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## "All quiet on the western front" review

A group of new recruits comes to reinforce the company, and Paul's friend Kat produces a beef and bean stew that impresses them. Kat says that if all the men in an army, including the officers, were paid the same wage and given the same food, wars would be over immediately. Kropp, another of Paul's former classmates, says that there should be no armies; he argues that a nation's leaders should instead fight out their disagreements with clubs. They discuss the fact that petty, insignificant people become powerful and arrogant during war, and Tjaden, a member of Paul's company, announces that the cruel Corporal Himmelstoss has come to fight at the front.

At night, the men go on a harrowing mission to lay barbed wire at the front. Pounded by artillery, they hide in a graveyard, where the force of the shelling causes the buried corpses to emerge from their graves, as groups of living men fall dead around them. After this gruesome event, the surviving soldiers return to their camp, where they kill lice and think about what they will do at the end of the war. Some of the men have tentative plans, but all of them seem to feel that the war will never end. Paul fears that if the war did end, he wouldn't know what to do with himself.

Himmelstoss arrives at the front; when the men see him, Tjaden insults him. The men's lieutenant gives them light punishment but also lectures Himmelstoss about the futility of saluting at the front. Paul and Kat find a house with a goose and roast the goose for supper, enjoying a rare good meal. The company is caught in a bloody battle with a charging group of Allied infantrymen. Men are blown apart, limbs are severed from torsos, and giant rats pick at the dead and the wounded. Paul feels that he must become an animal in battle, trusting only his instincts to keep him alive. After the battle, only thirty-two of eighty men are still alive. The men are given a short reprieve at a field depot. Paul and some of his friends go for a swim, which ends in a rendezvous with a group of French girls.

Paul desperately wishes to recapture his innocence with a girl, but he feels that it is impossible to do so. Paul receives seventeen days of leave and goes home to see his family. He feels awkward and oppressed in his hometown, unable to discuss his traumatic experiences with anyone. He learns that his mother is dying of cancer and that Kantorek has been conscripted as a soldier, from which he derives a certain cold satisfaction. He visits Kemmerich's mother and tells her, untruthfully, that her son's death was instant and painless.

At the end of his leave, Paul spends some time at a training camp near a group of Russian prisoners-of-war. Paul feels that the Russians are people just like him, not subhuman enemies, and wonders how war can make enemies of people who have no grudge against one another.

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