

How female characters in 'the accrington pals' are affected by the war

[Literature](#), [Character](#)



Discuss how female characters in ' The Accrington Pals' are affected by the war. Also comment on what sort of message Peter Whelan is making through these characters. You should discuss at least 2 characters in your essay. ' The Accrington Pals' is a play that follows the lives of those effected by the war; both and home and overseas. The role that the women played at home has often been underplayed within World War Literature so the play gives an alternative view of the women's role.

The female characters in the play are stuck in limbo; not free from war but at the same time not directly involved. Looking at the effect on these characters can show the impact that the War had on the country as a whole and gets across the message that the playwright, Peter Whelan, is hoping to portray. The war has affected women in many different ways and forces them to take on roles that otherwise would never have been done by women. Whelan makes it obvious that most of the women are not used to living a life without the men present.

The majority of the conversations between Eva and Sarah are associated with the men. ' There's a bit about the pals at camp. ' They are unable to have a conversation without the men being involved; this exaggerates their dependence on them. Before the men went away to war they were the main source of income and power in the women's lives With the men away at war they are lost and they seek authority from the next best thing; May. May, the owner of the stall has taken charge in general.

The other women look up to her and respect her, as they would a man. She has almost taken over the men's stance as the authoritative figure. ' Oh

May... I was just going to make the tea' as soon as May enters the scene the other women, Eva and Sarah, stop frolicking and get back to doing something productive, which is exactly what May expects them to do. Later, the women discuss the fact that Jack Proudlove dyes his hair. This massively shows what effect the war has had on those at home.

Eva has now become more useful than her foreman; Proudlove and in an attempt to stay relevant he has resorted to dyeing his hair ' so the bosses won't notice'. The men at home are starting to feel threatened by women as their input is a necessity on the home front; the gender hierarchy is starting to break down. The female characters in *The Accrington Pals* make conscious efforts to ignore the actual war. ' There's a bit about the Pals at camp' ' There always is. Read me the funny poem.'

Sarah diverts the conversation; she appears to want to stay blind to the events of the actual war. This may be as a way to help her deal with the heartache she is feeling whilst her husband Arthur is away at war. They use the humour in the poem as a distraction. Whelan portrays the women as growing figures in *The Accrington Pals*' it is obvious how they are affected by the war but they don't let it hinder them. Whelan makes a point of the men at home, one example being Proudlove, feeling threatened by the women's growing place in society.