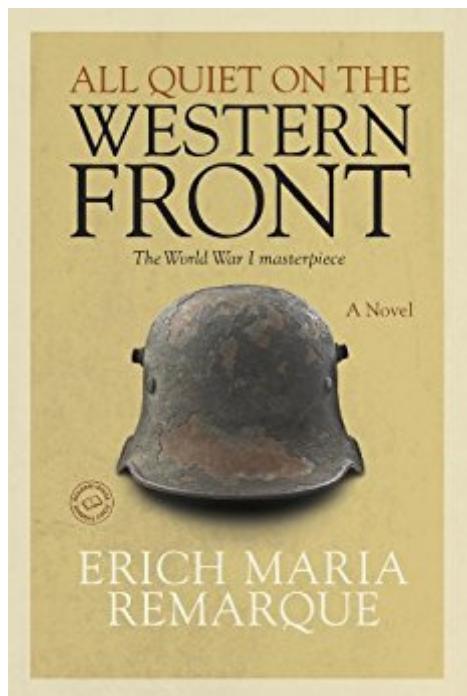


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All Quiet On The Western Front: A Novel



Synopsis

Considered by many the greatest war novel of all time, All Quiet on the Western Front is Erich Maria Remarque's masterpiece of the German experience during World War I. I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. . . . This is the testament of Paul Bäumer, who enlists with his classmates in the German army during World War I. They become soldiers with youthful enthusiasm. But the world of duty, culture, and progress they had been taught breaks in pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches. Through years of vivid horror, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the principle of hate that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against one another . . . if only he can come out of the war alive. Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader's Circle for author chats and more. "The world has a great writer in Erich Maria Remarque. He is a craftsman of unquestionably first rank, a man who can bend language to his will. Whether he writes of men or of inanimate nature, his touch is sensitive, firm, and sure." • The New York Times Book Review From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

What a great work of fiction. Feeling ashamed that I had never read this novel but heard so much about it, I finally got a copy and burned through the pages in 3 days. It certainly lived up to its name and legacy. The writing is to the point, Hemingway-esque, and rarely slows. Every fifth paragraph leaves one a jewel phrase or entire sentence that can qualify as a memorable quote. For example: "What do they expect of us if a time ever comes when this war is over? Through the years our business has been killing;--it was our first calling in life. Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what shall come of us?" In my opinion, the Nazis burned Remarque's books not because he changed his name to a non-German name, but because this book is filled with anti-war sentiment cloaked as it had to be in 1928 when this was first published. To have lived through war in the trenches as Remarque did, qualifies him to speak to the insanity of mass killing that is war. Let us all read his pages and imbibe the message of the cruelty and senselessness of war. I feel as if I want to go out and obtain a copy of every book Remarque ever published. Let his experience be our teacher; let his message endure. Let every school-kid in the world read and study these pages, so they come to know what war is. Let the decision-makers of the world pore over every passage, and ask themselves whether they will send their children to war. Let Remarque's works guide their decision. Truly a classic.

I read this book a long time ago but just now realized that I never wrote a review for it. I think I know why: no words can possibly describe what a true masterpiece this novel is. I am a huge WWII history buff, but this story taking place during the horrific Great War still undoubtedly holds a special place in my heart because it is definitely my favorite war novel. It is a strange calling a war novel "favorite" and saying how much you enjoyed reading and re-reading it, however when the most unimaginable horrors are delivered through such a beautiful, poetic prose it becomes so much more than just a war novel; it becomes a first-hand account of a broken life that has just started, a eulogy to the generation that would never return home the same, if those boys return home at all. Told from a young German boy's - just hardly out of school - point of view, each chapter makes you not only relive all of the horrors of the war together with him but also poses eternal questions that every man fighting in the front line eventually asks himself: what is this all for? Are we all brothers under our uniforms? Why

all these unnecessary deaths? Why take another one of my comrades today? The gory fighting scenes described with brutal honesty are masterfully replete with some beautiful, melancholic prose of ceasefire days; of camaraderie and glimpses of civil life on leave; of broken families and former acquaintances - all of which suddenly loses its very meaning after the horror one will never forget once he lived through it. Incredibly touching and almost painfully truthful at times, this novel should definitely be on everyone's must-read list. It's one of those novels that will stay with you forever once you dive into its dark, riveting depth.

World War I was a massive orgy of man's most savage brutality, intertwined with his technological brilliance. For the average soldier on the western front, it was the most uniquely hellish experience in human history. Artillery bombardments, gas attacks, flamethrowers, rats, lice, dysentery, rotten bodies all over the place. All of these alone are too much for most to bear. Let alone combining them and living in a muddy hole with them 24/7. And it all makes you want to scream when you realize that many of the people who experienced this were teenage boys and family men. They were our children, our parents, our little brothers, our coworkers and our classmates. And as Remarque so beautifully says, they had to shoot their world to pieces. All the while being told by their superiors and even the people back home that they should be proud of themselves for taking part in this. No novel has ever before displayed the horror and futility of war in such a blunt and concise story. Now imagine reading a story similar to this, about 10 or 15 million times in a row. It would no longer be beautiful or poignant, would it? You'd just be sick to death of it and want the ordeal to end. War is not a glorious or a beautiful thing. It really is hell. And we refuse to learn the lesson.

I had always heard about this book but never knew why until I read it. Beautifully written and the most graphic depiction of the carnage and brutal cruelties of war that I have ever read. The gut wrenching escapades of the seven young German soldiers made it seem as if you were in the foxhole with them. The action combined with the slow inexorable deterioration of the teenage mind left an indelible impression that is unforgettable. A mind provocative classic.

Good read all these years later. Straight forward story about WW1 trench warfare. Interesting that the characters are all German, but the novel is devoid of politics. At times it is quite brutal. Other times it is quite introspective. Interesting how aware the young soldiers are of their humanity being harmed by all they endured.

This book, a requirement for history class, has now moved towards the top of the favorites list. Unlike others that try to gloss over the horrors of war, Remarque lays it all out there. Raw, emotional, and so poignant. The realities of sending children off to war and demons they must confront...all the while these young men question why they fight this war and for what purpose so many are sent off to die. Very profound. A must read for anyone interested in a classic or period literature. Make that a must read for anyone.

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