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The Killers Questions

1. The killers attempt to assert their dominance over the situation and attempt to control the people through making jokes and calling the other people names. They keep ordering dinner to show their masculinity because when one thinks about masculinity, one thinks about a man who gets everything they want when they want it. The killers keep asking not only to assert their dominance, but also to irritate George for the fun. The continual asking reflects how they embody a lack of conscience and a pure enjoy of inflicting pain and irritation on others. George continually tells the killers they cannot have dinner but the killers continue to order dinner. The two killers continuously insult George and the other men by calling them “bright boy” to belittle them and to show how they are in control.

2. George was not afraid of the killers at all. He wanted to maintain control over the killers. He frequently asked questions to assert his dominance over the situation even though the killers truly had control. He asked “What are you going to kill him for, then?” (Hemingway 6) to make the killers rethink killing Ole Anderson. Max respond by saying that they were killing him for a friend but Al tells him he was talking too much. George took control of the situation through these questions and he learned a lot more about them. George was definitely unafraid of the killers.

3. The three men react differently. George tells Nick to go see Ole Anderson and to tell him the news. George said "Listen," to Nick, "You better go see Ole Anderson." (Hemingway 8).

However, the chef, Sam, believes Nick should stay out of the mob's affairs and "[he] better stay way out of it." (Hemingway 8). This shows how the mob has so much influence over the city.

The cook wanted to save Nick's life because if he had given Anderson the information regarding his killers, Nick would have been assassinated too. In the cook's eyes, it was better to throw away your morality to save your own life.

4. Ole is in trouble because he was a prized fighter and he did not follow the mob's orders when they bet on his loss. The mob now wants him dead because they lost money. Anderson "double-crossed somebody. That's what they kill them for." (Hemingway 12). When Nick told Ole the news, Ole understood it and accepted his death. Ole made no attempts to contact the police or remove himself of his situation because he understood that the mob controlled Chicago. Nick thought he would save Ole's life by telling him about his murderers but instead it made Ole lose hope and accept his death.

5. How is Nick affected by this interaction with Ole?

Nick reacts by skipping town because he is mentally shaken by the thought of Ole Anderson's near future death. "I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful" (Hemingway 12). Nick tried to save Ole Anderson's life by alerting him of the mob's assassins but instead, Ole Anderson did nothing but accept his death. Nick could not bear the thought of Anderson accepting his death just as he told Anderson the news and attempts to move away to distance himself away from these events.

6. Hemingway chose to leave out the context for much of the dialogue to give focus to the dialogue. The dialogue is intense and suspenseful. By focusing in on the dialogue, it gives it more power of the reader. When Hemingway chooses to include context, it is meant to give a mental break for the reader and feel like a break in the dialogue. It is also used to set up a different scene or event. When George says “He's not coming.” (Hemingway 7), more context is provided about what happened during the hold up and that George had made two people sandwiches to proceed to the next piece of dialogue where Max sarcastically compliments George.

7. I believe that the ending was perfect. Hemingway slowly built up suspense like how a tea kettle builds up energy under a fire. Ending the story like the way Hemingway did forces the reader to reflect back on Ole Anderson and understand that he is going to die and that nothing will be able to prevent it. Nick tells George, “I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful.” (Hemingway 12). The ending shows how the mob had all the power in Chicago and that Ole Anderson's death was inevitable.

8. How do you believe this story fits into Hemingway's personal life?