

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 1*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 14**

How was I going to get the clothes for college? How was I going to get clothes for Kenny so he would stay in school? Mama had said that she'd see to it that Kenny stayed in school if I sent the money for clothes for him. I wasn't saving any money for clothes for him. I wasn't saving any money, the way I figured I would when I first got into the army, but I figured that might come later if I made sergeant.

Richie is reflecting upon his decision for joining the Army. He and his family are very poor and don't have money for clothes so both he and his brother could stay in school. He is concerned that he isn't saving the money necessary, but he remains hopeful that it will happen.

In one argumentative paragraph encourage Richie to maintain hope and believed that everything would work out in the end. Include three reasons why Richie should maintain hope.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 2*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 23-24**

“The recruiting sergeant said he can’t get in no army ‘cause they don’t be taking no rowdy dudes like him. I figure if they don’t take no rowdy dudes, the army had to be pretty cool. If they really meant to be doing a whole lot of killing and carrying n, they should go get them suckers from the projects, ‘cause that’s all they like to do anyway.” (23-24.)

As Peewee is describing his enlistment into the Army to Richie, he talks about feeling the experience must be pretty cool if they aren’t going to allow “rowdy” dudes to join. If you were Peewee, would this be enough for you to join the Army?

What reason would you need prior to enlisting?

Write an argumentative paragraph that explains why Peewee wants to be away from the “rowdy” dude? Provide 2-3 reasons why this seems to really put him at ease and feel better about joining.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 3*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 35**

“You have to get out of yourself, Perry,” she said. “You’re too young to be just an observer in life.”

I was fifteen, and painfully aware that I was “just an observer in life.” I didn’t want to get into what was going on at home, about how Mom seemed to be falling apart, and how I couldn’t think about much else than keeping us together.

Richie has been told by others and acknowledges the fact that he is an observer in life. What do you think being an observer of life means? Think about your life to this point have you been an observer of life or an active participant.

Write a letter an argumentative letter to encourage Richie to be more than an observer in life and to engage as an active participant and not just watch from the sidelines as life passes by. Provide three ways he can step up and take the reins of life to become an active participant to make sure that his family is taken care of and stays together.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 4*



#### Key Paragraph, pg. 50

I had never thought of myself as being afraid of anything. I thought I would always be a middle-of-the-road kind of guy, not too brave, but not too scared, either. I was wrong. I was scared every time I left the hooch.

On the way to the chopper I found myself holding my breath. I kept thinking of the noise I had heard when Jenkins got it. By the time we took off I was panting. (50.)

Richie has realized he is not quite the guy he had hoped he would be in terms of fear. He has found he isn't brave or middle-of-the-road—he is always scared. He is holding his breath and remembering how Jenkins was killed.

Write Richie an argumentative letter as his friend to persuade him that he has the mental strength to confront his fears and control his emotions even in frightening situations. Provide three ways on how Richie can over handle his fear. Remember the circumstances of his fear—he is fighting a war.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 5*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 77**

Lieutenant Carroll said that we had to demonstrate that America stood for something, and that's what we were doing.

Sergeant Simpson said that we were trying to free the South Vietnamese people to do what they wanted to do.

I said that we either defended our country abroad, or we would be forced to fight in the streets of America (77.)

Carroll, Simpson and Richie try to explain to the television crew why we were fighting in Vietnam. Each of their comments is filled with ideas of Justice, America standing for something, freeing people to do what they want to do, and defending our country abroad to prevent fighting it in our streets.

In an argumentative paragraph defend whether or not you believe America should be fighting in Vietnam. Provide three reasons to support your position. Incorporate elements of the Justice Requires Restraint theme.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 6*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg.92**

Peewee asked me to write a letter to his girl for him. I had been right about her writing him a Dear John letter, and it really messed him up.

“Every time I get ready to write the damn thing I get messed around,” Peewee said.

“Peewee, I can’t write a letter to your girl for you I said.  
(92.)

Peewee has asked Richie to write a letter to his ex-girlfriend, Earlene, in response to a Dear John letter he recently received. Think about the pain he has gone through and everything he is dealing with on a daily basis on patrol as well as interacting with other soldiers in the hooch.

At Peewee’s request, write an argumentative letter to Earlene. In the letter, prove that Peewee is going through a tough time since he received the Dear John letter. Provide 1-2 examples to justify your claim. Explain how not being able to concentrate and focus could be dangerous not only to Peewee but also to other soldiers while on patrol.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 7*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 106**

I couldn't sleep. They all started crowding in on me. The guy with the plasma taped to his helmet, the sergeant crying. None of them were together in my mind. They just kept coming, one by one. Short movies. (106.)

Scotty tells how Doyle avoided the draft for four years before the FBI caught up with him. Pretend you are Scotty.

Write an argumentative letter to the FBI persuading them that you are not suitable to be drafted. How would your life change if you were drafted? What would it be like to leave your family and friends? Make up three reasons why the FBI should not draft you.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 8*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 112**

We were supposed to smile a lot and treat the people with dignity. They were supposed to think we were good guys. That bothered me a little. I didn't like having to convince anybody that I was the good guy. That was where we were supposed to start from. We, the Americans, were the good guys. Otherwise it didn't make the kind of sense I wanted to make it. (112.)

Richie is struggling with the fact that the Americans have to try and look like the good guys. He believes we, the Americans, are the good guys. If we are not, then he doesn't know what to make of it.

Why is this so hard for Richie to get past? What about being a good guy is so important for Richie?

Do you feel the same as Richie that being a good person is so important to Americans worldwide?

Write an argumentative paragraph that supports or disproves Richie's idea of why being on the right team or feeling like the good person comes naturally for Americans to the point where we expect to be seen by foreigners as good people. Describe what it means to be an American. Provide three reasons from history that support your argument that Americans strive to be the good guy?

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### Fallen Angels, Day 9



#### Key Paragraph, pg. 131

*Dear Mrs. Carroll,*

*My name is Richard Perry, and I had the good fortune to serve under your husband. Last night, we ran into heavy fighting in an area we've been trying to protect for some time. Lieutenant Carroll was in the process of getting us out of there safely despite the fact that we had run into more of the enemy than we had expected to, when he was wounded. The medevac choppers got him down to Chu Lai, to the medical unit there, and they tried their best to save him, but could not.*

*Mrs. Carroll, I know that it is not much comfort to you that your husband died bravely, or honorably, but he did. All of the guys in the squad who served under him are grateful for his leadership and for having known him*

*I am sorry to have to write to you under these circumstances.*

*Yours,  
Richard Perry (131.)*

Richie is given the difficult task of writing to Lt. Carroll's wife explaining to her that he has died. He tries to make her feel better about her loss, explaining where they were, what was happening as well as the impact that Lt. Carroll had on not only him but the entire squad as well. Richie has done a good job of trying to be empathetic and ease her pain with his kind words and description of what happened.

Write a letter of response by Mrs. Carroll to Richie. Thank Richie for his kind words. In your letter share with Richie details about your life with Lt. Carroll and what plans you had for when he was to come home. Read page 130

Write an argumentative paragraph that explains to Richie how his letter meant helped you feel more at peace. Provide three reasons why his letter brought you peace and closure.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 10*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 147**

What Brew had said about not having the nerve to go to Canada shook me. Here he was in Nam, getting shot at everyday, afraid of every noise, every step, and yet he had been afraid of going to Canada. It shook me because I knew what he meant. Sometimes standing alone seemed to be the hardest thing in the world to do, even when being in the crowd meant you could be killed. (147.)

Richie is shaken by comments made by Brew about not having the nerve to avoid the war by going to Canada, but here he was in Vietnam where he could die at any moment. Richie talks about how difficult standing alone can be even though staying with the group could get you killed.

Richie shares how standing alone is difficult even when it means being safer than being with a group where you could get killed. Do you believe Richie should stand alone safely or join the crowd at the risk of danger?

Write an argumentative paragraph to convince Richie of your position. Provide three reasons to support your answer that will motivate Richie to see things more clearly.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 11*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 172**

But the only thing I could think about was that I was glad it was Turner, and not me. It wasn't what I wanted to feel, or what I thought I was supposed to feel (172.)

Richie is glad that Turner is killed and not him. He acknowledges that he doesn't want to feel this and he doesn't want to think it's how he is supposed to feel but he does, causing him discomfort.

Write an argumentative paragraph supporting or disapproving Richie's feelings regarding Turner's death. Support your position with a personal example. Write about a time in your own life when you were happy not to be experiencing someone's unfortunate circumstance. Describe the situation, what you were feeling, and why you knew that you didn't want to feel this way.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 12*



#### Key Paragraph, pg. 178

I think if Simpson hadn't been there, it would have been worse. Much worse. He calmed us down, brought us back to ourselves he let us be human again; in all the inhumanity about us, he let us be human again (178).

Richie gives Simpson credit for helping the men calm down after returning from the difficult mission. Richie believes had it not been for Simpson the situation would have been much worse.

Write an argumentative paragraph **explaining** how the situation could have been worse. Provide three examples of what could have possibility happened if Simpson wasn't there to calm the men down.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 13*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 196**

Don't think. Stop thinking. Stop. Look ahead of me. Don't think, don't daydream. Look. Quiet. Suppose everybody had left except me? I didn't hear anybody. Why was I so afraid of being left alone? It was possible. I knew it was possible. (194.)

On the night patrol, Richie is struggling with his focus and imagination. He has been instructed to not think; to stay focused and be alert. He is now alone in the jungle and he begins to think, worry, and almost panic.

Write an argumentative paragraph to encourages the Richie to overcome mental roadblocks that interfere with his duty. Include 2-3 reasons why he needs to keep focused.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 14*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 214**

Maybe they were right. I had felt awkward talking to Judy. I was glad to see her, but I couldn't talk to her. The words didn't have the right proportion somehow. There was this feeling that everything I was going to say was either too loud or too strange for a world in which people did normal things (214).

Richie is struggling with feeling awkward seeing Judy. He was glad to see her but didn't know what to say or how to say anything to her. He had been away from civilized people for so long that he didn't know what was appropriate to discuss with Judy.

Write an argumentative paragraph to encouraging Richie to speak to Judy. Include three reasons why he should speak to her and three topics of what they could talk about.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 15*



#### **Key Paragraph, pg. 234**

There was something about Johnson that was different than the rest of us. There was a knowing about him, as if he had been here before, as if dying and fighting was something he had been born to. When he talked about Dongan, I listened. (234.)

Richie is thinking about Johnson and how he understands what's going on around them better than anyone else. Richie feels that Johnson is born for his position, and when he talks, Richie listens.

Write an anonymous argumentative statement to the rest of the crew in support of Johnson. Provide three reasons/examples of why all the men should listen to Johnson's breakdown in every situation.

**Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt**  
***Fallen Angels, Day 16***



**Key Passage, pg. 249**

"I was tired, so tired. There was nothing to do but to go on". (249.)

Richie is tired, very tired. But the only option he sees is to go on. Quitting is not an option.

Write an argumentative paragraph to Richie to convince him not to give up in this troubling situation. Provide three reasons to support your answer that will motivate Richie to see things more clearly and to keep him from giving up.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 17*



#### Key Paragraph

“Suddenly I wasn’t there. It was as if I were out of my body and looking down at us. And then I was back. What the hell was going on? I shook my head. Everything seemed okay again” (pg. 257).

Richie is concerned that his brother will consider him a hero if he tells what has gone on in Vietnam. Would you consider Richie a hero? Why or why not? Write an argumentative paragraph supporting or disproving that Richie is a hero. Support your position with three examples.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 18*



#### Key Paragraph

“The chopper did the same thing to my stomach. Just the sound of them coming in put me in a panic. My arms and legs felt heavy. My palms were sweating. I didn’t want to go out anymore. I had had enough” (pg. 277).

Richie hears the choppers coming in and it causes him panic. In addition to his mental fear, he’s experiencing physical fear as his palms are sweaty and his arms and legs feel heavy. He does not want to go out on patrol and says he’s had enough and doesn’t want to go on. Pretend you are Richie. Write an argumentative letter to your superior explaining why you can’t go on. Provide three reasons to support your statement.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 19*



#### Key Paragraph

“The voices were coming up from the stream. We weren’t going away from the stream, no way. They were coming nearer. Think. Think. Don’t think react.” (pg. 286).

Richie hears the voices up stream; as he was going away from the stream. The voices were getting closer. He talks to himself to think then changes into not thinking, but reacting to what happens. Richie is using self-talk to help him get through difficult times. This is how he handles pressure and tries to manage his fears.

Pretend you are Richie. Write an argumentative statement that encourages other soldiers to use self-talk to get through a difficult circumstance. Use the example in today’s reading to support your statement.

## Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

### *Fallen Angels, Day 20*



#### Key Paragraph

“That’s good,’ I said, straining to see Monaco’s face, to see if he was telling the truth.

‘Hey, Perry, I go to split,’ he said. He was crying again. ‘I been sitting here trying to think of something to say about ... you know ... you and Peewee saving my life and all....’

‘No big deal, man,’ I said. ‘We all got lucky.’

‘No, I was dead, Perry. I was actually sitting there with that Cong gun right on my ass and I was dead. You know, when it went down, when you and Peewee opened up on the gun, it was like I was brought back to life. I was dead and I was brought back to life again.’ (pg. 300).

Monaco is trying to find the words to say “thank you” to Richie after he and Peewee saved his life. Richie tries to down play the situation but Monaco is really trying to find the words to show his appreciation. He would not have made it had it not been for the efforts of Richie and Peewee. Pretend you are Manaco. Write an argumentative letter to Richie and Peewee that proves they saved your life. Support your claim with three reasons.