

DISCUSSION GUIDE

I Am Canada: Defend or Die

by GillanChan

1. Jack is given a choice of going to court or joining up. He says that he wanted to join up before, but his mother wouldn't sign the enlistment papers. Why do you think he wanted to do this?
2. Jack describes his impressions of being sent to an exotic destination like Hong Kong. Have you ever visited a place that was very different from your home? What was that like?
3. Do Jack's feelings about Sergeant Oldham change during the events they experience together? Have you ever had your feelings change about someone as you got to know them better? How did your feelings change and what caused the change?
4. Imagine you are Sergeant Oldham. What was your first impression of Jack?
5. Do you think the Canadian troops were prepared for the defence of Hong Kong? What evidence do you have for your opinion?
6. The conditions in the prisoner of war camps were brutally harsh. How did the men survive them? What was it about Jack's character and circumstances that allowed him to do so? Do you think that you could survive in such conditions?
7. Can you imagine what the conversation would be like when Jack and his friend Paddy meet up after the war? Would they avoid some topics? Write some lines of dialogue between the two men to convey what you think they would talk about.
8. How have Jack's experiences in Hong Kong changed him? What sort of life do you imagine him leading now that the war is over?
9. Jack is in contact with Sergeant Oldham's daughter. Write a letter to her as if you were Jack. What would he say?