

Which do you think is
the more accurate
description of
stanhope essay
sample



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R. C Sherriff represents Stanhope in many contrasting situations throughout Journey's End. In each circumstance he is portrayed in a different way depending on the scenario. 'A fine leader of men' is the more accurate statement to describe Stanhope, although the reader is often left with mixed opinions of this diverse character. The gossip of the other characters in the play help to signify Stanhope's personality; this is a major part of the character development as well as the contrast of Stanhope and Raleigh.

Although R. C Sherriff first introduces Stanhope as a callous character when Hardy speaks of him to Osborne, when he is presented for the first time, he does not seem quite as harsh as originally portrayed. Stanhope's role as a leader of the battalion is often very successful and he seems professional and extremely capable of being in charge of other soldiers.

It is his responsibility to keep the optimism and spirits high in the battalion during the trials and tribulations of war, and there are often points in the play where this is represented, such as when Stanhope continues with the celebration after the raid regardless of the death of Osborne to keep the battalion united. This suggests that Stanhope is a fine leader as it shows he puts in all the effort he can to keep the battalion together, even with small things such as keeping the men happy and keeping their moral fiber in tact. Stanhope is also represented in being a strong believer in teamwork.

There are various scenes in the play where he makes a point of the fact that his 'officers work together'. When Hibbert informs Stanhope that he no longer feels fit to fight, Stanhope believes that he is being a coward and trying to escape the horror of war. Stanhope says to Hibbert, 'you're going

to stay here and see it through with the rest of us' and although he may appear ignorant, it is evident that Stanhope was only performing his duty of commander. Stanhope's more considerate side is also portrayed in this duologue, as he comforts Hibbert by telling the truth about his similar fears.

He then says to Hibbert ' we know how we both feel now. Shall we see if we can stick it together? ' the playwright uses this represent the more cooperative aspects of his personality. Stanhope's reactions to the two main deaths during the play are extremely contrasting, in the sense that he deals with them in different ways. The death of Osborne is expected to evoke a strong reaction from Stanhope, as it was suggested that Osborne was his closest friend. However Stanhope proceeds with the celebratory dinner, and is depicted in high spirits.

This reaction is not expected; however the he strain he is under is shown when he asks for more alcohol, which revisits the detail that drinking is Stanhope's coping mechanism for the terrors of war. As the scene continues, it is evident that he is trying to divert his and the other soldier's minds from the topic of Osborne's death. This effort shows good leadership skills as it suggests that Stanhope was trying to keep the battalion together and he did not want any of the other soldiers to be distressed or distracted.

This is a good quality as it shows that Stanhope is considerate and professional and does not let his feelings get in the way of his position. However later on in this scene, Stanhope becomes frustrated when Hibbert and Trotter start to speak of Raleigh and the raid. Sherriff does this to suggest that he was very determined to keep their minds off of the topic of

war. Stanhope says ' we were having a jolly decent evening until you started blabbing about the war. ' This outburst was because he did not want to express his feelings towards the raid and he was worried that he would let his guard down in front of the other soldiers.

The playwright portrays Stanhope positively although he loses his temper, as it becomes evident that he wants to keep the other soldiers content and not allow them to be disheartened as it may decrease their confidence and affect their performance at war. Although Sherriff provides some harmful methods for Stanhope coping with the strain of war, they are occasionally effective. Stanhope's drinking is harmful to him and occasionally to others as it becomes more likely for him to lose his temper, however it does help him to cope with trench life and the devastating mental effects that war instates.

The playwright uses these factors to enable him to cope privately with his issues and fears of the front line, however he gains the reputation of a hardened drinker by other soldiers. Stanhope is very secretive about his life and his feelings; this is first proven when it is discovered that Osborne is unaware of Stanhope's unofficial engagement back at home. He attempts to keep up a heroic facade, which fools most of the soldiers apart from Osborne and partially Raleigh. Stanhope confesses to Osborne when drunk ' if I went up those steps into the front line - without being doped with whisky - I'd go mad with fright.

Sherriff does this to create a vulnerable side to Stanhope yet also to show how Stanhope has hidden this from the other soldiers to give them moral inspiration and confidence. In conclusion, neither statements provide a

completely accurate description Stanhope's character, however ' a fine leader of men' is more truthful than ' a cruel bully'. This is because all of Stanhope's actions, whether they are positive or negative, were primarily to protect all of the soldiers in his battalion and he always has their best interests in mind.

However they are often portrayed in a rather harmful or unproductive way and this gives the reader a bad impression of Stanhope. Overall Stanhope is extremely committed to his position and is not a bully at all, only ever being critical and harsh when necessary. Any point where Stanhope shouts at another soldier, in fact just shows that he is a fine leader as he must maintain respect and discipline within the battalion and he is only ensuring this is present.