters 14 & 15

Why did the Confederate boy spur his own hanging?

Why was he smiling when Harriman cut him down?

Why did Mrs. Jordan sew on a piece of the Rebel flag onto Harriman's flag?

Why did Harriman choose to leave it on rather than rip it off?

Chapter 18

Was Harriman a coward when he ran away during the first day of fighting at Shiloh ("can you swim?")

Chapter 22

Why did Lucinda burn down her home?

Why did she come with Harriman, when she suspected he had something to do with her brother's death?

Chapter 23

Why did Harriman jump up on the trench parapet, inviting certain death from Rebel sharpshooters?

Why do you think no one took a shot at him?

Chapter 28

Why did Walter Ridley have it in for Harriman Hickenlooper?

Chapter 32

What made Alonzo, Harriman and Lucas go after the overseer when they came to the plantation where a slave boy had been killed by dogs?

What did the old woman mean when she said "praise the Lord"?

Chapter 33

Why didn't Harriman, Lucinda and Rufus try to take the children they found in the wilderness back to civilization?

Do you think they survived on their own?

Could you have under the same circumstances?

Chapter 35

Was Harriman right to save his own life, or was it better if he had buried his brother properly but probably be captured and face certain death?

Chapter 38

Why do you think Jack Connolly missed the story Rufus Dewes had proposed to him after Harriman made the bet at the regimental reunion?

Chapter 41

What would you have done if you were a slave on that bridge and the ropes were cut?

How would you have felt about the choices you had to make?

Chapter 45

Was Lucinda right to stay behind in Savannah?

Was Harriman right to go back to Iowa?

Where did they belong?

Chapter 48

Why was Red Hundley so angry at Burton Ball?

Chapter 49

What could Walter Ridley say after seeing the clock Harriman brought back?

Chapter 51

Would you have displayed a flag like the one that sat on Harriman's mantel?

Suggested small group projects:

1. Split the class into two groups, one group taking the Union position and the other, taking the Confederate position. Have each group make a list of why their side is in "the right." Have them present each side like a debate or town hall meeting.
2. In small groups, assign each group one of the following topics: The history of the Union (American) flag/ the history of the Confederate flag, slavery/slave ownership, peace/war, bravery/cowardice, Gilbert Bates impact in the U.S./ Gilbert Bates impact in Europe, day-to-day life for the soldiers/day-to-day life for civilians during the war.

Suggested class discussion points:

1. Ask the class if they know anyone, past or present, who served in the armed forces and if they have ever discussed their experiences with them. Were those who served changed by their experiences of serving their country? Do the students know if they suffer or suffered from PTSD? Did the students experience a difficulty or a change in their ability to talk to someone returning home after serving?
2. In light of the recent Confederate flag controversy, how do the students feel about Harriman putting a piece of the Rebel flag on his own flag?

AFTER READING THE ONES THEY LEFT BEHIND

We suggest that after the students have finished reading the novel, you reintroduce the question posed to them before they read the book to see how -- or if -- they would answer those same questions after having learned more from reading the novel and from their class projects. How did their thoughts about war change?