

All quiet on the
western
frontconclusion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

All Quiet on the Western Front is a historical novel, written by Erich Maria Remarque. It is set during the World War I between France and Germany. The book explores the lives and deaths of men who fought the war and how it tore them apart. The story is told through the eye of Paul Baumer, who enlists with his class mates in the German army. They become soldiers with youthful enthusiasm, not expecting the hardships and despair they are about to experience. Because of the narrow explanation of the war, most people thought that war was, "romantic", "heroic".

Even though many would disagree with Remarque's feelings towards the war, his novel is a great argument as to why the war was dehumanizing and it how it caused extreme physical and mental stress. During World War I, there were about seventy millions of men and women in uniform, half of them were either killed, wounded or became prisoners of war. Paul Baumer and his comrades, Muller, Kemmerich, Behm, and Kropp are all part of that total at the end of the war. But Paul expresses that he and his friends were dead long before any bullets pierced their skin.

In the last battle scene of the book, Paul and his only surviving friend, Kat, are fighting in a storm swept front. "Our hands our earth, our bodies' clay and our eyes pool of rain. We do not know whether we still live." (Remarque 87). They feel as if there's no hope. At home they feel detached, and on the front they're guessing their survival "Our thoughts are clay, they are molded with the changes of the days; when we are resting they are good; under fire, they are dead. Fields of craters within and without. (Remarque 271)

Throughout the novel, Paul's inner personality is contrasted with the way the war forces him to act and feel. His memories before the war show that he was once a very different man from the miserable soldier who now narrates the novel. " The backs of the books stand in rows. I know them all still, I remember arranging them in order. I implore them with my eyes: Speak to me -take me up -take me, Life of my Youth -you who are care-free, beautiful -receive me again - I wait images float through my mind, but they do not grip me, they mere shadows and memories...

A terrible feeling of foreignness suddenly rises up in me, I cannot find my way back" (Remarque 272) Paul was a compassionate and sensitive young man; before the war he loved his family and wrote poetry. I fear to importune it too much, because I do not know what might happen then. I am a soldier, I must cling to that. "(Remarque 273) Because of the horror of the war and the anxiety it induces, Paul, like other soldiers, learns to disconnect his mind from his feelings, keeping his emotions covered in order to preserve his sanity and survive.

We want to live at any price; so we cannot burden ourselves with feelings, which, though they may be ornamental enough in peacetime, would be out of place here. Kemmerich is dead, Haie Westhus is dying... martens has no legs anymore, Meyer is dead, Max is dead, Beyer is dead, Hammerling is dead... it is a demandable business, but what has it do with us now we live. " (Remarque) This shows Remarque's knowledge of the yearning to survive in the War, but with all the death surrounding him it's just so hopeless.

All his classmates were dead, he could not talk about the war back home, he did not believe in what the war was going on for, Paul had nothing to hope but his own life. Many soldiers felt the detachment from civilian life upon returning home from the front. "What is leave? - A pause that only makes everything after it so much worse." (Remarque 179) Unable to express his feeling towards the war or even talk about it or his experiences on the front at home among his family.

Unable to think about the past without pain, or hope for the future without war.. He becomes a human animal, capable of relying on animal instinct to kill and survive in battle "If anyone jumps in here I will go for him. It hammers in my forehead; at once, stab him clean through the throat, so that he cannot call out; that's the only way..." (Remarque 215") the advanced technology in the WWI made killing easier and more impersonal than ever before.

The longer that Paul survives the war, and the more he hates it, the less certain he is that life will be better for him later on. This anxiety arises because of his belief that the war has ruined his generation. This war damaged his mind and his friends minds. They will always be dead even if they don't die. Men will not understand us-for the generation that grew up before us the war will be forgotten-and the generation that has grown up after us will be strange to us and push us a side the years will pass and in the end we shall fall into ruin. (Remarque 40)

This statement summarizes Remarque's idea of how the war was useless because shortly after the war, Germany falls apart. Remarque uses Paul as a

political voice against War. Remarque's most important idea that he wants the readers to know is that the war wasnt "romantic". War is evil and inhuman and the pain associated with the war both mentally and physically changed the soldiers, who fought in it, forever.