

# Things they carried reactions essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Death October 1st 2012 The Things They Carried Close Reading p. 1-26 -

Pages 3 and 4: So many items being carried... what is the purpose? Quote(s):

" Kiowa also carried his grandmothers distrust for the white man..." (Pg. 3)

"...The poncho weighed almost 2 pounds, but it was worth every ounce" (pg.

3) Meaningful words/ phrases: pounds, weighed, grunts, Kodacolor, Bonnie

and Clyde Overall meaning/ author's purpose: The soldiers do not only carry

material goods, they also carry emotions. Such is Kiowa's distrust for the

white man, as well as fear, anxiety, resentment and hope.

The author is trying to show that the men carry more than just material

goods. Personal reaction/ insight: I thought the list of items was extensive,

like reading an intense shopping list. Carrying all that gear must be

overwhelming on long treks into the jungle. -Pages 6 and 7, 11-13 Ted

Lavenders death Quote(s): " It was like watching a big rock fall, or a big

sandbag or something- just boom, then down" (pg. 6) " Kiowa kept

explaining how you had to be there, how fast it was..." (Pg. 13) Meaningful

words/phrases: superstition, boom-down, moral, thumb, tunnel Overall

meaning/ author's purpose:

Kiowa is in shock of Ted's death, he's not used to seeing someone dying in

real life. He is curious at how it's so fast and anticlimactic. The author shows

here how these kids are alien to a world where their friends drop over dead

like sand bags. Personal reaction/ insight: I have a feeling Kiowa is going to

be very dramatized later in the story, although appearing fine in this

passage. - Page 13 and top of 14: conversation between Mitchell Sanders

and Henry Dobbins Quote(s): " You want my opinion, Mitchell Sanders said,

there's a definite moral here. " (Pg. 13) " I don't see no moral" (pg. 4)

Meaningful words/ phrases: moral, pebble, blood, Paladin, gift, superstition

Overall meaning/ author's purpose: Mitchell Sanders bizarrely tries to teach a lesson in morals by using the example of a dead Vietnamese boy.

Henry Dobbins is confused/frustrated at what moral Mitchell Sanders is trying to teach. The author's purpose is to show the bizarreness and frustration of the war. Personal reaction/ insight: I thought the cutting of the boy's thumb was a bit gory/ unnecessary. I feel the same way as Henry Dobbins does, I'm confused at what point Mitchell Sanders is trying to make. Pages 19-23 stage presence, odd behavior, etc. Quote(s): " For the most part they carry themselves with poise, a kind of dignity" (p. 19) " They would repair the leaks in their eyes" (p. 19) Meaningful words/ phrases: dignity, sobbed, awkwardly, shame, hard vocabulary, zapped while zip-ping. Overall meaning/ author's purpose: The author shows how the boys in Vietnam were putting on a show for each other. While trying to appear tough on the outside they were really terrified for their lives on the inside. They were not accustomed to such a harsh dangerous environment.

So they would use humor, and hard vocabulary to lighten up harsh situations. Personal reaction/ insight: I can relate to this passage a lot. I often use humor to deflect many serious situations. However I find it hard to imagine being put into an environment like Vietnam without losing your cool, and defecating your pants. -Pages 23-26: the new Lt. Jimmy Cross Quote(s): " Jimmy Cross crouched at the bottom of his foxhole and burned Martha's letters" (p. 23) " It was very sad, he thought. The things men carried inside. " (p. 25) Meaningful words/ phrases: letters burn the blame, duties, laxity, daydreams

Overall meaning/ author's purpose: Jimmy feels personally responsible for Lavenders death. He feels like if he wasn't daydreaming about Martha he could've saved his life. He Burns Martha's photographs, but cannot burn the blame he feels about Lavenders death. The author shows the fish out of water-ness of Jimmy, how he is not meant to be in a war, instead he should be back in NJ doing teenager things instead of playing army guy. Personal reaction/ insight: I feel for Jimmy, however I do not believe that it was his fault at all. I can understand how he feels guilty.