

Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk: A Novel Study Guide

**Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk: A Novel by Ben
Fountain**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk: A Novel Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-2, The Thing Begins, A Private in the Infantry.....	5
Chapters 3-4, It Is Mostly In Your Head But We Have Cures For That, The Human Response....	7
Chapters 5-6, By Virtue of Which the Many Become One, Bully of the Heart.....	9
Chapters 7-8, We Are All Americans Here, Dry Humping for the Lord.....	11
Chapters 9-10, Jamie Lee Curtis Made a Shitty Movie, XXL.....	13
Chapters 11-12, This Is Everything There Is, Billy and Mango are Out for a Walk.....	15
Chapters 13-14, Raped by Angels, If In The Future You Tell Me This Is Love, I Will Not Disappoint You.....	17
Chapters 15-16, Temporary Sanity, Will Slay Vampires for Food.....	20
Chapters 17-18, Money Makes Us Real, The Proud Good-Bye.....	22
Characters.....	24
Objects/Places.....	30
Themes.....	32
Style.....	34
Quotes.....	37
Topics for Discussion.....	38

Plot Summary

"Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk," written by author, Ben Fountain, is a novel that takes the reader through one day in the life of war hero Billy Lynn and his seven fellow Bravo squad members. The day depicted is the last day of the squad's Victory Tour and they are being honored through their participation in various activities during a Dallas Cowboys football game, including a half-time show. Throughout the book, Billy shares his thoughts, feelings, and experiences about being in war, being honored, wanting a relationship, and being redeployed.

The first two chapters of the book introduce the main characters and plots. In these chapters, the men of the Bravo squad are getting ready to go to Texas Stadium where they will all be honored for their brave actions during the Iraq war. The reader also learns that a movie producer is trying to turn their story into a movie, though he doesn't ultimately succeed. Although approximately ten characters are introduced during these chapters, Billy clearly stands out as the main character.

As the book progresses, the major and minor characters are developed further, with the focus continuing to be on Billy. Throughout the next several chapters, the reader gets a more intimate perspective on Billy's thoughts about being redeployed and wanting a meaningful relationship, as well as his struggle to understand the undying fanaticism of the American people, through his interactions with his squad members and with fans. It also becomes clear that Billy is struggling to process many of the experiences that he has had during the war, including the death of a fellow squad member and the randomness and fear that accompany a war, as his mind takes him through these memories repeatedly throughout the book. Chapter 6 develops Billy's character in a different way when his family members are introduced, as the reader is able to see how their dysfunctional dynamics have contributed to shaping Billy's overall personality.

Chapter 7 introduces another plot line when Billy makes an instant connection with a Dallas Cowboys cheerleader named Faison. Despite his stimulating conversations about business with major Cowboys executives, and his continued struggle to block out memories of the war, his connection with Faison seems to change Billy's perspective and priorities in life.

Chapters 13 and 14 bring the climax of the book as Billy and his fellow squad members participate in the half-time show. Unfortunately, it is not the experience they hoped for, as the chaos and the random loud noises bring back negative memories of the war for many squad members. Although shaken, Billy recovers well in Chapter 14 when he realizes that Faison wants a relationship with him as well.

Knowing that Faison wants the same thing that he wants prompts Billy to seriously consider the option of leaving the Army. However, he realizes that even if he was happy with Faison, he would miss his Bravo brothers and feel guilty for not being in the war with them. At the end of the book, Billy realizes that he has no choice but to go back

to Iraq. As the Bravo squad leaves for redeployment, Billy can't help but think that he'll never see Faison again, although he hopes that he is wrong.



Chapters 1-2, The Thing Begins, A Private in the Infantry

Chapters 1-2, The Thing Begins, A Private in the Infantry Summary

Chapter one begins by setting the scene for the men of Bravo. The reader learns that it's Thanksgiving Day and that the men of Bravo are drinking heavily in the back of a limo after a game. The first character introduced is Billy, who needs to drink because being bombarded by citizens about being in the military, God, war, etc. Another character, Sgt. Dime, is introduced when he exclaims joy at the sight of their white hummer limo. As everyone enjoys the accommodations of the limo, the other characters are introduced, including Holliday, Lake, Crack, A-bort, Sykes, Lodis, and Mango. These men, along with Billy, make up the Bravo Company, second platoon, first squad, dubbed by Fox News as the Bravo squad. The chapter also reveals they have come home from Iraq to complete the Victory Tour.

In addition to Sgt. Dime, movie producer Albert Ratner is in the limo as well. The chapter reveals that the Bravo squad participated in a rescue mission in the war in Iraq that Albert plans to make into a movie. As the squad rides in the limo, they bet on various aspects of the upcoming football game. Through his phone conversations, Albert reveals that some big-name movie stars are interested in being in his movie. Albert assures the squad that, although war movies have not typically done well at the box office, their story is one that all Americans can relate to.

As the other squad members hang out of the limo to impress girls, Billy checks his cell phone and has very few texts. He wonders why he doesn't have more since everyone tells him he's famous. As they approach Texas Stadium, Billy realizes that he grew up several miles away from the place but has never been there. It is not as nice as he thought it would be and Billy thinks about how everything in the world starts off new but will follow an ultimate path of loss. Although Billy is excited about being on TV during this football game, he is worried about what he may be asked to do and he is determined not to embarrass himself.

The Bravo squad arrives to the football game in Chapter 2 and they sit in their seats. The members of the squad are introduced more formally at the beginning of chapter 2 as well: Hebert "A-bort," Mango, Holliday "Day," Lodis "Load," Sykes "Sucks," and Koch "Crack." Also attending the football game is Albert, Sgt. Dime and Major McLaurin "Major Mac." While sitting in their seats, Sgt. Dime asks Load how long a football field is and, when he neglects to include the end zones in his answer, Sgt. Dime rebukes him and asks Billy, who gives the right answer. Billy wonders why Sgt. Dime seems to be looking for ways to sing his praises in front of the other squad members.



Sgt. Dime gets into an argument with Sucks when Sucks continues to beg him for money to place bets. Billy shares that Sucks is on a strict budget after spending all of his money on porn. Then Sgt. Dime asks Billy how he feels about Hilary Swank wanting to play his character in the movie. Billy shares that he believes it's weird because she's a girl and Sgt. Dime gives him a hard time about this and about a girl playing him in the movie. This chapter reveals that Sgt. Dime is a well-read 24-year old college dropout from North Carolina. There are rumors about golf scholarships in college and being a star quarterback in high school, although Sgt. Dime denies these claims.

He has a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star from Afghanistan and he is described as somewhat of a free thinker. As Billy hopes that the movie deal becomes a reality, he remembers when he first joined the platoon in Fort Hood. He remembers how Sgt. Dime and the now-deceased Sgt. Breem (Shroom) taunted him about being a punk and a delinquent for trashing another man's car. When Billy explained to them that he trashed the car of his sister, Karen's, ex-fiance, after he left her following a near-death car accident she was in, they taunted him less. Billy also reveals during this chapter that he joined the Army at 18 because doing so was part of the plea bargain for the damage that he did to the car.

Chapters 1-2, The Thing Begins, A Private in the Infantry Analysis

Chapters 1 and 2 serve to introduce the main characters of the story, the men of the Bravo squad, and to set the opening scene of the story. In Chapter 1, the reader is introduced to the men of the Bravo squad through dialogue and it becomes apparent that the main character in the squad is Billy. Many details and stories are told through Billy's perspective and memories throughout both chapters. Also in chapter 1, the reader learns that the Bravo squad completed an important rescue mission in the Iraq war and that they were flown home to complete a Victory Tour.

The reader also learns that their story is on track to become a movie as well. Chapter 1 begins to develop the characters as well, mostly through their dialogue with each other. Billy's character is developed slightly more, as he shares his perspective more often. Through the text, the reader learns that Billy is more of an observer in the group and that he has a mostly negative outlook on life, believing that all good things in the world are ultimately heading towards loss.

Chapter 2 introduces the squad members more thoroughly and the reader is also able to gain more insight into their individual personalities. Sgt. Dime's character is developed further in chapter 2, as is Billy's. The chapter reveals that Billy had a troubled adolescence and had to join the Army at 18 because he was required to do so by the plea bargain he reached after destroying his sister's ex-fiance's car.



Chapters 3-4, It Is Mostly In Your Head But We Have Cures For That, The Human Response

Chapters 3-4, It Is Mostly In Your Head But We Have Cures For That, The Human Response Summary

Chapter 3 finds Billy in serious pain because of his hangover. He knows that drinking on top of his hangover yesterday made things worse but he feels even worse now that he's no longer drinking. As he sits at the football game and thinks about having to redeploy in two days, he tries to enjoy the purely American scene he's sitting in now- football on Thanksgiving Day. Billy and Mango decide to get more beers, putting them in Coca-Cola cups because they aren't supposed to drink in uniform, and Billy decides to do fifty pushups before drinking his beer, as they have had no time for exercise on the Victory Tour.

While drinking their beers, Billy and Mango discuss what the fans at the game must be thinking about and decide that it is probably both boring and pointless. When they return to their seats, it is brought to Sgt. Dime's attention that Major Mac is missing and he sends Billy and Mango back out to find him. The chapter reveals more information about Major Mac, describing him as "every inch the ideal Joe" that, thanks to being blown up twice on his first day at war, has a profound hearing loss and periods of disassociation. Through Billy's thoughts, the reader learns more about Mango as well- he is Latino, a great asset to the squad and a "rock-steady" person overall. Billy and Mango talk briefly about the girls they saw at the strip club the night before, which prompts Billy to think about how much he is wanting a girlfriend in his life.

As he wonders why he hasn't been able to find her in these two weeks spent touring around the country, Billy's thoughts drift into thinking about the war and how lucky they all are to still be alive. Billy knows that Mango is thinking about the war, too, but he decides not to say anything because there's too much to say. They give up looking for Major Mac, get into a mock fight in a high-end Cowboys merchandise store and are in disbelief when they hear how much money the store makes on leather jackets alone.

Chapter 4 begins with Albert talking with the squad about Hilary Swank's price for even looking at the film script, which has yet to be written. The chapter reveals that Albert seems to have some type of fascination with Sgt. Dime and a comment made by Day causes Billy to think about Shroom and how their squad seems to think about only money lately. When the football reaches the peak of its arc, Billy decides that's where Shroom lives and he falls into somewhat of a trance, watching the kicker practice several more times. Billy is interrupted from his meditation-like state when his squad members point out their names on the Jumbotron.



The fans begin to cheer loudly and everyone around them gathers to meet the squad and express their thanks. Billy adopts a "reserved yet courteous expression" that he's learned from watching American movie and TV actors. He knows that people eat up his expressions and behaviors, it's something he's noticed while being on tour for the past 2 weeks. Billy is amazed by the public's response, their raw emotions and frantic speech patterns. As he thinks about it, he feels that they need something from him, that they participate in the war daily and that, when they meet him, his struggles become theirs and vice versa. The fans encourage Billy about what he and his fellow squad members are doing, urge him to be proud of the Silver Star he earned, although Billy dreads the day that the "good deed" will seek him out again.

The squad leaves the stadium for lunch, as the football is kicked into the air again, and Billy begins thinking about Shroom. He thinks about the last day Shroom was alive and how, when they got attacked, Shroom seemed to know he was going to die. Thinking about the war, Shroom's death, the movie deal, the tour, etc. becomes overwhelming for Billy. He thinks about his need to process these issues with someone and decides that Major Mac is the best candidate, but then decides against it, thinking about how hard it would be to communicate about these issues with someone who has a hearing loss.

Chapters 3-4, It Is Mostly In Your Head But We Have Cures For That, The Human Response Analysis

Chapters 3 and 4 continue to develop the plot and the characters that were introduced in the first two chapters. The chapters focus more specifically on Billy's character development, his perspective, thoughts and feelings, however the other squad members are present in dialogue and Major Mac and Mango's characters are somewhat more developed as well. In chapter 3, Billy finds himself thinking more about having to redeploy back to Iraq but he seems to try and enjoy the American culture surrounding him.

When he and Mango go to get beers and then, later, to look for Major Mac, Billy seems to have a harder time not thinking about the war, what they've seen, what they've lost and how lucky they are to be alive. The reader can also begin to see loneliness in Billy when he talks about his experience at the strip club, how it left him feeling empty and how it only highlighted the fact that he wants a girlfriend, someone to connect with on the physical and spiritual level.

Chapter 4 focuses mostly on Billy's perspective and continued amazement of the American people's reaction to his squad's acts of heroism. In response to their reaction, Billy finds himself falling into a way of looking and being that mimics what he's seen from American actors in the movies and on TV. Billy appears grateful for the support, encouragement, and love received from Americans. Although he understands that the people connect their struggles with his in some important way, the text suggests that part of him does not understand the source of their fanatical behaviors.



Chapters 5-6, By Virtue of Which the Many Become One, Bully of the Heart

Chapters 5-6, By Virtue of Which the Many Become One, Bully of the Heart Summary

The squad arrives to the Thanksgiving Day buffet at the beginning of chapter 5. As they get their food, Billy realizes that the place makes him feel bad because it's run down and full of rich people who make him nervous. Although he feels as though he doesn't belong, Billy is surprised when the patrons give the squad a round of applause. Billy's thoughts alternate between what's happening at dinner and what's happened in the war, thinking that nothing in life seems real anymore except the memories of being in Iraq that are in his head. The squad listens as Stadium Club patrons and their wives stop by the table to express their thanks.

Albert continues talking about his frustrations with Hollywood's resistance to pick up the movie idea, stating that people in Hollywood have no idea what the squad has been through and that their judgment on the legitimacy of their experiences is ridiculous. During dinner, Billy remembers how Shroom called Sgt. Dime a "master of the psyche" and, through his memories of Shroom, the reader learns that Shroom was very close with Sgt. Dime, that Shroom had a hard upbringing and that he went to a Christian boarding school which caused him to know a lot about the Bible and make odd comments about God. Billy remembers how he was involved at the time of Shroom's death, how he was trying to get to Shroom's wounds and was covered with blood.

When the squad is approached by an oil millionaire who tries to suggest that he's doing his part in the war, Sgt. Dime makes a scene to embarrass the man and then questions Billy about why he would be so hard on somebody. Billy remembers the day that Lake was injured and how Sgt. Dime kissed him on the lips saying "I knew it would be you." As he's coming from the bathroom, Billy meets up with Mango and a waiter, Hector, and the sneak outside to smoke marijuana. Hector says he's thinking of joining the military but Mango and Billy urge him to think otherwise, although they understand his reasons for wanting to do so- because what else is there?

Chapter 6 begins with explaining that the members of the Bravo squad got two nights and one day free while home for the Victory Tour. Billy chose to go home to Stovall, Texas, to his childhood home. He starts off a description of his home by describing his father, Ray's, motorized wheelchair that his sister, Kathryn, calls "The Beast." Billy and Kathryn share thoughts on how their father enjoys being inconsiderate and rude and how Ray doesn't make an effort to communicate with anyone in the family unless he needs something. Through his accounts of his father, it is clear that Billy harbors resentment and anger towards his father for making him feel that he was never good enough.



The reader is also introduced to Billy's mom, Denise, sister, Patty, and nephew, Brian. He reflects on the family secret that causes feelings of shame- not the affairs that Ray had, not the fact that he has a teenage daughter with another woman, but the joy the family experiences now that Ray can no longer talk. Throughout chapter 6, Billy enjoys the comforts of home but also notices his family's dysfunction in relating with one another- everyone waiting on Ray hand and foot but not too quickly and talking about Ray and his medical condition and affairs right in front of him. While playing with his nephew, Billy wonders if this is what people mean by the "sanctity of life" and the thought makes him uncomfortable about his actions in the war.

He learns that his parents are in financial trouble because of his father's medical. Kathryn and Billy spend time together and he answers her questions about his experience in the war and on the Victory Tour. She makes it clear that she doesn't want him to go back. Billy thinks that he going to experience a moment with his father but he gets a silent brush-off instead. As Billy spends his last morning at with his family, he feels the need to detach himself because their sadness is too much for him to bear. He realizes he's changed because, several months ago, he wouldn't have wanted to be around his family. Knowing he must fulfill his duty, Billy leaves home to go back to Iraq.

Chapters 5-6, By Virtue of Which the Many Become One, Bully of the Heart Analysis

In Chapter 5, Billy and the rest of the Bravo squad continue to participate in the festivities at Texas Stadium. During their Thanksgiving Day buffet meal, Billy has a hard time focusing on what's happening at the moment because his memories keep taking him back to the war. The more he experiences at home the more Billy seems to believe that nothing is real except for the memories he has in his head. As Albert talks about the various difficulties in getting their story turned into a movie, Billy thinks back on his memories of Shroom and the day that Shroom died.

The text makes it clear that Billy is struggling with the loss of Shroom, as Billy seems to think about him frequently. Billy also contemplates his relationship with Sgt. Dime in chapter 5, seeming to think that they're relationship is special somehow, although Billy doesn't understand why. Billy and Mango also smoke marijuana with a waiter, Hector, and listen to Hector as he explains that he wants to join the Army because he has a family and there aren't many opportunities for him to provide for them. Although Billy and Mango urge him to reconsider, they understand his reasons for wanting to join the Army.

Chapter 6 introduces Billy's family and family dynamics. It is clear from the beginning of the chapter that Billy and his father, Ray, do not have a good relationship. Then again, the text suggests that Ray does not have a good relationship with anyone in the family and focuses mostly on himself. It becomes clear that Billy has a strong connection with his sister, Kathryn, as he opens up to her and discusses some of the thoughts and memories he has from the war. Billy notices change within himself when he realizes that he wants to be around his family now and wonders if war did that.



Chapters 7-8, We Are All Americans Here, Dry Humping for the Lord

Chapters 7-8, We Are All Americans Here, Dry Humping for the Lord Summary

At the beginning of chapter 7, the Bravo squad meets Dallas Cowboys owner Norman "Norm" Oglesby. The reader learns that Norm is disliked by most everyone involved in sports and he begins to wonder why. Although he is nervous to meet Norm, Billy mostly stays quiet and lets Norm do the talking when they are finally introduced. Norm tells Billy that he has given America back its pride and, while Billy finds this hard to believe, he doesn't argue. Billy finds himself struggling to maintain focus during the meet and greet and his thoughts soon wander to interactions with Shroom, his experiences during the war and his thoughts on feeling tired of the fear and randomness that life brings when you're in a war.

A Cowboys executive notices that Billy appears to be overwhelmed by the amount of people so he brings him over the bar and they have a conversation about business, more specifically how Norm conducts business. Ever since being in the war, Billy finds himself wondering about how business transactions and economics work. Sgt. Dime interrupts Billy's thoughts about business and they have a brief conversation about business as well. When Sgt. Dime realizes that Billy has been drinking again, he tells Billy that he needs to get his act straight because he will be needed to help keep the troops in line back in Iraq. This touches Billy because he does not want to disappoint Sgt. Dime.

Chapter 7 reveals that the Bravo squad became famous for their actions in the Al-Ansakar Canal because they had a showdown with the insurgents. Billy knows that every soldier dreams of a moment like what happened in the canal but he is now constantly bombarded with the memories of the events. The squad then heads out into the stadium for a type of press conference. During Norm's speech and the question/answer period that follows, Billy makes a special connection with a cheerleader. Billy is put on the spot when asked to explain what inspired him to lead the attack in the canal and he is relieved to give a satisfactory answer.

Chapter 8 begins with Billy explaining that the Dallas Morning News features a front page picture of A-bort after the press conference. Billy notices that the paper got his name wrong and A-bort is, from this point forward, known as "Brandon" to the Bravo squad. Billy remembers that, after the press conference, each soldier was assigned three cheerleaders to escort them around the stadium. Initially, Billy enjoys the company of the three beautiful women but he begins to feel annoyed by the pictures that are constantly being taken and with the fakeness of the situation. While being asked questions by several reporters, Billy sees "his cheerleader," which causes him to ask



the cheerleaders assigned to him whether or not they have to be single to be on the cheerleading squad.

The cheerleaders tell him that the answer is no but they immediately seem less engaged with him and Billy knows they think he's hitting on them. Before he has to explain himself, Billy and the rest of the Bravo squad are called away for a photo op. After the photo op, Billy feels overwhelmed and he tries to step away for a few minutes alone. However a couple of reporters find him and start asking questions. Billy is glad, though, when he realizes that "his cheerleader" is standing next to him. He gets rid of the reporters quickly and learns that the cheerleader's name is Faison. They share some background information and she talks about what it's like to be a cheerleader.

Faison continues on to explain that she feels God wanted them to meet and Billy listens to the story of how she became a Christian. As she's talking, Billy pulls her into a small alcove and they begin making out, which leads to Faison reaching a climax. Afterwards, Faison discusses her beliefs about being intimate with a guy. When she finds out that Billy is going back to Iraq, it seems that she wishes to change her mind about being completely intimate with him but she is unable to stay, as she is called away for cheerleading duties. She tells him to meet her on the 20-yard line to get her phone number.

Chapters 7-8, We Are All Americans Here, Dry Humping for the Lord Analysis

Chapters 7 and 8 serve to develop Billy's character even further while simultaneously continuing the plot of the Bravo squad being on the Victory Tour. In chapter 7, Billy spends a lot of time focusing on the owner of the Dallas Cowboys, Norm Oglesby, his characteristics and his business expertise. Although Billy states during this chapter that he would never consider going back to college, he does reveal a deep interest in the way business and economics work. He goes on to discuss how being in the Army seems to have opened his eyes to the ways of the world and cause him to wonder how big corporations work.

Amidst his fascination with Norm and business, however, Billy continues to get caught up in his memories from the war. More specifically, he seems to be struggling with trying to adjust to the constant fear and randomness of life he's experiencing during the war. Billy also seems to continue to struggle with understanding the undying and unwavering support and love demonstrated by the Americans that he's met while on tour. At the end of chapter 7, Billy makes eye contact and forms a connection with a cheerleader.

Chapter 8 begins with Billy remembering that he and the other Bravo squad members were each escorted by three cheerleaders after the press conference. Billy seems particularly overwhelmed in chapter 8 with the media involvement and constant interactions with fans but he catches a break when "his cheerleader," Faison, catches up with him and they share an intimate moment in a hidden alcove. The fun is over, however, when Faison learns that Billy is being redeployed.



Chapters 9-10, Jamie Lee Curtis Made a Shitty Movie, XXL

Chapters 9-10, Jamie Lee Curtis Made a Shitty Movie, XXL Summary

In Chapter 9, Billy and the men of the Bravo squad find themselves on the playing field. Norm and his associates, called Norm & Co., as well as Albert, are there as well. While hearing conversations, Billy deduces that new developments have taken place in the making of the movie, mainly that many of the people previously interested are interested no longer. Albert lets the squad know that Norm is intrigued in the project but says it in a way that implies Norm is not yet intrigued enough to give them any money. Albert also tells the squad that someone associated with people that are interested in the project said that Bravo's story is not real but he tells Bravo not to worry about it.

Billy notices that Sgt. Dime seems to be in a quiet, low-energy funk and he is disappointed because he needs Sgt. Dime's input on what to do about the situation with Faison, although he has to keep checking with himself that what happened with her was real. When the men of the Bravo squad become restless with waiting in the cold, having no direction and wondering what's happening with the movie, Billy begins to taunt Sgt. Dime into throwing a football at him. When Sgt. Dime and Billy begin passing the football back and forth, the rest of the squad gets involved as well. While playing, Billy remembers how all of the rules and constrictions found in the game of football caused him to stop playing his sophomore year of high school.

For now, however, he enjoys the sense of peace the men of Bravo are experiencing. The boys are yelled at to get off the field and, after they do, they participate in a taped TV announcement where they wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Norm and Sgt. Dime have a conversation about how Albert is helping them to secure a movie deal. Norm mentions that he thinks it is "nutty" to have Hilary Swank playing the role of Billy/Sgt. Dime and he talks about a movie role of Hilary Swank's that he doesn't like. Sgt. Dime points out that he's talking about Jamie Lee Curtis.

Chapter 10 finds the men of Bravo squad visiting the Dallas Cowboys locker room. Billy and A-bort discuss the massive size of the players and Billy believes that America is the only country that could grow people this large. The squad gathers autographs from the players, although Billy notices that the players and the coaches aren't too thrilled about this. Billy stays back from the rest of the squad at first because he feels that getting autographs is pointless however, when one of the players is standing next to him, he feels it would be rude not to ask for his autograph. He proceeds to gather more autographs and, when he gets to Octavian Spurgeon, he ends up having a somewhat lengthy conversation with him and, eventually, other players that join them.



Octavian asks Billy about his experiences in Iraq and seems to focus particularly on what weapons Billy uses and what affects each of the weapons has. Billy answers all of their questions but, when he starts to feel uncomfortable, he excuses himself from the conversation. Billy finally gets time alone with Sgt. Dime and asks him how he can keep from losing Faison. Sgt. Dime tells him that there's no hope of not losing her, that they are back on duty later tonight, that she was probably just being nice and that he should get her email. Billy knows that Sgt. Dime is right but he can't help but feel that his connection with Faison was real. Sgt. Dime and Billy are taken on a tour of the equipment room by the equipment manager, Ennis.

As Ennis explains all of the specific equipment and the amount of equipment they use, Billy thinks again that this could only happen in America. When the players have two minutes before the game, Octavian and few other players call Billy over to their group. Octavian asks how he and these players can help in what the Bravo squad is doing. Billy tells them that they have to join the Army if they want to do something extreme. Octavian and the others laugh, stating that there's no reason to leave the job they already have.

Chapters 9-10, Jamie Lee Curtis Made a Shitty Movie, XXL Analysis

Chapter 9 begins by continuing to develop Albert's struggle to turn Bravo's story into a movie. Through Albert's communications, it seems that many of the people in Hollywood who were once interested in being a part of the project are no longer interested and it seems that there is at least one person in Hollywood, if not more, who do not believe that the Bravo story is true. Someone who does seem interested in investing in the story is Norm, although he is not yet interested enough to give them any money. Also in chapter 9, Billy is looking to confide in Sgt. Dime about what happened with Faison and to ask him what he should do now.

Sgt. Dime, however, appears to be low-energy and Billy knows that it's not the right time. What he does instead, however, is engage Sgt. Dime and the others in running around the field, passing footballs to one another. In Chapter 10, Billy and the men of Bravo get to go inside the Dallas Cowboys locker room and meet the players. Billy is in awe over the size of the players, how much money it takes to feed them and how much equipment they use.

Billy gets into a conversation with a few of the players about what his experience in war has been like, what weapons he uses and what damage each weapon causes. Billy seems to be uncomfortable with this discussion, however, as he seems to feel uncomfortable any time someone asks him to discuss any aspect of the war. Billy finally gets the chance to talk with Sgt. Dime about Faison but he gets an answer he didn't want: having a relationship with her is hopeless.



Chapters 11-12, This Is Everything There Is, Billy and Mango are Out for a Walk

Chapters 11-12, This Is Everything There Is, Billy and Mango are Out for a Walk Summary

Chapter 11 begins with Billy giving his autographed football away to an underprivileged child. When the Bravo squad arrives to the owner's suite, Norm gives a speech about how proud everyone is to have them as their guests and Billy notices that, unlike other audiences he's spoken to today, this audience seems to be intently listening to Norm. Billy meets March Hawey, a Texas millionaire, and March tells him what it meant to watch the Bravo squad in action in the canal. There is a group of people hovering around him now, asking him if he was scared to go into battle, and Billy does the best he can to give them an answer that they will appreciate and that will make them stop asking questions.

Billy thinks about how Shroom told him to watch Sgt. Dime because of "he knows how to see in the dark" and Billy remembers the time that Sgt. Dime has always made them go out into the streets, despite its dangers. As the group of people continues to talk about whether or not it's good for the American morale to keep pressing the issue of terror and how 9/11 changed the country, Norm interjects and states that Billy is a hero. He also says that he heard Billy was up for a Medal of Honor but that the Pentagon shut it down. Billy knows that it was Albert who told him this and he is upset that he did so.

Sgt. Dime tells Billy to watch himself around March Hawey because he is rich, famous and tied in with the people who make the decisions about who the real enemies of America are. As the national anthem is sung, Billy thinks about Faison and how he wants to keep a connection with her. When Bravo sits down to watch the game, they all agree that being heroes is exhausting. Billy spends the rest of the game watching Faison. During a thought-provoking conversation about business with March, Billy sees Faison on the Jumbotron and can't help but moan. March seems to know exactly what Billy's thinking.

Billy and the rest of the Bravo squad have to leave the owner's suite after the first quarter because Norm is expecting more guests. They return to their seats in the stands and Billy sees that he has two text messages, one from his sister and one from Past Rick, a pastor he confided in on a whim after one of Bravo's rallies. Billy remembers how he felt the need to talk about Shroom's death and how he couldn't quite explain how Shroom's death changed him. Billy shares that he feels he loved Shroom so much at the time of his death that he can't imagine ever loving someone that much again- so what is the point of marriage and children? Billy's thoughts are interrupted by Mango being restless in his seat.



Billy knows that being back out in the stands is harder for Bravo because they are back in the midst of their fans and they have to constantly talk to people. Overwhelmed by the thoughts and the emotional strength needed to have a gracious composure at all times, Billy decides to go see Faison and he invites Mango to go with him. Billy takes Mango to the end of the field where Faison is standing and he talks to her while standing on the front-row walkway. They have a great conversation and share laughs when Billy mimics her dance moves. But the fun is ended when security guards tell Billy and Mango to leave the area.

Sensing that Faison is scared of a scene, Billy and Mango leave after Billy agrees to meet Faison at halftime. Mango tells Billy that he should be as intimate as possible with Faison before they are redeployed because she will likely not remember him when he gets back. Just then, Billy receives a call from A-bort who tells them that Sgt. Dime is angry and wants them back as soon as possible. Then A-bort tells Billy that he doesn't even want to know what they are going to have to do at halftime.

Chapters 11-12, This Is Everything There Is, Billy and Mango are Out for a Walk Analysis

In Chapter 11, the Bravo squad is escorted to the owner's suite to watch the game. It is there that Billy meets March Hawey, a Texas millionaire who is impressed with Bravo's actions in the canal. As March and his friends share their thoughts about the war and about the way the situation in the Middle East is being portrayed by the American Media, Billy is put on the spot again about his actions in the war, if he was scared, etc. As with every other time he's been asked about the war, Billy feels slightly uncomfortable and he looks for the most pleasing, as well as the shortest, answer.

By this point in the book, it is clear that Billy is quieter, more observant and more reserved with his thoughts and emotions than the other members of Bravo. As such, the reader is not surprised when Billy is upset that Norm announces his chance at the Medal of Honor that was denied by the Pentagon. Billy and the rest of Bravo appear tired of the Victory Tour and the attention by this point and so Billy focuses his attention on Faison. Even though Sgt. Dime told Billy that he shouldn't have any hopes of having a relationship with Faison, Billy can't help but think that his connection with her was real.

Billy's thoughts about their connection are confirmed in chapter 12 when he goes down to the front row to see her. Mango tells Billy that their connection is obvious, although he too says that he should do what he can with Faison now because she won't remember him when he gets back. Billy can't find it in himself to give up the hope that he can have a relationship with Faison. Chapter 12 ends with A-bort telling Billy that he doesn't want to know what they'll have to do at halftime.



Chapters 13-14, Raped by Angels, If In The Future You Tell Me This Is Love, I Will Not Disappoint You

Chapters 13-14, Raped by Angels, If In The Future You Tell Me This Is Love, I Will Not Disappoint You Summary

In Chapter 13, the Bravo squad is on the field, getting ready for the halftime show. Billy knows they are likely in trouble when he realizes that Load is past drunk because they are going to be performing drill during the halftime show. There are several high school bands, twirlers, drum lines and ROTC squads that are ready to perform in the halftime show as well and, when Destiny's Child comes on the field and begins to perform, the show gets started. Through Billy's perspective, the show contains the "proverbial cast of thousands" and it is clear that he and the other men of the Bravo squad are overwhelmed by the scene.

When the fireworks and other loud sounds begin, Billy wonders if the producers of the halftime show know that they have created a large trigger for PTSD and he notices that many of the Bravo squad are struggling with the environment. As they perform their drill, Billy takes the scene in and deems it ridiculous, with the money spent, the noise of the crowds, the hectic nature of the show and the sexual choreography. All of the commotion and obscenities of the show cause Billy to think the god or gods in people's heads live in the place that is so horrifying "that it has to be called divine." When they come off the field, the men of the Bravo squad learn that they will do more drill onto the stage and then stand there for the rest of the performance.

As they are placed into position to do so, Beyonce steps off stage close to Billy and he admires all of the talents that make her a world-class performer. They make brief eye contact and, although Billy thinks he and Beyonce make some type of connection, she is back on stage before he can derive any meaning from their eye contact. As Billy comes onto the stage, he just wishes for the show to be over. He finds Faison across the field and then looks up into the sky, letting the sleet on his face help him escape to a more peaceful place.

After the half-time show in chapter 14, no one comes to tell them where to go next, as they were promised, so they remain on stage as the rest of the show begins to get taken down. They are told by the roadie foreman that they have to leave but they remain where they are. Several of the Bravo squad are visibly shaken by the halftime show, notably Skyes, who begins to cry, and Billy, who tells Sgt. Dime that he isn't feeling well. Sgt. Dime tells Billy that he looks fine but Billy says it's more like he feels



rattled from the halftime show. When Sgt. Dime tells Billy to look at it as just another normal day in America, Billy says that he's not even sure what normal is anymore.

The roadie foreman returns and tells Bravo again that they have to leave. When Crack says that they don't know where to go because no one told them, the foreman rudely tells them that he doesn't know where they should go either but they can't stay on the stage. Crack answers back with a disrespectful comment and, before long, Crack and the foreman engage in a headlock battle that eventually turns into a fight that includes the stage crew and Bravo. Bravo immediately disengages from the fight when the police arrive and their injuries are minimal. As they head off down the field, Billy's heart begins to race when he sees Faison heading towards them. She is concerned about their welfare and begins to ask for details as other cheerleaders approach.

Faison states that other guests have had trouble with the stage crew and the cheerleaders begin tending to the injuries that some of the Bravo squad have sustained. Faison begins to ask Billy about his redeployment and she is sympathetic to the fact that they have already been over there and now have to go back. She and Billy share a sentiment that maybe the war should be over now that Saddam is dead. Then Faison asks if Billy is seeing anyone and, when he says no, she says she isn't either. Faison asks to exchange information with Billy, stating she doesn't want to lose him, and Billy can't be happier.

Chapters 13-14, Raped by Angels, If In The Future You Tell Me This Is Love, I Will Not Disappoint You

Analysis

Chapter 13 focuses on the halftime show that has been referenced throughout the book to this point. Billy knows that the Bravo squad is not in the best physical or mental shape to perform drill during the halftime show but they all try their best to pull it together anyway. However, when they get out on the field and the halftime show begins, the Bravo squad becomes immediately overwhelmed and many of them, including Billy, feel triggered by the loud noises and the randomness of the show. As they participate in the show, Billy is both amazed and disgusted that this show is taking place. He is unable to understand why so much time and effort has been put into making the show so large and so sexual. Throughout the show, Billy compares the reality of the war to the reality of the halftime show and he and the other Bravo squad members do their best to keep up with the show.

In Chapter 14, Bravo struggles to recover from the halftime show. It affected them so much that they don't even care anymore that they were within inches of Destiny's Child. Sykes is crying but doesn't know why and Billy feels extremely rattled by the show, although Sgt. Dime tells him that he's ok. Forgotten by the show's managers, they remain on the stage until the foreman roadie tells them they have to leave. Due to the foreman's disrespectful attitude, Bravo gets into a fight with the entire stage crew. Afterwards, Faison tells Bravo that many other guests have had trouble with the stage

crew but she tells Billy something even better: she's single, too, and she wants to stay in touch so she doesn't lose him.



Chapters 15-16, Temporary Sanity, Will Slay Vampires for Food

Chapters 15-16, Temporary Sanity, Will Slay Vampires for Food Summary

The Bravo squad meets up with Josh, one of their event coordinators, at the beginning of chapter 15. Josh apologizes profusely for leaving them stranded after the halftime show but Bravo forgives him immediately. When Josh has no details about a possible after party with Destiny's Child, he takes them to the concourse in the stadium instead, where the Bravo squad members call their families. Billy calls Kathryn but Patty answers instead. She tells him how proud the whole family is of him and gives him a hard time about not meeting Beyonce. When Kathryn gets on the phone, she steps outside and tells Billy that she heard about how he told Patty not to let her son, Brian, join the Army.

Kathryn says that she talked a group of lawyers in Austin who specialize in helping people get out of the military and that they are very interested in helping a war hero like Billy. Kathryn tells Billy that members of the group could meet him at the stadium and take him to a 10-thousand acre ranch where he would "disappear" until the lawyers worked everything out. Even though Billy says that he would be considered AWOL, Kathryn feels sure that the government wouldn't press charges on him because he's a decorated war hero. Billy tells her that he wants to go back with the rest of his squad and Kathryn tells him that she gave the lawyer group his number. As Kathryn gives the phone to their mom, Billy thinks about what it would be like for his family if he didn't come back. He decides that he would be particularly hard for his mother.

Billy talks briefly with his mom and, when she begins to rush him off the phone, he knows she doesn't mean anything by it and he decides to let her go and let her be. After getting off the phone, Billy realizes that he's grief-stricken and that part of him is scared that he will not come back from Iraq. He hopes that he has the chance to experience the certain salvation that soldiers can get when they learn to enjoy daily life.

Chapter 16 begins with Bravo going back into the stands. Unlike other fans, who are leaving because of the freezing cold weather and the ice that's starting to materialize on the seats, the Bravo squad must bear the elements while watching the game. As Billy and Mango talk about what happened to Mango's ear in the fight, Billy tells Mango that he thinks he's in love. Mango tells Billy how obvious it is that Faison like Billy and he is proud of Billy for getting her phone number. Billy is startled when his cell phone rings but it's not Faison.

He waits for a voicemail and, when he listens to it, he learns that it's the lawyer group from Austin calling to talk about how they could help him make a change if he wants to. Billy thinks about what Shroom would do and knows that he would go back to Iraq, but



somehow Billy feels different from Shroom and questions if being in the Army is still the stage of life he's in. The message paints a picture of a remote and secure place and Billy imagines himself in that place with Faison. When Sykes' screeching brings him back to reality, Billy notices that Load is asleep, despite having no covering from the weather. A nice woman sitting in front of Bravo can't believe that they have no protection from weather and she puts a Snuggie on him. Minutes later, Bravo puts a sign on him that says "homeless vet- will slay vampires for food."

Mango again encourages Billy to do as much as possible with Faison before they leave, as she will likely lose interest in him before they get back. Billy gets a text from Kathryn begging him not to go back and Billy listens to the lawyer's message again, deciding that the man had a nice voice. Billy asks Sgt. Dime if he would go back, had he the choice, and Sgt. Dime only answers that he doesn't have a choice. Sgt. Dime gets a phone call suddenly and asks Billy if he's available to meet with Norm, telling him that rich people are crazy and to never forget it.

Chapters 15-16, Temporary Sanity, Will Slay Vampires for Food Analysis

In Chapter 15, Billy talks on the phone with his family and has an important conversation with his sister, Kathryn. Kathryn is continuing to urge Billy not to go back to Iraq and she tells him that she's been in touch with a group of lawyers in Austin who could help Billy get out of the Army if he wanted to. Although Billy tells her that he would be AWOL if he did this and that he wants to go back with his squad, Billy's thoughts throughout the book and responses during their conversation seem to indicate that he is more conflicted about going back than he's led others to believe.

Billy has an important realization in his relationship with his mom as well: that she maintains certain behaviors in order to survive her situation and that trying to press the issue of getting real emotion at this point would be mean. At the end of chapter 15, Billy has a new development in the desires of his life as well when he realizes that he would like the chance to experience the peace and healing that comes from learning to enjoy everyday life.

In Chapter 16, Billy continues to think about Faison and how to keep a relationship with her, even though no one else seems to think that having a relationship with her is a possibility. Billy receives a call from the lawyers in Austin and he can't help but picture what his life would be like with Faison on a secluded, secure ranch. Chapter 16 ends with Sgt. Dime inviting Billy to attend a meeting with Norm and the text suggests that the meeting has to do with the movie.



Chapters 17-18, Money Makes Us Real, The Proud Good-Bye

Chapters 17-18, Money Makes Us Real, The Proud Good-Bye Summary

Billy and Sgt. Dime meet up with Albert in the hallway outside of Norm's suite in chapter 17. Albert tells them that Norm is inspired not only to fund their movie but to create his own movie production company that he will call Legends. Sgt. Dime and Billy are excited until they learn that Norm wants to deal only with Billy and Sgt. Dime and leave the others out, which Billy and Sgt. Dime immediately turn down. Albert says that if all of Bravo is involved and, because there are ten Bravo men, Norm's offer is to pay each of the Bravo men \$5500 at the start, with a second payment later, rather than the lump sum of \$100,000 each that Albert promised them they could get when they started talking about making the movie. Both Billy and Sgt. Dime feel that Bravo is being treated badly in this deal but Sgt. Dime eventually agrees to speak with Norm about the deal since it's the only offer they have.

When they enter into Norm's "war room," he and his sons are there along with several rich executives. They talk amongst themselves about the football players but, when they begin talking about the movie deal, it is clear to Billy and Sgt. Dime that they are being condescending and that they are not taking Bravo's perspective seriously. Sgt. Dime asks why he should believe that Norm is a real player in the industry and can get it done, as well as where the money will come from. When it's clear that Norm is going to continue being arrogant about the deal, Sgt. Dime has a verbal outburst, offending Norm's team, and he and Billy leave.

In a separate room, Albert has a hard time calming Sgt. Dime down. In the middle of Sgt. Dime's rant, Billy sees a text from Kathryn telling him that a car is being sent to the stadium for him and he should get in it. When Sgt. Dime and Billy return to the meeting, Sgt. Dime speaks with General Ruthven, who was contacted by Norm, and then leaves, with Billy following close behind. Sgt. Dime says that General Ruthven is a Steeler's fan and gave him permission not to take Norm's deal.

Chapter 18 begins with Billy wondering why they should make a movie at all since news crews were there and filmed the actual attack. Bravo talks about how Albert treated them wrong, especially considering all of the money he has. Faison sends Billy a text asking to meet after the game and Billy replies yes and asks where but he doesn't get an answer. One of the guys sitting in front of Bravo starts making provocative comments to Crack and they enter into a banter and Billy wishes they would stop. He thinks about his fantasy of living with Faison on the secluded ranch but, this time, he includes the fact that he would miss his Bravo brothers and feel guilty for not being there with them.



Then Billy gets a text from Kathryn saying that the car is at the stadium and he should call them. Billy wonders again what Shroom would do and he knows that he has very little time to figure it out. Crack and the guy in front of him, Travis, continue their banter until Crack puts Travis in a carotid choke. When Sgt. Dime returns to the stands, he says that it's time to go. Billy texts Faison a location and is happy when she texts him back and says she'll meet him there. Albert meets up with Bravo and says that he's going to keep trying to get the movie deal. He pulls Billy aside and says that he will contact Billy anytime Sgt. Dime refuses to talk to him and Billy agrees. As Billy looks through the crowd for Faison, he sees the roadies coming and, before he knows it, he and the Bravo squad are being jumped by the roadies who have wrenches, irons, etc.

After the cops have ended the fight, Billy gets a call from Faison and he gives her directions to where he is. They embrace and kiss for a long period of time and she shares her sadness that he has to go back. When Billy mentions running away with her, her look lets him know that it's not going to happen and Billy finally accepts that he is going back to Iraq. She says that she'll wait for him and that he can stay with her in the spring but, as they say goodbye and Billy gets in the limo to leave, he has a feeling that he'll never see Faison again. But he hopes he's wrong.

Chapters 17-18, Money Makes Us Real, The Proud Good-Bye Analysis

Chapters 17 and 18 bring an end to the book and provide closure for each of the story lines. Chapter 17 focuses mostly on the making of Bravo's story into a movie, something that movie producer Albert has been trying to do throughout the book. Sgt. Dime and Billy learn that Norm is not only wants to fund their movie but that he's going to start his own movie production company called Legends. But Sgt. Dime and Billy's excitement about this opportunity quickly fades when they learn that Norm would rather not use all of the Bravo men but that, if he does, he's going to pay them each significantly less than what they've been expecting.

After Sgt. Dime isn't able to strike a better deal with Norm, he has a verbal outburst and leaves the room. During Sgt. Dime's fall out, Billy gets a text from Kathryn saying that a car is being sent to the stadium and all he has to do is get in. Even though Norm contacted Bravo's chain of command, Sgt. Dime is given permission by the General to turn down Norm's deal, although Albert vows to continue working on getting the deal he knows they deserve. In chapter 18, Billy finds himself confused on what to do about staying in the Army.

Kathryn sends him another text saying that a car is at the stadium and, although Billy is tempted to leave and have a life with Faison on a secluded ranch, he knows that he would miss his Bravo brothers and feel guilty for not being there with them. He knows that he has to go back to Iraq and this is confirmed when he mentions to Faison that he could run away with her and she looks confused. Billy says goodbye to her and joins the rest of Bravo in the limo that will take them back to war. As much as he's hopes he's wrong, Billy has the feeling that he will never see Faison again.



Characters

Billy Lynn

Although part of the 10-member Bravo squad featured in the book, Billy clearly stands out as the main character and the majority of the book is told through his perspective. From the first few chapters of the book, it is clear to the reader that Billy is older and wiser than his age of 19 and that he is quieter, more observant and more reserved with his thoughts and feelings than the other members of the Bravo squad. The reader also gets a clear sense in the first few chapters that Billy's life and perspective have been completely changed because of his participation in the war and this change of perspective is developed throughout the entire book.

It seems that Billy's perspective on life is not a particularly positive one due to his experiences as a soldier. His experiences in Iraq have caused him to question many things around him including business, the constant support and love of the American people and his ability to have a meaningful and loving relationship with a wife and kids one day. Billy's constant questioning of whether or not events taking place in the book are real compared to his experiences in the war suggests that he will likely have a hard time adjusting to life after the war, although he makes it clear that he hopes he has the chance to experience the joys of everyday life. Also seen throughout the book is Billy's struggle to be the war hero that America tells him he is.

He doesn't seem to understand the obsession with being a war hero that American people seem to have and he finds the pressures of being a hero to be quite exhausting. The reader is able to notice a change in Billy's thoughts and perspectives, however, when he meets Faison and immediately desires a future with her. The thought of having a relationship with Faison after the war seems to add hope to Billy's perspective, despite the reality that he must go back to Iraq.

Staff Sgt. David Dime

Sgt. Dime is one of the sergeants in Bravo squad. He is described as a well-read 24-year-old college dropout from North Carolina. The Bravo squad has heard rumors about him receiving golf scholarships in college and of him being a star quarterback in high school, although Sgt. Dime denies these claims. He is also presented in the book as a no-nonsense personality that commands the attention of everyone in the room.

Sgt. Dime is an important character throughout the book because he is so well-respected among the Bravo squad and, in particular, by Billy. Billy seems to look up to Sgt. Dime in a way and there are several times throughout the book that Billy tries to observe, learn from and mimic Sgt. Dime's behaviors. Billy also seems determined not to disappoint Sgt. Dime in any way and Sgt. Dime makes it clear that he trusts and depends on Billy in a way that he doesn't with the other members of the squad.



Billy also seems to have an enormous amount of trust in Sgt. Dime as well, as he mentions several times that he would follow Sgt. Dime anywhere and often confides in him about personal matters such as his relationship with Faison and, indirectly, his thoughts about leaving the Army. Sgt. Dime is also essential in the plot of Bravo's story being made into a movie because he seems to be the main negotiator and he ultimately keeps Bravo from being cheated out of money they deserve.

Faison Zorn

Faison is one of the famed Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders and, during one of Billy's press conferences, she makes eye contact with him and an instant connection is formed between the two of them. She is described as having strawberry-blonde hair, beautiful eyes, charming freckles and a body that men would cry over. Faison makes a point to find Billy after the press conference and they further their connection by talking about her journey to becoming a Christian, feeling that God led her to Billy and becoming physical almost immediately.

Both Billy and Faison admit that they have never before felt so strongly about someone they have just met and their first encounter, although short, changes Billy right away. After meeting Faison, Billy's focus shifts and he begins thinking about how he can make a long-term relationship last with her. Faison's character is important because she provides a sense of hope and motivation for Billy in many areas of his life. Her presence in his life also seems to cause Billy to seriously consider leaving the Army.

While their connection was strong, it became clear by the end of the book that Billy felt he needed to go back to Iraq and that Faison wouldn't have considered running away with him anyway because of her desire to focus on her career. Faison promised to stay in touch with Billy, to house him when he returns home on furlough and to pick up their relationship when he returns for good. But when he joins Bravo in their departure for Iraq, Billy doubts that he will ever see her again, although he hopes he's wrong.

Sgt. Breem

Shroom was one of the sergeants in the Bravo squad who was killed in action in the Al-Ansakar Canal. He plays an important role in the story because of the large impact his life and death had on Billy. Billy reveals that he was with Shroom right before and right after he was shot and that he watched Shroom die in his arms. That moment was extremely difficult and meaningful for Billy because he felt that he loved Shroom so much in that moment that he could never love anyone like that again, causing him to wonder if there was any point in his trying to have a family.

Billy thinks of Shroom's death throughout the book and it is clear that he is still processing his grief about the situation. Through Billy's memories, the reader also learns that Billy and Shroom were fairly close before Shroom's death, as Billy thinks back on many of their conversations and uses what he feels Shroom would do as a guide to making decisions in his own life.



Marcellino

Mango is another member of the Bravo squad and he appears to be Billy's closest friend in the squad. Throughout the book, Billy and Mango go on several walks together throughout the stadium and they seem to share a connection and an understanding that rises above words. Mango also seems to be Billy's confidant, as he shares many of his thoughts and emotions with him, and Mango appears to feel comfortable doing the same with Billy.

Although Mango's devotion to the Army seems a little deeper and more unshakable than Billy's, Mango is also found in the book urging someone else to think hard before joining the Army and he seems exhausted by being labeled and treated like a hero as well. Mango is one of the first squad members to know about Billy's relationship with Faison. Although he encourages Billy to have as much of a relationship with Faison as he can before they redeploy, he tries to help Billy understand that, realistically, there is little hope for a long-term relationship with her.

Staff Sgt. Kellum Holliday

Day is a sergeant in the Bravo squad, although no one refers to him as sergeant throughout the book. Day's character is not developed much during the book but his presence is seen mostly in dialogue that involves all of the Bravo members.

Lodis

This is a member of the Bravo squad whose character is also not developed fully but whose presence is found in several passages that involves all of the Bravo members.

Brian

This is a member of the Bravo squad who seems to be one of the members that makes many wisecracks. His character is not developed fully but he is present during several passages of dialogue between Bravo members.

Robert Earl Koch

This is a member of the Bravo squad whose character appears to be sarcastic, fearless, and ready for a fight at any time and he starts at least two fights in the book. Crack's character is not fully developed but his character can be seen in the fight scenes and in the dialogue that involved all of the Bravo members.



Kenneth Sykes

This is a member of the Bravo squad whose character is not fully developed but who is present in the dialogue that involves all of the Bravo members. What the reader does learn about Sykes early in the book that Sykes is married and has children, that he maxed out his credit card on porn, that Sgt. Dime put him on a tight budget and that he likes to place bets. Sykes also seems to be particularly affected after the half-time show.

Lake

This is a member of the Bravo squad who was seriously wounded during the war and who is not on tour with the rest of the squad. He is only mentioned occasionally throughout the book.

Major McLaurin

Major Mac is the public affairs (PA) escort for the Bravo squad during their Victory Tour. He is described as looking "every inch the idea Joe." However, since he was blown up twice on his first day at war, he has profound hearing loss and is prone to spells of disassociation. The Bravo squad sees him as an enigma and he is absent throughout most of the book.

Albert Ratner

Albert is the movie producer that has been accompanying Bravo while on the Victory Tour in an effort to turn their story into a movie. He is described as late fifties and big-boned and the text suggests that he has many high-end connections in Hollywood. Albert's character is displayed as fearless, ruthless and willing to do what it takes to get the job done, although he has a clear affection for Bravo.

Kathryn

This is Billy's older sister. She is described as beautiful, smart, and motivated. She plays a large part in the story because she seems to be one of the only people Billy will truly open up to in conversation and because she contacts a group of Austin lawyers about helping Billy get out of the Army, which she strongly encourages him to do. Chapter 2 also reveals that Kathryn was in a near-death car accident, after which her fiancé ended their engagement. Billy then destroyed her ex-fiance's car, which led to a plea bargain that included him having to join the Army.



Patty

This is Billy's other older sister. They do not seem to have as close of a connection but their relationship seems good overall.

Pete

This is Patty's husband. He is mentioned only briefly in the book.

Brian

This is Patty's son and Billy's nephew. Billy spends some quality time with him while at home and he tells Patty to make sure that he does not join the Army.

Denise

She is Billy's mom. Billy has a good relationship with her. Denise is portrayed as the woman who does whatever it takes to keep her family together, although it's clear she's stressed out by financial and marital problems.

Ray

He is Billy's father. They are not close. Ray's character was portrayed as unloving, unaccepting, selfish and opinionated. He was described as semi-famous local musician who lived out of town to work, had affairs and has a teenage daughter with another woman. He had a double stroke that left him in a wheelchair and unable to speak, which has now caused a huge financial and emotional burden on the family.

Norman

This is the owner of the Dallas Cowboys. He is described as highly disliked by many that follow sports, although he is also described as a brilliant business man. Billy seems impressed by him throughout most of the book however, when Norm starts his own movie production company and tries to underpay Bravo for their story, Billy and the rest of Bravo dislike Norm as well.

Josh

This is an event coordinator/host at Texas Stadium on the day of Bravo's half-time show. He was described as young, good-looking and too nice for his own good. Bravo joked with him often and liked him overall.



Pastor Rick

This is the pastor that did the invocation at one of Bravo's rallies on their tour. In a moment of desperation to talk with someone, Billy spoke with Pastor Rick about the war and Shroom's death. He continues to text Billy but Billy wants Pastor Rick to leave him alone.

March Hawey

This is a Texas millionaire that Billy meets during the game. Billy has a stimulating conversation with him about business and Sgt. Dime tells Billy that he should be careful around March because of all the important people he knows.



Objects/Places

Texas Stadium

This is the main setting of the book.

Stovall, Texas

This is Billy's hometown and the place where his family still lives.

Al-Ansakar Canal

This is the place of conflict with the insurgents where Bravo had a large victory and became war heroes.

The War in Iraq

This is where Billy and the rest of Bravo will redeploy.

The Victory Tour

This is Bravo's two-week tour around the country to celebrate their victory in the Al-Ansakar Canal.

Bravo Squad

This is the name of the group of men featured in the book. Technically, they are the Bravo Company, second platoon, first squad.

The Silver Star

This is the decoration earned by Billy for his actions in the Al-Ansakar Canal.

Dallas Cowboys Locker Room

This place is visited by Bravo.

Memories of War

This is something Billy experiences regularly throughout the book.

Themes

Brotherhood

It is evident from the beginning of the book that the men of the Bravo squad have an unbreakable bond of brotherhood. Although they are very different in character, the men of Bravo share one thing in common that possibly no one else could understand: their experiences in the Iraq war and more specifically, in the Al-Ansakar Canal. The effects of the bonds of brotherhood can be seen throughout the book in many ways.

The effects can most easily be seen in the sense of family, comfort and trust that exists for each member of the Bravo squad. The way that the members of Bravo depend on one another, look up to one another, are respectful and loyal to each other and look out for one another is also a sign of the brotherhood in Bravo. The members of Bravo are able to communicate using only their looks, they share inside jokes and it is clear that they would do anything for one another.

The bond of brotherhood is so strong between them that despite Billy's growing desire to leave the Army and make a life with Faison, he is unable to imagine his life without the Bravo squad. Furthermore, he knows that if he did not redeploy, he would mourn their absence and feel guilty for not being there to fight alongside of them in the war. It is this bond of brotherhood that gets Billy through his experiences in the Army and that ultimately leads him to leave Faison behind to redeploy.

Being in a War Changes Your Life Forever

One point that Billy makes throughout the book is that his life has been changed forever because of being in the war. Throughout the book, Billy is seen questioning whether or not events in the book, including buffet dinners, halftime shows, greeting fans, being on tour, etc., are real compared to what he's seen and done in the war. He talks about how being in the war has caused him to have a fear of big things, i.e. stadiums and buildings, and how he now questions the intricate details of things work, especially business and economics.

Billy questions whether or not there is any point to him searching for love, getting married and starting a family because he felt he loved someone so much at the time of their death in the war that he didn't know if he could ever love someone that much again. Billy is found throughout the book constantly flooded with memories of the war, causing him difficulty in focusing and participating in conversations.

While with his family, he notices that, in a drastic change from several months ago, he actually wants to stay with them and spend more time with them. He notices that the war has matured him as well, causing others to think he is wiser than his years. Despite the many challenges he faces because of his experiences in the war, through his

relationship with Faison Billy realizes that he hopes to have the chance to experience joy in everyday life.

Being a Hero is Hard Work

From the first page of the book the reader is introduced to what it's like for Billy and the men of Bravo to heroes. Although they appreciate the support, while on the Victory Tour, they have experienced extremely fanatical Americans who demand their attention, ask them emotionally difficult questions, inadvertently cause them to relive their experiences in the war and shower them with undying love, support and attention. Throughout their dinners, press conferences and random interactions with Americans, Billy finds it difficult to understand their reactions and enthusiasm.

He finds himself adopting the facial expressions and postures of actors seen in American TV and movies because it is much easier than trying to figure out how to act. During his interactions with fans and supporters, Billy regularly finds himself feeling uncomfortable with their questions and with the fact that he has to provide an appropriate answer. Billy often looks for a response that will please them but that will also make them stop asking questions. As the book progresses, Billy's patience, motivation and energy to create what he calls "Moments" with supporters wanes and he finds himself overwhelmed with the attention and questions.

He begins to look for ways to escape these events and he one of his fellow Bravo members, Mango, begins to join him. Towards the end of the book, it is clear that all of the Bravo members feel exhausted and overwhelmed with being a hero and, when they leave the stadium to go back to war, several of the members seem relieved to be going back to war, to a place that makes sense to them and where they are free from the unfamiliar pressures of being heroes.

Style

Point of View

"Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" is written from a third-person perspective. The author is successful in creating several main characters and a variety of secondary characters and, while most of author's focus seems to be developing Billy's character, the author is also able to provide vivid descriptions of the other characters as well, despite the number of lines or scenes they may have throughout the story. For the characters that the author does focus on developing, such as Billy, Sgt. Dime, Mango and Norm, the reader gets a clear sense of who each character is, how they reason and how they feel. Although he doesn't fully develop all of the characters in the Bravo squad, the author's use of clear and descriptive language allows the reader to get a sense of what Bravo feels as a whole.

The author's personal writing style also allows the reader to relate easily with the characters and to experience their fears, joys, disappointments and losses, causing the reader to form a strong connection with the characters. Because the author uses the dialogue to reflect the perspectives of the main character, the point of view is mostly that of young American military men. Although each man in the Bravo squad comes from a different background and upbringing, they share a common viewpoint on many different subjects. It is clear that each man's perspective has changed from serving in the military and from being in the war.

Setting

"Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" takes place mainly in Texas Stadium, home of the Dallas Cowboys, as the Bravo squad is being honored during several dinners and a halftime show. Billy describes Texas Stadium as more run down than he expected, although he is able to see how it would have been magnificent when it first opened. While at the stadium, the Bravo squad participates in events that take place in several different locations including a dining hall, the Dallas Cowboys locker and equipment room, the stands, the field at halftime, the owner's suite and the "war room," an even more exclusive suite where Norm and his executives sometimes watch the game, discuss player statistics and make trading decisions.

Another place mentioned throughout the book is Stovall, Texas, Billy's hometown and the continued location of his family home. In one of the chapters, Billy visits Stovall in order to see his family before being redeployed. Faison's grandmother is also from Stovall. As mentioned in the book, the Bravo squad is home from the war in Iraq, where they became war heroes because of their successful efforts to stop the insurgents. While at home, they are participating in the Victory Tour, which has taken them around the county in a span of two weeks.



Another important part of the setting is that it's Thanksgiving Day. This contributes to the visualization of what their meal was like, about the fact that they were participating in true Americana- football on Thanksgiving Day-, and to what the overall feel of the American people was.

Language and Meaning

"Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" is an adult novel aimed primarily at adult males. The book contains numerous sexual references, disrespectful/inappropriate sexual comments made towards various people and multiple descriptions of various sexual acts. The language throughout the book is straightforward, although the author makes regular use of inappropriate language. Occasionally, the sentences could be seen as rambling and they seemed to change direction without warning sometimes however, because the story is being told through the perspective of a young American war hero, the language and writing style could be representative of the fact that the main character also feels somewhat lost and jumbled at times. The sentences also tended to be moderately long but they were highly descriptive. While there is not a large amount of hidden meaning in the text, the author uses some foreshadowing and ends several chapters in a "cliff-hanger."

The story contains a fairly good balance between dialogue, descriptive text and passages that illuminated Billy's thoughts, feelings and reasoning. While the author's writing style and use of language can sometimes make the story difficult to follow but, overall, the story was easy to comprehend. Although there are several uses of military lingo throughout the book, the author makes sure to explain the lingo for the reader. Although the story is told using the third person perspective, the author's use of vivid language and descriptions allows the reader to fully relate with the characters in the story, particularly Billy. The author also uses realistic and believable language for the setting and characters, adding to the reader's ability to relate to the story.

Structure

"Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" is three hundred and seven pages long. It is divided into nineteen named chapters. Several of the chapters are fairly long so the reader may find it difficult to read more than three chapters in a sitting without becoming fatigued. "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" is a stimulating read built around a relatively straightforward plot with a number of subplots that are developed as well.

The first thirteen chapters of the book focus on introducing the characters and developing the main plot and subplots of the story. The reader learns that the Bravo squad is a squad of American war heroes, home from the war in Iraq, that are participating in a Victory Tour after successfully stopping insurgents at the Al-Ansakar Canal. A movie producer is also trying to turn their story into a movie, although he is ultimately unsuccessful. Throughout these first chapters, the reader gets to know the



overall mood and viewpoint of the Bravo squad, as well as Billy's perspective, experiences and family.

Chapter 7 introduces a new element into the story, Billy's connection with Faison, and his connection and desire to have a relationship with her. Billy's relationship with Faison begins to change his overall outlook and perspective on redeployment and the events leading up to the halftime show as well.

Chapters 13 and 14 contain the climax of the book because the Bravo squad participates in the halftime show, which triggers negative war memories, and because Billy learns that Faison returns his feelings. Throughout the rest of the book, Billy and the other Bravo squad members grow tired of being the heroes and Billy questions whether or not he really wants to redeploy. By the end of the book, Bravo is ready to return to the war and Billy knows that he must return with them, although he hopes to continue a relationship with Faison.



Quotes

"Billy, you're flaking on me" (Chapter 1, p. 3).

"What you guys did out there, that's the happiest possible result of the human condition. It gives us hope, we're allowed to feel hopeful about our lives. There's not a person on the planet who wouldn't pay to see that movie" (Chapter 1, p. 7).

"It's not like anything, except maybe being raped by angels" (Chapter 5, p. 61).

"There was no such thing as perfection in the world, only moments of such extreme transparency that you forgot yourself, a holy mercy if there ever was one" (Chapter 6, p. 103).

"This is what he truly envies of these people, the luxury of terror as a talking point, and at this moment he feels so sorry for himself that he could break right down and cry" (Chapter 7, p. 114).

"Billy, I'm gonna need you. You gotta help me keep the rest of these clowns alive. So don't be flaking on me" (Chapter 7, p. 123).

"You have an old soul" (Chapter 8, p. 155).

"Let's put up a sign. Dysfunctional Vets, Leave Us Alone" (Chapter 1, p. 208).

"Dude, you don't even wanna know what they're gonna make us do" (Chapter 12, p. 225).

"I don't think I even know what normal is anymore" (Chapter 14, p. 242).

"Dawg, I think I'm in love" (Chapter 6, p. 259).

"I was just thinking, rich people are crazy. Don't ever forget that" (Chapter 16, p. 265).

"Dave, you want a guarantee, go buy a microwave. No guarantees in my world unless your name is Tom Cruise" (Chapter 17, p. 271).

"Baby, we don't have to run anywhere. You just get yourself home and we'll be fine right here" (Chapter 18, p. 305).



Topics for Discussion

Identify and discuss three specific ways in which fighting in the war has changed Billy's life.

Discuss the reasons that Billy contemplated leaving the Army.

Why was Shroom such an important character in this story?

How did Billy's relationship with Faison change his overall perspective on life?

Which three family members seemed to have the biggest impact on Billy's life and why?

Why might the halftime show have been physically and emotionally difficult for the Bravo squad?

Discuss the reasons that Billy ultimately decided to redeploy with Bravo squad.