

# Maria remarque all quite on the western front

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Many novels and movies portrayed and emphasized the ideas of glory, honor, adventure, and patriotic duty. Maria Remarque portrayed war, as it was actually experienced in *All Quite on the Western Front*. Erich M. Remarque had replaced the heroism and glory with a vision of fear, meaninglessness, and butchery. He conveys in this book the brutality of war that had completely altered the human spirits of a soldier, who in this case is Paul Baumer, a German soldier.

Remarque's novel started out with Paul and several of his friends who have graduated from school and joined the army voluntarily after listening to the stirring patriotic speeches of their professor. They all started out believing and looking at going to war as an opportunity to show their heroism and patriotism. But after ten weeks of cruel training and the unimaginable brutality of life on the front, Paul and his friends had realized that the ideals of nationalism and patriotism for which they enlisted is not what they expected.

Paul and his friends are subjected to constant physical danger, as they can literally be blown to pieces at any moment. This intense of physical threat also serves as an unceasing attack on the nerves, forcing soldiers to survive with primal, unconscious fear during every waking moment. In addition, Paul and many other soldiers were forced to live in horrible condition of filthy, soaked ditches full of rats and decaying bodies. They frequently went without food, sleep, and medical care. Where as at night, they went on a traumatic mission to lay barbed wires at the front.

Weapons pounded them and groups of living men fell dead around them, with constant fear of getting killed and seeing close friends getting killed. Gruesome events of war that played over and over again each and everyday, made Paul feel that he must become an animal in battle, trusting only his instincts to keep him alive. Paul discovered that it is a waste of time, hope and dreams of his life flying further and further away. Sometimes at night he desperately wished to recapture his innocence with a girl, but he felt that it was impossible to do.

As the war went on Paul still lived on the battlefield with many cold bloody bodies around him. He was tired to the point of death, but could not stop for one second knowing that at any moment the enemies could come flooding over the trench trying to kill as many Germans as they can. Paul's friends were getting killed in combat one by one; he was the only one remaining from his class. One of the horrible incident that really struck Paul was seeing his friend Kat, who got killed when a piece of shrapnel sliced his head open while Paul is carrying him to safety.

Paul received seventeen days of leave and went home to see his family. Knowing that he was the only survivor from his circle of friends, he felt awkward and depressed in his hometown. He was unable to talk about his dreadful experiences with anyone. Knowing his mother was dying of cancer; Paul got a certain cold satisfaction. Paul no longer felt the purpose of a normal everyday life, feeling that everything was just a waste. He visited Kemmerich's mother and told her, untruthfully, that her son had died painlessly and peacefully.

At the end of his leave, he visited a training camp near a group of Russians and understood that Russian people were just like him. They were not bloodthirsty monsters, and he wondered how war could make enemies of people who have no grudge against one another. Paul returned to the front knowing that when the war ends his life would not be the same because all he knows now is war. By the fall of 1918, on the morning of October was a day with very little fighting, Paul was killed.

He wore a calm expression, as though he was relieved that the end has come at last. The army reported that that day was simply, " All quite on the Western Front. " Erich Maria Remarque had thoroughly explained and illustrated the cruelty of war and the impact on the soldiers, and how it had altered the consciousness of soldiers during and after war end. Remarque, had showed how Paul and his friends were seduced into joining the army by nationalism ideas, but the experience of fighting quickly pulled them in patriotism irrelevance in the face of the war's horror.

Remarque used vivid description of the condition they needed to go through to survive, with all of the dead bodies surrounding them, many were friends and many were foes. They also constantly felt the fear of dying, not knowing who to trust, because they saw their friends fall one by one. As days went by the horror had eaten into their mind and crushed their hope, dreams, and faith. No longer can they dream, and even if they get a chance to go back home and start all over, like Paul did. Nonetheless, war had killed the human spirit in them and they no longer felt the desire to dream.

War had altered the soldiers' mind into believing that they were animals. They needed to kill or get kill, do or die; there were no other choices. Even though they do not know whom they are killing. Remarque had written in a different point of view about that no one ever thought of. War is not all about the glory and heroism, but just the matter of survival. It took the lives of fathers, brothers, and husbands, and it caused hate between different countries and put hate in the heart of the civilians. Sometimes you do not even know what you are fighting for or why, but all you know is that you have to fight.