

Lieutenant Henry's moment of illumination



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Lieutenant Henry's Moment of Illumination Stephanie tries on her first pair of glasses. Before now, her view of the world has been blurry, but as she puts her new glasses on, everything becomes crystal clear. Just like Stephanie's sudden clarity, an illuminating moment is when one makes an important realization that changes one's perspective, or makes one question one's priorities. A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway's main character Lieutenant Frederic Henry has an illuminating moment while in the river after leaving the army forever.

This realization opens the door for Henry to live the life he truly wants to live, and not to only go through the motions doing something he does not love. He sees that Catherine is who he wants to be with, he has to sometimes put himself first, and that he does not belong in the army. Henry's illuminating moment makes him rethink his priorities and realize what is important to him. Henry realizes that what he really wants to do is to be with Catherine Barkley, and that she is the most important person in his life.

When he flees from the Italian army, his first thought is to go to where Catherine is. Throughout the book, he feels most comfortable when he was with Catherine. He says, " We were never lonely and never afraid when we were together. " (105). In his time of realization, he sees that he does not need to be apart from Catherine. Instead, he can depart from the army and go to her. He never loved anyone before, and realizes that Catherine is who he wants to be with. Lieutenant Henry states that, "...when I could not see her there I was feeling lonely and hollow. (41). Being with her is different for Henry because ever since the beginning of their relationship, Henry doesn't want to talk of war with her. She is his escape, his love, and is who he

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decided to spend his time with. His love changes his life in more than one way. While Lieutenant Henry does not show much emotion while on the front line, it is with Catherine where his passion and true happiness is displayed. Without the sudden realization in Henry's life, he wouldn't have left the war and gone to find Catherine, and his entire life would have been different.

When Lieutenant Frederick Henry left the war, he was not thinking of only Catherine, but of himself as well. In the beginning of the book, Henry didn't seem to have a passion for anything or anyone. He spent his time drinking or fraternizing with women he would never really fall for. Peer pressure may have been a factor in Henry's frequent associations with women, because all the other men in the army did it as well. It almost seems as if he did it only to pass the time, as he always felt bad about it. Rinaldi says that "Every time I see that glass I think of you trying to clear your conscience with a toothbrush. (168). It is clear that Henry doesn't like the life he is living. At the end of the day, he feels bad about the decisions he made, which is why he tries to clear his conscience, even in the form of brushing it away with a toothbrush. In short, Henry did not have a true passion. He didn't have a family he loves and cares for, or a hobby that he enjoys to do. He doesn't do anything to make his life better for himself. In his instant of illumination, he finally decides to do something to make his life better, and that benefitted him.

Without this moment of understanding and realization, he would have continued his somewhat empty life instead of really living and loving. He decides to take a step towards controlling his own life, and to do this, he has to make more decisions on his own rather than going with the crowd. One of <https://assignbuster.com/lieutenant-henrys-moment-of-illumination-essay-samples/>

the most important decisions Lieutenant Henry made was leaving the army. Lieutenant Henry realizes that the war was never something that he enjoyed doing, nor is it his priority. He thinks to himself that, "anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation" (232).

Henry doesn't feel the sense of commitment that others in the war do. For example, when he talks to Gino, he cannot identify with the pride this young man feels for his country. He listens to him speak about words such as glory, honor, and courage, and they don't mean anything to him. He hears Ettore Moretti talk about his accomplishments and awards, and does not feel that same pride. Instead, he feels only indifference. When other ambulance drivers talk about how Italy should withdraw from the war, he does not defend the country he is fighting for.

He is an American, and when asked why he isn't fighting for America, he doesn't know the answer. The pride and glory that so many of the other men have is lacking in Lieutenant Henry. Throughout the book, he remains unfeeling and cold about the war. He doesn't pick a side, but simply goes through the motions. After his illuminating moment, it was clear that his purpose in life was not to be out on the front line. Like putting on a new pair of glasses, Lieutenant Frederick Henry had an eye opening realization while fleeing from the Italian Army.

He realizes that Catherine is important to him, and it is with her that he is truly happy. He also finds out that he must take himself into consideration because it is his life. Finally, he realizes that he was not meant to be fighting on the front line doing something he did not enjoy. This illuminating moment

opened the door to many changes, and ultimately, his life became very different. His priorities are now in order, and he can live in a way that makes him the happiest. One must enjoy what one does and with whom one does it with to live a fulfilled life, and sometimes it takes just a single moment to realize it.