



Fallen Angels

Walter Dean Myers

Teacher's Guide

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Note: The book is divided into sections, but they are not designated as chapters.

Synopsis

Seventeen-year-old Richard Perry, just out of his elite New York City high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.

It is September 13. Perry is in Alaska, waiting with the other soldiers as the plane taking them to Vietnam is refueled. He meets Judy Duncan, a nurse also on her way to Vietnam. Perry is black; Duncan is white. They chat in a warm and friendly way. Perry thinks Duncan is a nice woman but feels shy around her. They arrive in Vietnam and Duncan bunks with Harold "Peewee" Gates, a combative black man.

In a flashback, Perry remembers being a poor child in Harlem. He thinks of his beloved younger brother Kenny. He also recalls his dreams of going to college and being a writer like James Baldwin. Some of the black men want to make a blood oath to protect each other, but Perry and Peewee refuse. Instead, they mingle spit and vow to be there for each other.

They are deployed to Chu Lai. On the ride there, Perry gets to know a soldier named Jenkins and decides he will be fun. Peewee, Jenkins, and Perry are assigned to Alpha Company. In a flashback, readers learn that Perry should not be deployed because he has a medical profile: a bad knee. When he enlisted, Perry had been told that if he could play ball, he would not see combat. He was good enough to dream of a career with the NBA before his injury on the basketball court. Back in the present, the soldiers see battle and Jenkins is killed when he steps on a land mine.

Lieutenant Carroll says a prayer over Jenkins' body, referring to the dead soldier as an "angel warrior." Later, Perry writes a letter to his mother about Jenkins' death, then tears it up. Alpha Company goes to a Vietnamese village on a public relations mission. The village is very poor and smells foul.

The squad has nothing to do for two days but swap rumors and eat. They finally see battle again and Perry wonders what any of them are doing in Vietnam.

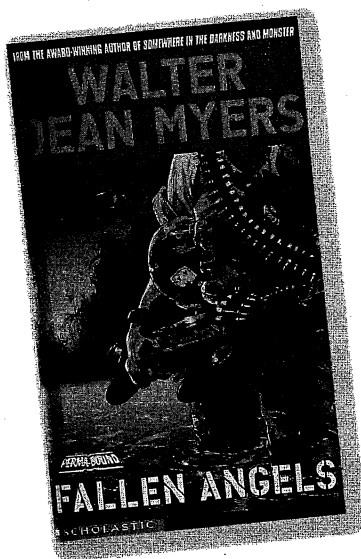
A soldier named Lobel pretends they are in a movie and none of what is happening is real. Captain Stewart hosts a film crew, whom they take on patrol. Perry shoots at the enemy and realizes that his rifle isn't loaded. The squad kills a Viet Cong soldier, a child not much older than Perry's younger brother Kenny. The soldiers learn that the victim wasn't a Viet Cong after all—he was not an enemy.

Officials report three Viet Cong dead. Perry realizes the lies being told and how the victims are mere trophies. Perry gets ill with a jungle disease and suffers great intestinal pain and distress. At Peewee's request, Perry writes a letter to Peewee's girlfriend in response to her "Dear John" letter to him.

Perry's squad is sent on sector patrol. By error, the soldiers shoot their own men, killing at least fifteen. It is Thanksgiving. Perry has nightmares of shooting his own men.

A soldier named Monaco throws a grenade at them as a joke, but it is not live. The men go on another peace mission to a village. Perry and Peewee find some salve in one of the huts and pay the women for it. The salve is supposed to grow hair and cure foot fungus. Perry gets a letter from Kenny; two Red Cross workers pass out supplies.

The soldiers are ambushed while on a mission. Perry is terrified. Lt. Carroll is killed. The helicopters pick them up and they leave the village.



At Captain Steward's request, Perry writes the letter to Lt. Carroll's wife about her husband's death. Steward is pleased with Perry's tact and sensitivity. The soldiers go on another mission and this time no one is injured or killed. Perry's mother writes a letter to Peewee, thanking Peewee for being her son's friend.

A few days later, a rocket strikes the camp, but no one is injured. It is Christmas, 1967, and Perry is depressed. The squad gets six new black soldiers and they go on an ambush patrol. The squad gets caught in a fire and is almost overrun. Turner, one of the new soldiers, is killed.

Monaco's girlfriend writes a letter of proposal to him, which the squad votes that he should accept. Perry rewrites Lt. Gearhart's letter about Turner's death. The squad goes on a new mission and sees mass carnage, including decapitated babies. Perry is ambushed by a young Viet Cong soldier, whom he kills. Sickened by his deed, Perry vomits. They move to Tam Ky. Peewee tries the salve they bought, which causes his face to swell up painfully.

A week passes and they head on another patrol. This time, Perry is injured twice and thinks he is going to die. Fortunately, he suffers only a minor concussion and some shrapnel injuries. Judy Duncan, the nurse Perry had met on the journey to Vietnam, visits him in the hospital. Perry is awarded a Purple Heart for his injury. Soon recovered, Perry is ordered to return to his unit. Four months have passed since he arrived in Vietnam.

Father Santora, a Roman Catholic priest, prays with the men. Peewee makes a doll for a Vietnamese child. While he is working on it, a Viet Cong woman hands one of her children to a soldier from Charlie Company. The child has been mined and blows up, killing the soldier as well as the child. Soon after, the men are in another battle, where Perry kills a very young Viet Cong soldier. During this battle, their fellow soldier Dongan is killed, along with many other Americans. The soldiers bury their dead so the Viet Cong do not desecrate the bodies, but they forget to retrieve the soldiers' dog tags. Other soldiers suffer grotesque wounds. Perry is sickened by the carnage.

Brunner becomes the squad leader as they return to battle. Perry and Peewee take shelter in a spider hole. A Viet Cong soldier finds them and they strangle him to death. Both Peewee and Perry are injured, Perry with a broken leg. Peewee is sent home, hurt worse than Perry realized. Perry is awarded his second Purple Heart and is discharged. He tries to find Judy Duncan to say goodbye and learns that she has been killed in battle. Perry ships out.

Timeline of the Vietnam War

- 1945** Ho Chi Minh creates a provisional government.
Ho declares Vietnam's independence.
- British forces land in Saigon, return authority to French.
- 1946** France recognizes Vietnam as a "free state" within the French Union.
- Indochina War begins.
- 1947** Vietminh move north of Hanoi.
- 1949** Elysee Agreement signed.
- 1950** The United States sends \$15 million in military aid to the French for the war in Indochina.
- 1953** France grants Laos full independence.
- Vietminh forces push into Laos.
- 1954** Battle of Dienbienphu
- Eisenhower cites "Domino Theory" regarding Southeast Asia.
- Provisional demarcation line is drawn at the 17th parallel which will divide Vietnam until nationwide elections are held in 1956.
- 1955** Diem becomes President of Republic of Vietnam.
- 1956** French leave Vietnam.
- 1957** Communist insurgency into South Vietnam
- 1959** Weapons move along Ho Chi Minh Trail.
Sergeant Chester M. Ovnand becomes the first American to die in the Vietnam War.
- Diem orders a crackdown on Communists and dissidents.

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| 1960 | North Vietnam imposes universal military conscription.

Kennedy is elected President.

Viet Cong formed. | 1968 | North Vietnamese launch Tet Offensive.

My Lai massacre.

Martin Luther King slain in Memphis.

Paris peace talks begin.

Robert Kennedy assassinated.

Richard Nixon is elected President. |
| 1961 | Battle of Kienhoa Province.

Vice President Johnson tours Saigon. | 1969 | Nixon begins secret bombing of Cambodia.

Ho Chi Minh dies.

Massive antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C. |
| 1962 | U.S. military uses Agent Orange. | 1970 | Sihanouk ousted in Cambodia.

Kent State incident. |
| 1963 | Battle of Ap Bac.

President Kennedy assassinated. | 1971 | Lt. Calley convicted of murder.

Pentagon Papers published. |
| 1964 | General Nguyen Khanh seizes power in Saigon.

Gulf of Tonkin incident.

Lyndon Johnson is elected President. | 1972 | Break-in at Watergate Hotel. |
| 1965 | Operation "Rolling Thunder"

First American combat troops arrive in Vietnam to defend the U.S. airfield at Danang.

U.S. troops exceed 200,000.

People protest against U.S. policy in Vietnam by holding "teach-ins" at universities.

American B-52s bomb North Vietnam for the first time.

Veterans stage anti-war rally. | 1973 | Cease-fire signed in Paris.

End of draft announced.

Last American troops leave Vietnam. |
| 1967 | Operation Cedar Falls begins.

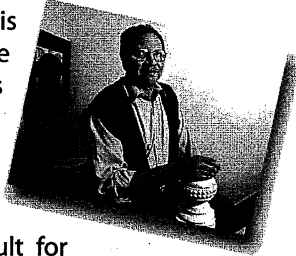
Martin Luther King speaks out against the war. | 1974 | Thieu announces renewal of war.

Nixon resigns. |
| | | 1975 | Communists capture Phuoc Long Province.

President Ford calls Vietnam War "finished." |

Author Sketch

Walter Milton Myers was born in 1937, in Martinsburg, WV. His family was very poor. When he was three years old, Myers was adopted by Herbert and Florence Dean, who settled in New York City's Harlem district. Myers had a speech impediment, making it difficult for him to communicate, and at the suggestion of a teacher he began writing down his thoughts in the form of poems and short stories. Although he won awards for his work, he never dreamed of becoming a writer. "I was from a family of laborers," Myers remembered, "and the idea of writing stories or essays was far removed from their experience. Writing had no practical value for a black child."



Discouraged by what he perceived as the lack of opportunities for black children, Myers began cutting school and making deliveries for drug dealers. After serving in the Army for three years, Myers worked in a variety of positions, including mail clerk at the post office, interoffice messenger, and interviewer in a factory. He didn't enjoy any of these jobs, and began gravitating toward writing as a career. "When I entered a contest for picture book writers," he claimed, "it was more because I wanted to write *anything* than because I wanted to write a picture book."

Myers won the contest, sponsored by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, for his text of *Where Does the Day Go?* Inspired by this success, Myers turned his attention to producing more picture books. In 1970, he took a staff position with Bobbs-Merrill, a publishing company, a job he held for seven years. After being laid off, Myers had already established a reputation as an able author of fiction geared for African-American children and was able to support himself by his writing alone.

In *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, Myers described his priorities as an author. He tries, he said, to provide good literature for black children, "literature that includes them and the way they live" and that "celebrates their life and their person. It upholds and gives special place to their humanity." He lives in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Critic's Corner

Walter Dean Myers is ranked as one of the top writers of young adult fiction. Not surprisingly, his books have won dozens of awards, including the prestigious Coretta Scott King Award for multiple books. As Carmen Subryan noted in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, "Whether he is writing about the ghettos of New York, the remote countries of Africa, or social institutions, Myers captures the essence of the developing experiences of youth." *Fallen Angels* won the 1989 Coretta Scott King Award. *The New York Times Book Review* praised *Fallen Angels* this way: The novel is "as thought provoking as it is entertaining, touching and, on occasion, humorous."

Other Books by Walter Dean Myers

Young Adult Fiction

- Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff*, 1975
- Brainstorm*, 1977
- Mojo and the Russians*, 1977
- Victory for Jamie*, 1977
- It Ain't All for Nothin'*, 1978
- The Young Landlords*, 1979
- The Black Pearl and the Ghost; or, One Mystery after Another*, 1980
- The Golden Serpent*, 1980
- Hoops*, 1981
- The Legend of Tarik*, 1981
- Won't Know Till I Get There*, 1982
- The Nicholas Factor*, 1983
- Tales of a Dead King*, 1983
- Mr. Monkey and the Gotcha Bird*, 1984
- Motown and Didi: A Love Story*, 1984
- The Outside Shot*, 1984
- Adventure in Granada*, 1985
- The Hidden Shrine*, 1985
- Duel in the Desert*, 1986
- Ambush in the Amazon*, 1986.
- Sweet Illusions*, 1987
- Crystal*, 1987, reprinted, 2002
- Shadow of the Red Moon*, 1987
- Fallen Angels*, 1988
- Scorpions*, 1988
- Me, Mop, and the Moondance Kid*, 1988
- The Mouse Rap*, 1990
- Somewhere in the Darkness*, 1992
- The Righteous Revenge of Artemis Bonner*, 1992

Mop, Moondance, and the Nagasaki Knights, 1992.
Darnell Rock Reporting, 1994.
The Glory Field, 1994
Slam! 1996
Smiffy Blue: Ace Crime Detective: The Case of the Missing Ruby and Other Stories, 1996.
The Journal of Joshua Loper: A Black Cowboy, 1999
The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins: A World War II Soldier, 1999
Monster, 1999
The Journal of Bidy Owens, the Negro Leagues, 2001
Patrol, 2001
Handbook for Boys, 2002
Three Swords for Granada, 2002
The Dream Bearer, 2003

Bibliography

African-American Review, spring, 1998, R. D. Lane, "Keepin' It Real': Walter Dean Myers and the Promise of African-American Children's Literature," p. 125.
Children's Literature Review, Volume 4, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1982.
Contemporary Black Biography, Volume 8, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1994.
Contemporary Literary Criticism, Volume 35, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1985.
Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 33: Afro-American Fiction Writers after 1955, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1984.
 Myers, Walter Dean, *Bad Boy: A Memoir*, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2001.
 Patrick-Wexler, *Walter Dean Myers*, Raintree Steck-Vaughan (Austin, TX), 1996.
 Rush, Theresa G., editor, *Black American Writers: Past and Present*, Scarecrow Press (Metuchen, NJ), 1975.
St. James Guide to Young Adult Writers, 2nd edition, St. James Press (Detroit, MI), 1999.
Something about the Author Autobiography Series, Volume 2, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1986.

General Objectives

1. To grasp the author's use of dialect
2. To understand the novel's title
3. To recognize the importance of setting
4. To assess each character's personality
5. To recognize the novel's theme and lessons that it teaches
6. To appreciate the brutality of war

7. To explore the ways kindness can be shown
8. To find examples of bravery and courage
9. To analyze the role of race in the Vietnam War
10. To evaluate the author's point of view

Specific Objectives

1. To understand why Perry enlists in the Army
2. To appreciate how Myers makes each character seem realistic and vivid
3. To understand why the dead soldiers are referred to as "fallen angels"
4. To analyze the difficulty of fighting a war in Vietnam
5. To determine why the number of enemy killed in battle is inflated
6. To understand why the soldiers are sent on public relations missions
7. To analyze the hatred some Vietnamese people show toward American soldiers
8. To appreciate the letters of condolence that Perry writes to the families of the dead soldiers
9. To trace the terrifying mood and analyze how Myers builds tension and suspense
10. To consider the lessons the book teaches about war

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Walter Dean Myers' style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

description a word picture of what something or someone is like. Description is made up of sensory details that help readers form pictures in their minds. Myers' style in *Fallen Angels* is highly descriptive, as this excerpt from page 261 shows: "It was a soldier. He had been white, round-faced. Now the bottom of one leg was off. Most of the flesh from the thigh was off, too. The white, twisted bone angled out oddly from the hip. His eyes were open, his mouth was open, as wide as it would go, the teeth bared." Notice how the description evokes the horror of war.

characterization the different ways an author tells readers about characters. Sometimes, writers tell about characters directly. Other times, writers let readers reach their own decisions by showing the comments, thoughts, and actions of the other characters. Myers uses direct characterization in most instances, as this excerpt from page 20 shows: "I was less nervous than I was when

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I first got in country. We were in Nam to stop the North Vietnamese from taking over South Vietnam. I didn't really feel gung ho or anything, but I was ready to do my part."

conflict in literature a struggle or fight. Conflict makes a story interesting because readers want to find out the outcome. There are two kinds of conflict. In an *external* conflict, characters struggle against a force outside themselves. In an *internal* conflict, characters battle a force within themselves. Stories often contain both external and internal conflicts. Myers has external conflicts as he battles the enemy and the jungle conditions. He also experiences major internal conflicts, as he realizes that the American people have not been getting the truth about the war. He comes to reevaluate his position about the war.

The Importance of Setting

The setting is key to *Fallen Angels*, an exploration of Walter Dean Myers' own experiences in the Vietnam War as seen through the eyes of his thinly-disguised narrator Richard Perry. The novel could not have been set anywhere but Vietnam.

Between 1945 and 1954, the Vietnamese waged an anti-colonial war against France. The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu was followed by a peace conference in Geneva, in which Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam received their independence and Vietnam was temporarily divided between an anti-Communist South and a Communist North. In 1956, South Vietnam, with American backing, refused to hold the unification elections. By 1958, Communist-led guerrillas known as the Viet Cong had begun to battle the South Vietnamese government. To support the South's government, the United States sent in 2,000 military advisors, a number that grew to 16,300 in 1963. The military condition deteriorated, and by 1963 South Vietnam had lost the fertile Mekong Delta to the Viet Cong. In 1965, Johnson escalated the war, commencing air strikes on North Vietnam and committing ground forces, which numbered 536,000 in 1968.

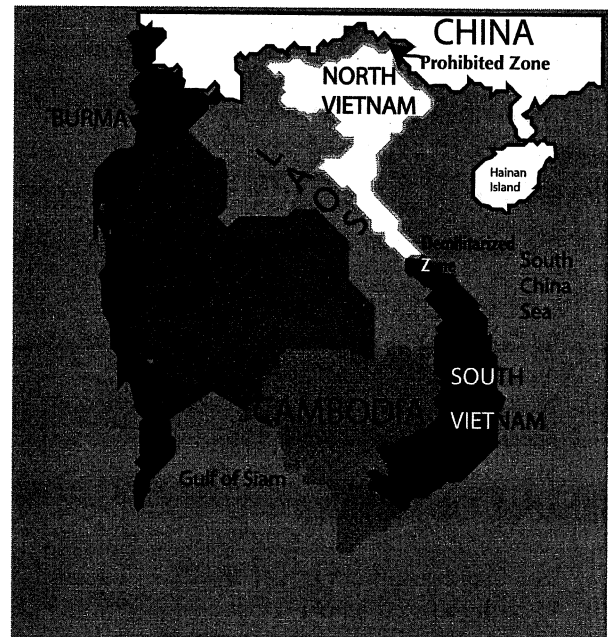
The 1968 Tet Offensive by the North Vietnamese turned many Americans against the war. The next president, Richard Nixon, advocated Vietnamization, withdrawing American troops and giving South Vietnam greater responsibility for fighting the war. His attempt to slow the flow of North Vietnamese soldiers and supplies into South Vietnam by sending American forces to destroy

Communist supply bases in Cambodia in 1970 in violation of Cambodian neutrality provoked antiwar protests on the nation's college campuses.

From 1968 to 1973, officials made efforts to end the conflict through diplomacy. In January 1973, they reached an agreement. U.S. forces were withdrawn from Vietnam and U.S. prisoners of war were released. In April 1975, South Vietnam surrendered to the North and Vietnam was reunited.

The Vietnam War was the longest war in American history and the most unpopular American war of the twentieth century. It resulted in nearly 60,000 American deaths and an estimated two million Vietnamese deaths. Also as a result of the war, Congress enacted the *War Powers Act* in 1973, requiring the president to receive explicit Congressional approval before committing American forces overseas.

Even today, many Americans still ask whether the American effort in Vietnam was a sin, a blunder, a necessary war, a noble cause, or an idealistic, if failed, effort to protect the South Vietnamese from totalitarian government.



Cross-Curricular Sources

Fiction

William Armstrong, *Souder*
Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War*
Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*
Sharon Draper, *Tears of a Tiger*
Sharon Draper, *Forged By Fire*
Kelly Easton, *The Life History of a Star*
Thomas Hargrove, *A Dragon Lives Forever: War and Rice in Vietnam's Mekong's Delta*
Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
Valerie Hobbs, *Sonny's War*
Tracy Kidder, *My Detachment: A Memoir*
Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
Tim O'Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*
Theresa Nelson, *And One for All*
Katherine Paterson, *Park's Quest*

Nonfiction

Chrisanne Beckner, *100 African Americans Who Shaped History*
Louis Haber, *Black Pioneers of Science and Invention*
Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*
Cal Massey, *Famous African American Women*
Diane Patrick, *The New York Public Library Amazing African American History: A Book of Answers for Kids*
Nancy I. Sanders, *A Kid's Guide to African American History*
Jeffrey Stewart, *1001 Things Kids Should Know about African American History*
Otha Richard Sullivan, *African American Inventors*

Audio Books

The Dream Bearer by Walter Dean Myers
Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers
Bad Boy by Walter Dean Myers
Shooter by Walter Dean Myers
Slam by Walter Dean Myers

DVDs, Videos

Dear America: Letters from Vietnam (1988)
Exploring Vietnam (2003)
Good Morning, Vietnam (1988)
Vietnam: The Year of the Pig (1969)
Vietnam: A Television History (1983)
Vietnam: Ten-Thousand-Day War (1998)
Vietnam: Chronicle of a War (1981)
Vietnam War Story (1988)

Internet

Meet Walter Dean Myers
<http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hmr05/mtai/wdmyers.html>>
Myers page
www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/myers.html
Scholastic Web site
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/>
Walter Dean Myers Teacher Resource File
falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/myers.htm

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Walter Dean Myers' *Fallen Angels* should include these aspects:

Themes

- courage
- death
- family love
- fear
- friendship
- injury
- prejudice
- racism
- Vietnam
- war

Motifs

- joining the Army because other plans fall through
- making friends with fellow soldiers
- worrying about family members left behind fearing death
- vowing to help protect your fellow soldiers
- being injured in battle
- trying to understand a very different culture
- enduring stretches of boredom
- reading and understanding dialect
- being brave in terrifying situations

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. I was fifteen and painfully aware that I was "just an observer of life." (p. 35)
(Fallen Angels is a thinly-disguised autobiography. Richard Perry, as with Walter Dean Myers, comes from a poor family in Harlem. Perry's family is falling apart and he is unable to concentrate on anything but keeping his life together. The Army seems the most logical escape, especially since he mistakenly believes that he will not see combat. This mirrors Myers' experiences.)
2. My knee had twisted. The pain burned through the joint at the thigh. My season was over. (p. 38)
(Perry, like Myers, was a promising basketball player before being injured. Myers envisioned his talent as his ticket out of the ghetto, but it was not to be.)
3. There was a shard of metal protruding from Jenkins' chest. (p. 41)
(Jenkins is killed when he steps on a landmine. This death, the first Perry has seen in Vietnam, shows him that he is in actual combat. For the first time, he understands that he might very well be killed.)
4. "Lord, let us feel pity for Private Jenkins, and sorrow for ourselves, and all the angel warriors that fall." (p. 44)
(Perry is greatly comforted by Lieutenant Carroll's prayer over Jenkins' body. Later, Perry asks Carroll why he called Jenkins an "angel warrior." Carroll explains that his father used this name for all soldiers because the Army usually gets boys to fight wars. Most of the soldiers aren't old enough to vote yet. Perry falls into this category, as he is fresh out of high school.)
5. The real question was what I was doing, what any of us were doing, in Nam. (p. 69)
(As he sees officials lie about body count, has difficulty distinguishing the enemy from friends, and experiences great bloodshed and horror, Perry begins to wonder why he is fighting this war. This is a sharp contrast to his earlier carefree attitude about the conflict and his conviction that he would not see any actual battle.)
6. "Hey, Scotty, did we...?" (p. 103)
(To his horror, Perry discovers that his platoon has shot American soldiers. The scene is a massacre, with wounded soldiers all over the field.)
7. The war was different now. (p. 136)
(The death of Lt. Carroll changes Perry in a significant way: part of him has died as well. Rather than feeling anger and sadness, he feels numb with grief.)
8. I emptied the clip. (p. 180)
(In this scene, Perry kills his first enemy soldier up close. It is a ruthless murder: even after the enemy is dead, Perry continues to shoot. Perry destroys the enemy soldier, leaving little more than a mass of bloody flesh. Sergeant Simpson has to force him away. Here, readers see how Perry has changed from an innocent high school kid to a numb killing machine.)
9. Having people to care about you was probably the only thing that made it right. (p. 200)
(Perry clings to his love for his younger brother and his mother. Readers see the importance of home contact for soldiers and the devastating effects of such lack of contact.)
10. We would have to learn to be alive again. (p. 304)
(Lt. Gearhart reports that the other men in the patrol are all right. Perry realizes that it is not true because there is a wide gulf between "alive" and "all right." The men may be alive, but they are not all right because they are all suffering from stress, fear, and the numbness that comes from seeing too much death.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. When and where does the story take place?
(The novel is set in Vietnam for one year, beginning on September 13, 1967. It takes place during the Vietnam War.)
2. Why does Richard Perry enlist in the Army?
(He wanted to go to college but lacked the money. He enlists in the Army to get away from all the questions about why he is not in college.)
3. How does Perry end up in Vietnam?
(He is sent by mistake: since he has a knee injury, he was supposed to be assigned to a supply company while awaiting new orders. But his paperwork is lost and so he ends up in Vietnam.)
4. How does Jenkins die?
(He is killed when he steps on a land mine.)
5. What happens when Peewee uses the native salve on his lip?
(The salve is supposed to grow hair. Instead, it causes his face to swell.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. Why is Perry so deeply affected by Jenkins' death?
(Jenkins is the first soldier killed while Perry is in Vietnam. Second, Perry knew him personally so the death has resonance. Third, Jenkins' death makes the horror of the war real. It shows Perry that he faces the very real possibility of being killed while in Vietnam.)
7. How does Perry's idea of Vietnam War change as the novel progresses?
(At the beginning of the novel, Perry does not think he will see any real battle. He does not understand the terror, horror, and loss that war brings. By the end, however, he has come to understand all of this and more. Also, he comes to question America's involvement in the war and the fact that so many of the front-line soldiers are poor black inner-city kids.)

8. How do the Vietnamese feel about the American soldiers?
(Despite the public relations efforts, the Vietnamese appear to fear and hate the Americans.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. What does Judy Duncan represent?
(Judy represents all the innocent victims. She is young and idealistic; she enlists as a nurse to help others. Like so many young people in Vietnam, she is killed.)
10. How are Perry and Peewee the same? How are they different?
(Both men are African-American soldiers, poor, and young. Both are injured, although Peewee is hurt worse than Perry. However, Perry is highly intelligent and gifted, headed for a career as a well-respected writer. Peewee appears to be mentally unstable.)

Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. Write a profile for Harold "Peewee" Gates. Imagine that you are an Army psychologist evaluating his personality.
12. Make a model of any scene in the novel. Add a caption from the novel to describe the scene.

Across the Curriculum

Art/Music

1. Perry is awarded two Purple Hearts, one for each time he is injured. Create another award for him based on the special skills he evinces while in the Army.
2. Research some of the war songs popular during the Vietnam War era. Play one or more of the songs for the class and provide background on it.
3. With a classmate, play a game of chess as Perry does. Explain the rules of the game to the class.
4. Make a travel brochure for people who want to visit Vietnam today.
5. Design a new cover for this book. Use color, shape, and graphics to capture the novel's main themes.

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Speech/Drama

1. Working with some classmates, debate whether or not all Americans should be required to serve two years in the military, as is required in some other countries.
2. Give a speech telling why you would like to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.
3. Give a lecture to the class in which you explain what life is like in Vietnam today. Discuss the political, educational, and social realities.
4. Perry was a high school basketball star. Explain the rules of the sport and demonstrate some basketball moves for your classmates.
5. In a roundtable discussion, explain why Myers describes in detail all the food the men eat.

Language Arts

1. Write a letter to a soldier serving overseas.
2. Read a famous war poem, such as "*War is Kind*" by Stephan Crane. Compare and contrast the poem to *Fallen Angels* to show their similarities and differences.
3. Choose any one character in the novel who dies. Write a letter to the character's family, explaining how the soldier died and offering solace. Model your letter on the letters that Perry writes to the families of deceased soldiers.
4. Myers said that a turning point in his education came when he decided to become a writer like James Baldwin. Read Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues." Explain in an essay why the story made such a strong impact on Myers' life.
5. Recast this novel as a ballad. Focus on the "fallen angels" to show their heroism and sacrifice.

History/Social Studies

1. Find out more about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Write your questions in a letter. Send your letter to:
Mail Operations/Vietnam Veterans Memorial
National Park Service
National Capitol Parks-Central
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242
2. As Perry struggles to find virtue in himself and his comrades, he questions why the U.S. is in Vietnam. Research the reasons the government gave at the time for the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

3. Draw a Vietnam Memorial monument for your town. Then see if your town already has a Vietnam Memorial. If so, how is it the same as the one you drew? How is it different?
4. Research the American Red Cross. Find out who started the organization, why, and when. Find out what services the Red Cross offers today. Share your findings in a web page or report.
5. Perry is awarded a Purple Heart each time he is injured. Find out what other awards the Army gives its soldiers. Display pictures of these medals and include captions showing what each medal represents.
6. As Perry mentions, people protested against the Vietnam War. Research the Kent State protest and explain why this event marked a turning point in the public attitude toward the war.

Science and Math

1. Calculate how many miles Vietnam is from your home town.
2. Perry suffers a concussion when he is injured in battle. Make a chart showing how a concussion affects the brain.
3. Why Perry gets the stomach virus, he assumes that he has appendicitis. He is mistaken, but appendicitis is notoriously difficult to diagnose. Make a booklet showing the signs of this condition.
4. Explain how military time is calculated.
5. On a chart, show the number of casualties the U.S. suffered in the following wars: Revolutionary, Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War.

Alternate Assessment

1. Write and deliver a eulogy for Judy Duncan, the nurse who is killed in Vietnam.
2. Read Walter Dean Myers' autobiography *Bad Boy* and compare and contrast his experiences to those described in *Fallen Angels*.
3. Compose a scene in which Perry and Peewee meet ten years after the action described in the novel. Working with a friend, act out the scene.
4. Write a critical review of the novel for the school newspaper.

Vocabulary Test

Fallen Angels contains many words that are jargon or are specific to the novel's time and place. Complete the following chart with a definition of each word. Then use any five words in a paragraph about the novel.

Vocabulary Word	Definition
relief	
choppers	
Nam	
squad	
platoon	
hamlet	
Cong, VC	
demilitarized	
civilian	
spook	

Paragraph:

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Circle the term to complete each of the following statements.

1. Richard Perry is (**seventeen, twenty**) years when he enlists in the Army.
2. It is the summer of (**1947, 1967**).
3. He spends (**one year, five years**) on active duty.
4. Peewee, Jenkins, and Perry are assigned to (**Delta, Alpha**) Company.
5. In high school, Perry played (**basketball, football**) and was considering a professional career.
6. Unfortunately, he was injured and now has a bad (**shoulder, knee**).
7. Lieutenant Carroll says a prayer over Jenkins' body, referring to the dead soldier as a(n)
(**"blessed child," "angel warrior."**)
8. Perry and Peewee find some (**clothing, ointment**) in one of the huts and pay the women for it.
9. Perry is awarded a (**Purple Heart, Green Beret**) for his injury.
10. Perry suffers a broken (**back, leg**).

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| A. Harlem | F. Judy Duncan |
| B. Vietnam | G. Richard Perry |
| C. Jenkins | H. Harold Gates |
| D. Lobel | I. Kenny |
| E. Monaco | J. Alaska |

- ___ 1. The soldier who is killed when he steps on a land mine.
- ___ 2. The novel's narrator.
- ___ 3. Where Perry meets Judy Duncan.
- ___ 4. The soldier who is nicknamed "Peewee".
- ___ 5. The soldier who pretends that they are really in a movie.
- ___ 6. Where Perry comes from.
- ___ 7. The nurse whom Perry meets when he first ships out.
- ___ 8. Perry's younger brother.
- ___ 9. Where Perry serves as a soldier.
- ___ 10. The soldier who throws a grenade as a joke.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each person, place, or thing and explain why it is important in the story.

1. "fallen angels"

2. salve

3. body count

4. dog tags

5. letters from home

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences on the following page.

1. Explain how the novel would have been different if it had not been told from Perry's point of view.
2. Analyze how Perry changes over the course of the novel. Include at least two ways.
3. Choose a scene that you found especially dramatic. Describe the scene and explain why you found it effective.
4. Explain what Peewee represents in the novel.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Quote Identification (20 points)

Explain the significance of each excerpt from the novel.

1. Jenkins' face was white and twisted as he struggled to look down at his wound. There were bubbles on the wound as he struggled for a final breath, and that, too, stopped.
2. "Lord, let us feel pity for Private Jenkins, and sorrow for ourselves, and all the angel warriors that fall."
3. The real question was what I was doing, what any of us were doing, in Nam.
4. "Yep, we just shot the *** out of the first platoon."
5. The war was different now.

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match the following descriptions with names of speakers from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Richard Perry | A. the soldier who throws a grenade as a joke |
| ___ 2. Peewee | B. the soldier who pretends they are in a movie |
| ___ 3. Judy Duncan | C. the soldier killed when he steps on a mine |
| ___ 4. Kenny | D. the leader who calls the dead men "fallen angels" |
| ___ 5. Lt. Carroll | E. where Perry comes from |
| ___ 6. Harlem | F. Harold Gates' nickname |
| ___ 7. Vietnam | G. where the action takes place |
| ___ 8. Jenkins | H. Perry's younger brother |
| ___ 9. Lobel | I. the novel's narrator |
| ___ 10. Monaco | J. the nurse Perry meets in the beginning of the novel |

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements T if they are true or F if they are false.

- 1. Some of the black men want a blood oath to protect each other, but Perry and Peewee refuse. Instead, they mingle spit and vow to be there for each other.
- 2. Officials are very careful to report the exact number of enemy soldiers who are killed.
- 3. At Captain Steward's request, Perry writes the letter to Lt. Carroll's wife.
- 4. Peewee writes a letter to Perry's mother, explaining how Perry was injured twice.
- 5. Monaco's girlfriend writes a letter of proposal to him, which the squad votes that he should accept.
- 6. Perry and the other soldiers make dolls and a doll house for the Vietnamese children.
- 7 Brunner becomes the squad leader as they return to battle.
- 8. The soldiers bury some of their own men, being very careful to bring the men's dog tags with them. This way, they can track who has died.
- 9. Peewee and Perry strangle an enemy soldier.
- 10. At the end of the novel, Perry is injured much worse than Peewee and lies close to death.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences on the following page.

- 1. Explain what you learned about the Vietnam War from the novel.
- 2. Analyze what the title means and tell why it fits the novel's theme.
- 3. Describe the novel's setting and explain its importance to the story.
- 4. Perry is a thinly-disguised version of Walter Dean Myers. Find evidence in the book that Myers' writing talent was evident when he served in Vietnam.

Answer Key

Vocabulary Test

Vocabulary Word	Definition
1. relief	welfare
2. choppers	helicopters
3. Nam	a clipped form of Vietnam
4. squad	a small group of soldiers, commonly ten men
5. platoon	a military unit consisting of two or more squads
6. hamlet	small village
7. Cong, VC	a clipped form of Viet Cong; an abbreviation for Viet Cong
8. demilitarized	to place under civil rather than military control
9. civilian	not military
10. spook	spy

Paragraphs will vary, depending on the words that students chose.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. seventeen | 6. knee |
| 2. 1967 | 7. angel warrior |
| 3. one year | 8. ointment |
| 4. Alpha | 9. Purple Heart |
| 5. basketball | 10. leg |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A |
| 2. G | 7. F |
| 3. J | 8. I |
| 4. H | 9. B |
| 5. D | 10. E |

Part III: Identification (20 points)

1. The "fallen angels" are the dead soldiers.
2. Peewee buys some salve from a Vietnamese woman. One jar is supposed to grow hair; the other, cure foot fungus. He tries the first salve, which causes an allergic reaction on his face. This part of the novel serves as comic relief.
3. Officials lie about the body count to make it appear that they have killed more Viet Cong soldiers than they really have. This greatly disillusions Perry.
4. The men are identified by their dog tags. When the men bury the bodies of fellow soldiers to prevent them from being desecrated by the enemy, they forget to take the dog tags. Thus, officials will have a very difficult time verifying who has died.
5. Letters from home are very important to the men because they show that someone cares whether they live or die. In some cases, the letters are all that keep the men from utter despair.

Part IV: Essay (40 Points)

Answers will vary.

Answer Key (Page 2)

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Quote Identification (20 points)

1. Jenkins is killed when he steps on a landmine. This death, the first Perry has seen in Vietnam, shows him that he is in actual combat. For the first time, he understands that he might very well be killed.
2. Perry is greatly comforted by Lieutenant Carroll's prayer over Jenkins' body. Later, Perry asks Carroll why he called Jenkins an "angel warrior." Carroll explains that his father used this name for all soldiers because the Army usually gets boys to fight wars. Most of the soldiers aren't old enough to vote yet.
3. As he experiences lies about body count, difficulty distinguishing the enemy from friends, bloodshed and horror, Perry begins to wonder why he is fighting this war. This is a sharp contrast to his earlier carefree attitude about the conflict and his conviction that he would not see any actual battle.
4. To his horror, Perry discovers that his platoon has shot American soldiers. The scene is a massacre, with wounded soldiers all over the field.
5. Lt. Carroll's death changes Perry in a significant way: part of him has died as well. Rather than feeling anger and sadness, he feels numb with grief.

Part II: Matching (20 points)

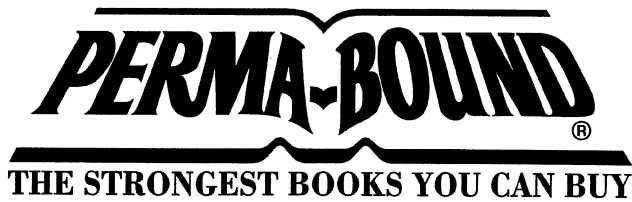
- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A |
| 2. G | 7. F |
| 3. J | 8. I |
| 4. H | 9. B |
| 5. D | 10. E |

Part III. True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (40 Points)

Answers will vary.



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