

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

By Matt Foss

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Based on *All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque,
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successor-in-interest to the Estate of Paulette Remarque.

SYNOPSIS: A stage adaptation of Remarque's classic novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front* tells the experiences of the Second Company on the German Front lines during the last year of WWI. Closely following the novel, the central storyteller, Paul, navigates these perilous trenches while learning the heartbreak of loss, the shared humanity and necessity of friendship, and struggles with the burgeoning awareness of the true reality within the horrors of war.

Employing a diverse cast and theatrical staging, Foss's adaptation is a feast for the eyes, incorporating dance and holi powder for the battle scenes and seamless symbolism. Championing Remarque's novel, Matt Foss sinks his teeth in to the text and viscerally rips the heart onto the stage.

DURATION: 100 minutes.

TIME: World War I (1914-1918.)

SETTING: Battle grounds and various locations.

CAST OF CHARACTERS: 10-38 either, extras.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ONE—THE FIRST BATTLE

TWO—MESS TENT

THREE—MEADOW #1

FOUR—HOSPITAL #1

FIVE—THE CAMP AT KLOSTERBERG

SIX—HOSPITAL #2

SEVEN—THE PATROL

EIGHT—ARRIVAL OF HIMMELSTOSS

NINE—FRONT TWO—COFFIN OFFENSIVE

TEN—THE CANAL

ELEVEN—HOME AND LEAVE
 TWELVE—BACK AT THE FRONT
 THIRTEEN—CATHOLIC HOSPITAL
 FOURTEEN—LOSS

CASTING NOTE

A full list of characters and line counts appears at the end of the script.

The play can be produced with a wide number of actors. Initial acting ensembles featured an equitable and diverse group of actors covering the acting tracks in ways idiosyncratic to that production while providing resonant doubling (and in some cases tripling) that aided the storytelling. The below is a suggested tracking, based on ten actors, playing all the roles in the play and allowing for some resonant doubling.

ACTOR ONE.....PAUL BAUMER
 ACTOR TWO.....KAT, WOMAN #1, RED CROSS NURSE,
 ensemble characters
 ACTOR THREEKEMMERICH, GINGER, REPLACEMENT,
 ANNA, DUVAL, SISTER LIBERTINE,
 ensemble characters
 ACTOR FOURKROPP, MAN #3, ensemble characters
 ACTOR FIVEMÜLLER, MAN #2, CHIEF SURGEON,
 ensemble characters
 ACTOR SIX.....LEER, MOTHER, SISTER TEA COZY,
 ensemble characters
 ACTOR SEVENTJADEN, DRILL SERGEANT, ensemble
 characters
 ACTOR EIGHTWESTHUS, OFFICER, ensemble characters
 ACTOR NINEDETERING, HIMMELSTOSS,
 KANTOREK, ensemble characters.
 ACTOR TENBERTINK, MAN #1, HAMMACHER,
 FIELD SURGEON, ensemble characters

FULL CAST, LINE COUNT, and PRODUCTION NOTES
are found at the end of the script.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The following play was written in association with the Erich Maria Remarque Estate, with the aim of premiering on the 100th Anniversary of World War I. Though the novel is centered around a small group of men in the very homogenous environment of the German trenches in the “War to End All Wars,” the issues of nationalism, economic disparity, and xenophobia that helped lead to the conflict and form the background for the story unfortunately run all too parallel to our very contemporary experience today. The play is created to accommodate a cast representative of the community that is electing to put it on.

Though literary in its source material, every attempt is made to translate the core of the novel into a dynamic experience on the stage. A transparent brand of theatricality is suggested throughout. For the initial production—tables engineered so they could create vertical walls or inclined planes (for the trenches) when stood on either end were built, along with the use of chalk powder to create almost slow-motion bomb and explosion effects. In the professional premieres, unit sets using pianos were used to create the trenches of the front. The location so readily changes, that finding an apparatus that allows for great variation of setting, while tying together the world of the play is an open question for each ensemble of collaborators to build towards. Additionally, contemporary music and remixes of Vietnam era music was used to some effect for the movement sequences and dance used to create many of the battles.

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

Foss's stage adaptation of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* premiered at the University of Toledo in November, 2018, on the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. This production was directed by Matt Foss, stage managed by Addison Toth. Designers included Erin Hamilton (Dramaturg), Ryan Hieber (Sound), Shaquira Jackson (Choreographer), Kelly McBane (Costumes), Christopher Montpetit (Production Manager), Stephan Sakowski (Lights), Kevin Upham (Sets), Nathaniel White (Technical Direction). The cast and their primary roles included:

PAUL BAUMER.....	Justin Petty
KAT	Gillian Martin
KEMMERICH	Jackson Howard
KROPP	Austin Rambo
MÜLLER.....	Alexandria Rayford-West
LEER	Faith Murphy
TJADEN	Imani Hudson
WESTHUS	Bailey Flint & Carlos Washington
DETERING	Emily Damschroder
BERTINK.....	Shaquira Jackson
HIMMELSTOSS	Bryan Harkins
GINGER	Kurt T. Elfering

AWARDS: The play received the Kennedy Center's 2019 David Mark Cohen Playwrighting Award and Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival Certificate of Merit for Production and Performance Ensemble.

PROFESSIONAL PREMIERE

Foss's stage adaptation of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* premiered professionally in Chicago in August of 2019, in a co-production between the University of Toledo and Red Tape Theatre Company. Production team and designers included Max Truax (Artistic Director), Ben Kaye (Managing Director), Catherine Miller (Casting Director), Matt Foss (Director), Emily Melgard (Stage Manager), Dan Poppen (Sound), Kate Staiger (Assistant Director/Dramaturg), Stephen Sakowski (Lights), Nicholas James Schwartz (Set), Rachel Sypniewski (Costumes), and Leah Urzendowski (Movement Director/Choreography). The cast and their primary roles included:

PAUL BAUMER.....	Elena Victoria Feliz
KEMMERICH/REPLACEMENT/DUVAL.....	Charlotte Mae Ellison
KAT.....	Caitlin Ewald
BERTINK.....	Ian Maryfield
MÜLLER.....	Colin Morgan
TJADEN.....	Alec Phan
KROPP.....	Collin Quinn Rice
LEER.....	Laila Rodrigues
WESTHUS.....	Joel Rodriguez
DETERING/HIMMELSTOSS.....	Brenda Scott Wlazlo
2 nd COMPANY SOLDIER.....	Bianca Canigila
2 nd COMPANY SOLDIER.....	Austin Rambo

AWARDS: The play received six Chicago Jeff Awards for Best New Work, Best Lighting Design, Best Sound Design, Best Choreography, Best Ensemble and Best Production of the Year.

ONE—THE FIRST BATTLE

AT START: *Dark. A small rumble of a distant explosion. KAT—a sergeant and de-facto leader of the company watches for the French attack, lit by the embers of their cigarette. The members of SECOND COMPANY are in their trench in a forward position on the frontline of the Western Front, in Belgium. SOLDIERS huddle in the dark, their backs to the enemy in their own trenches across No Man's Land. PAUL BAUMER—a former student, almost twenty, who has been on the front for almost two years now—starts to light a cigarette. Just sparks as PAUL'S fingers fumble with the lighter. As PAUL grows close to lighting it, their hands start to shake. KAT gives PAUL a light. The light from the shells light up the soldier's faces as they fall in the distance.*

KAT: It's all right, Paul. Nice fireworks if they weren't trying to kill us.

A few more explosions. Then, all goes quiet. The explosions cease. Silence.

KAT: That's it.

KAT puts out their smoke, grabs PAUL'S cigarette and taps it out. KAT hushes the rest of the line.

KAT: Here it comes.

The space bursts with the light and sound of explosions whistling in. Music—a cadence of drums—deep, echoing, begins to pound and the SOLDIERS move in a dance like violence amidst the explosions of powder they are creating—a marching kind of destruction. KEMMERICH climbs out of the trench. Enemy machine gunners target them and they are gunned down.

PAUL: Franz!

Time slows. KEMMERICH creates a burst of red powder in their leg. Another in their arm. Another in their torso. KEMMERICH falls. Some time. PAUL begins to speak.

PAUL: This story is to be neither an accusation nor a confession... and least of all an adventure... for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war.

TWO—MESS TENT

Light and music smashes in. We see SECOND COMPANY lining up at the mess tent: KROPP, MÜLLER, LEER, TJADEN, WESTHUS, DETERING, and KAT.

PAUL remains in place—caught between remembering and being with their friends—speaking underneath and on top of the din. TJADEN beats their tin cup against the large saucepan they've brought to collect their rations.

KROPP: Open up, you carrotty headed bastard!

PAUL: We are at rest five miles behind the front. Fourteen days ago we went up to the line on relief. It was quiet on our sector, so our Sergeant Cook—

TJADEN: *(Overlapping, yelling at the occupant of the hut.)* Hey, Ginger!

PAUL: —Ginger, remained behind, requisitioning the usual quantity of rations for a full company—one hundred and fifty soldiers—for our return.

LEER: Come on, Ginger!

KROPP: We can smell that those beans are done, you damn'd Prussian.

PAUL: But on our last day—a battery of English heavies tore into us.

KROPP: Don't they smell done to you, Müller?

MÜLLER, without looking up from their book, gives a nod and a salute—maybe a thumbs up.

PAUL: Only eighty of us made it back.

WESTHUS: Ginger!

KAT: (*Yawning.*) It wouldn't be such a bad war if you could get enough sleep.

KROPP: Do those beans smell done to anybody else?

PAUL: At the head of the queue were my friends from school—the four of us all joined up from the same class and volunteered for the war.

KROPP: Ginger—come on.

PAUL: Albert Kropp, the clearest thinker amongst us, and therefore only a lance corporal. Müller, who to this day still carried his school textbooks with him and during bombardments mutters propositions in physics.

LEER: I got places to go!

PAUL: Leer. The first of my friends to lose his virginity, so naturally, he's our expert on the subject. And me—

KAT: (*Walking towards PAUL.*) —hey, Paul?

PAUL: —Paul Baumer.

KAT: Save your tobacco for me—will you? I'll trade you my ration of cigarettes for it. (*PAUL nods.*) Done—thanks, Paul.

A beat.

PAUL: The rest of the Second Company, we met at the training depot in Klosterberg. And we've been together since.

WESTHUS: What's with the pot, Tjad?

TJADEN: I'm starving.

PAUL: Tjaden—a former locksmith—the biggest eater in the company.

WESTHUS: Ginger!

PAUL: Haie Westhus—peat-digger, and the executive arm of some of our greatest schemes.

TJADEN: Det—can I have your bread?

A beat.

DETERING: No.

TJADEN: No?

DETERING: No.

A laugh breaks out among the company.

PAUL: Detering—from the country, who only ever spoke of his wife and his farm. When he talked at all.

KAT pats TJADEN on the back—they return to the line.

PAUL: And—Kat. Stanislaus Katczinsky: the leader of our group and a remarkable nose for dirty weather, good food, and soft jobs.

KAT: Heinrich, it smells wonderful. Open up, would you, sergeant? For old Katczinsky?

PAUL: It's been us. Together. For almost two years.

GINGER—a greasy cook bursts through the tent with a massive pot, its handles wrapped with rags. SECOND COMPANY converges, as GINGER smacks their mess tins back with their spoon.

GINGER: You must all be here first.

TJADEN: We are all here, you rotten old Carrot.

GINGER: Doesn't look it to me, Private Tjaden.

A beat.

GINGER: Where's everybody else?

DETERING: This is all that's left.

KAT: —We're what's made it back.

GINGER: But I've cooked enough for one hundred and fifty of you—

LEER: *(Pushing forward with their mess kit.)* Then for once we'll have enough.

GINGER smashes LEER away with a spoon.

GINGER: No. No. No. No, no, no, no...

WESTHUS: What do you mean no?

GINGER: Eighty soldiers can't eat what is meant for a hundred and fifty. (*A look from the SOLDIERS.*) Fine. I don't care about the stew—take it all—but I can only issue single rations of the tobacco and all the rest. I'm sorry.

KAT: Heinrich. Sergeant. My friend?

GINGER: I can't Kat—the rules.

TJADEN: Hang your rules.

GINGER: I'll hang you!

BERTINK enters, MÜLLER is the first to notice.

MÜLLER: Sir.

ALL snap to attention.

KAT: (*Small salute.*) Lieutenant Bertink.

BERTINK nods to KAT.

PAUL: Our company commander. Lieutenant Bertink. Came to the company as a non-com and was promoted through the ranks. So he knew how things were.

Quiet nods and salutes from the SOLDIERS to BERTINK. BERTINK inspects the line, slowly smells GINGER'S pot.

BERTINK: Beans look good, Sergeant.

GINGER: Thank you, sir.

BERTINK: Smell good too.

GINGER nods enthusiastically.

BERTINK: Cooked with meat and fat?

GINGER nods again. BERTINK looks at the SOLDIERS, back at GINGER.

BERTINK: Can I have a taste?

GINGER: Sir. Yes. Yes, sir.

GINGER takes out a spoon, wipes it on his shirt. BERTINK smiles at the SOLDIERS—a laugh—takes a bite. It's terrible and BERTINK hides it.

BERTINK: Good. It's very good, Heinrich. Thank you. (*BERTINK eats another mouth full. Managing the hot soup in their mouth.*) ...We had some heavy losses yesterday. (*A beat. Another bite, tough to swallow.*) This is very good. You got a full tent back there, Sergeant—all the rations for the resupply?

GINGER nods.

BERTINK: Why don't we serve out all of it? The company could use it, Heinrich.

GINGER: Yes, sir.

BERTINK: (*Taking final bite.*) You've outdone yourself. These are very good.

BERTINK exits with a smile to the SOLDIERS. TJADEN grabs GINGER and kisses them on the top of the head. GINGER leaves in disgust, but smiling.

THREE—MEADOW #1

SECOND COMPANY heads to the meadow—a quiet place with the sounds of insects and birds. BERTINK begins to hand out mail. PAUL remains stationary, still reeling from the gruesome injury to KEMMERICH.

BERTINK: Looks like something for everybody today.

BERTINK hands out the post—letters, journals, small packages to each as they go around the group.

BERTINK: Kropper. Tjaden—there you are. Your paper, Müller—and this. Kat. Haie. Leer. Detering—sorry. None today.

DETERING nods. BERTINK crosses to PAUL.

BERTINK: Baumer. A few for you, Paul.

PAUL: Is there any news on Kemmerich?

BERTINK: Franz made it to the field hospital. *(To PAUL.)* They have him in a bed up at St. Joseph's. Action report for the day says intermittent shelling along the front. Should be quiet back here. Good day, gentlemen. Paul.

BERTINK gives a small salute and exits. KROPP opens a letter.

KROPP: Kantorek sends you, his former pupils, his best wishes.

MÜLLER: Wish *he* was here.

TJADEN: And Himmelstoss.

LEER: Both of them—the terrors of Klosterberg.

PAUL: Kantorek was our schoolmaster. Himmelstoss, our drill sergeant at the training camp.

MÜLLER: How is it that the unhappiness of the world is so often brought on by small men?

KAT: I take it as a point of personal pride I have always taken good care to keep out of companies with smallish command officers.

MÜLLER: Shout a lot of rules and follow none themselves.

TJADEN: Just like Himmelstoss.

KROPP: And Kantorek.

LEER takes on an impersonation of KANTOREK.

LEER: "Inadequate, Herr Kropp—quite inadequate."

PAUL: At school, Kantorek gave us long lectures on patriotism and duty till the whole of our class went to the District Commandant and volunteered. Anybody who didn't was called a "coward." Even by our parents.

KROPP: *(Reading the letter.)* Iron youth...

KROPP, LEER, and MÜLLER spit. A beat.

PAUL: The entire generation before had let us down... and let us down badly. They surpassed us in phrases and clever hot air. They'd shout how duty to one's country is the greatest thing. But here, we could distinguish the false from true. *(Some time. Turning from the audience to talk to their friends.)* Let's go see Franz. *(Some time.)* Come on.

KROPP nods. A look to MÜLLER, who nods. LEER makes a small no.

KROPP: Leer? You coming?

Nothing from LEER.

PAUL: Let's go, Leer.

LEER still shakes head no. They won't go. LEER exits.

KROPP: *(Standing with KANTOREK'S letter.)* Iron Youth. You feel young, Paul?

A beat.

PAUL: No.

KROPP throws KANTOREK'S letter. KROPP, MÜLLER, and PAUL head to hospital. The rest exit.

FOUR—HOSPITAL #1

The meadow transforms into the hospital. KEMMERICH is at center, beneath a hospital light, a bloody bandage where his leg has been amputated. He is flanked by other PATIENTS. ORDERLY #1 is doing the rounds checking on the other injured soldiers.

PAUL: Excuse me.

ORDERLY #1 walks past.

PAUL: Franz Kemmerich?

ORDERLY #1 shrugs, busily checking other PATIENTS.

KROPP: —Came in with a thigh wound last night.

ORDERLY #1 jerks their head towards the center bed. KROPP, PAUL, and MÜLLER carefully approach.

KROPP: How goes it, Franz?

KEMMERICH: Somebody took my watch.

MÜLLER: I told you that you shouldn't have a watch nice as that out here.

PAUL: We'll try to find it, Franz.

KROPP: How do you feel?

KEMMERICH: Not so bad... my foot hurts. *(Reaches for the missing limb. A beat.)*

MÜLLER: Franz—your leg's—

KROPP mutters for MÜLLER to stop talking.

PAUL: The good news is you're heading home now—

A blank look from KEMMERICH.

KROPP: Before you would've had to wait at least three or four months before you came up for leave. But now...

KROPP signals to MÜLLER, who carried in KEMMERICH'S items, a tunic and book.

MÜLLER: We brought your things, Franz.

KEMMERICH: Put them under the bed.

MÜLLER does. MÜLLER discovers KEMMERICH'S pair of fine leather boots and matches them to the soles of their own boots for size.

MÜLLER: Franz—you think you'll be taking these with you? (*KROPP shoots a look to MÜLLER.*) When you go home?

KEMMERICH doesn't answer.

KROPP: Remember when we snuck out of the trench to pull them off that Brit whose plane had crashed?

KEMMERICH nods.

PAUL: Best boots in the company.

MÜLLER: Why don't you let us hold on to them for you, Franz?

KROPP: (*Quietly.*) Müller.

MÜLLER: ...don't want them to walk off like your watch.

KEMMERICH has a bout of pain. The conversation begins to overlap.

PAUL: It's all right, Franz. It's all right.

KROPP: Easy, Franz.

MÜLLER: Maybe we could make a trade—

PAUL: Franz?

KROPP: Müller! Come on.

MÜLLER: They fit me perfectly, Albert.

KROPP: That's enough.

PAUL: Doctor?

MÜLLER: They should go to one of his friends, not one of these thieving orderlies.

KEMMERICH is writhing in pain. PAUL struggles to comfort KEMMERICH. ORDERLY #1 enters and PAUL tries to get their attention while comforting KEMMERICH. They all talk overlapping through the din.

PAUL: Doctor? Doctor!?

MÜLLER: He's not leaving here, Albert.

KROPP: All right.

PAUL: It's our friend. Something's wrong—

MÜLLER: It's not cruel. It's practical.

KROPP: That's enough.

ORDERLY #1: What do you want *me* to do?

PAUL: Can you give him some morphine?

ORDERLY #1: You see it just lying around?

KROPP: I bet you have plenty for the officers.

ORDERLY #1: You think so?

PAUL: Hey—hey—

KROPP: Only attend to the rich boys properly?

ORDERLY #1: (*To KROPP.*) If you think so, then why did you even ask?

PAUL thrusts a pack of cigarettes into the hand of ORDERLY #1.

PAUL: Hey—do us a favor—just a favor. His name is Kemmerich. Franz Kemmerich.

KEMMERICH cries in pain. PAUL pulls out another pack and thrusts it into ORDERLY #1's chest.

PAUL: Just help our friend.

ORDERLY #1 takes the cigarettes, nods, gives KEMMERICH some morphine. ORDERLY #1 exits. KEMMERICH subsides.

KROPP: You think he'll last till tomorrow?

MÜLLER shakes their head "no."

PAUL: I'll sit with him.

Silence. MÜLLER turns to go. KROPP nods.

MÜLLER: (*Putting down the boots.*) Ask him, Paul—will you? (*No answer. MÜLLER exits.*)

KROPP: Damned shit. Damn this shit!

KROPP exits. Some time. PAUL sits next to KEMMERICH.

KEMMERICH: Paul?

PAUL: Yeah, Franz.

KEMMERICH: Paul? Did they take my leg?

A beat.

PAUL: You've got to be thankful you've come off with only that, Franz.

Besides you're going home.

KEMMERICH: You think so?

PAUL: Of course.

KEMMERICH: Paul. Do you think so?

PAUL: Yes. Once you are over the operation.

KEMMERICH: *(Turning away from PAUL.)* I don't think so.

PAUL: Shhhh—Franz, don't... couple of days and you'll see for yourself.

KEMMERICH: Look at my hands.

PAUL: That's just from the operation. You've got to eat.

KEMMERICH shakes head.

PAUL: You got to eat—eating is the main thing.

KEMMERICH: Did you know I wanted to study to be a forester? Back home?

PAUL: You still can—there are these amazing artificial limbs now. They fix them onto the muscle, so you can—

KEMMERICH: —You remember the river, where we used to catch sticklebacks?

PAUL: You'll have to build an aquarium again—just like we used to.

KEMMERICH starts to silently cry—weeping without a sound. A beat.

PAUL: Maybe they'll send you to the hospital in Klosterberg, make you a drill sergeant like Himmelstoss. You remember Himmelstoss? (*KEMMERICH doesn't answer.*) ...How much he hated us. And Kropp, Leer. And Tjaden—? Tjaden the most. The terror of Klosterberg. Remember we used to call him that... Himmelstoss? (*KEMMERICH doesn't move or respond.*) Franz?

There's a little fall of snow. At first, just a few flakes from one spot. Then small isolated spots around the stage.

PAUL: Franz?

TJADEN enters, as a cadet, in memory, with a dustpan and small broom. They start to clean up the snow at their spot.

PAUL: What is it, Franz?

More snow starts to fall. Music. SECOND COMPANY starts to fill in.

FIVE—THE CAMP AT KLOSTERBERG

HIMMELSTOSS: (*Shouting as they enter.*) Kemmerich! BAUMER!

HIMMELSTOSS enters in a rage, shouting commands. SECOND COMPANY runs to try to clean up the snow, and then gets in line.

HIMMELSTOSS: This barrack square was to be cleared of snow by morning! Kropp!

Unacceptable!

I'll be damned if I don't teach you school boys more in this ten weeks than you ever learned in ten years of that damned school of yours.

Müller! Get in line, Leer!

Stand up!

HIMMELSTOSS: *(Continued.)*

Attention!

Line up! Stand up! Line up!

In a flurry, the transformation from hospital to parade ground is complete. SECOND COMPANY stands at attention in the freezing cold.

HIMMELSTOSS: We'll stand here at attention for an hour if we have to in order to learn the discipline I find altogether lacking in you and your cohorts here. Recruit Kemmerich—what are the parts of the 98 rifle? *(KEMMERICH stammers.)* Too slow, Kemmerich.

HIMMELSTOSS claps their hands together loudly, making booming and whistling noises.

HIMMELSTOSS: Down, down, down!

TJADEN is a step behind.

HIMMELSTOSS: Get down, Herr Tjaden. Too slow, Tjaden. You're dead. You're dead because you're lazy.

TJADEN: I—

HIMMELSTOSS: What's that—Recruit Tjaden—you disagree? You disagree with my assessment, that you, Recruit Tjaden, are lazy? Too lazy to get down in the dirt and not die. Too lazy to march straight and salute sharp, so lazy that every night you treat your bunk like the latrine.

TJADEN: *(Stands up.)* I'm not lazy.

HIMMELSTOSS: What's that, Recruit Tjaden?

TJADEN: I'm not lazy. Sir.

HIMMELSTOSS: Then why can't you get up at night and use a toilet like a fully functioning adult? No, you rather piss yourself and soil my barracks every night.

PAUL: *(Stands up.)* He can't help it, sir.

HIMMELSTOSS: What's that, Baumer? *(Silence.)* DOWN!

TJADEN and BAUMER hit the ground, faces in the snow.

HIMMELSTOSS: I am going to find another piss-a-bed in this god-forsaken camp, Recruit Tjaden. I'm going to bunk him above you so each night he'll baptize you—a holy anointment to cure you of your slovenly ways.

BERTINK enters, coughs.

HIMMELSTOSS: On your feet—ALL OF YOU. (*HIMMELSTOSS salutes.*) Lieutenant Bertink, sir. Second Company at the ready, sir.

BERTINK: How long have these men been outside in this snow, Corporal Himmelstoss?

HIMMELSTOSS: Not long, sir. We just started into training. (*Goes to blow their whistle.*)

BERTINK: Corporal. That's enough. Men, dismissed. Goodnight.

As BERTINK exits, HIMMELSTOSS snaps to attention. The SOLDIERS begin to exit.

HIMMELSTOSS: Where are you going?

MÜLLER: Lieutenant Berti—?

HIMMELSTOSS: Full kit, double time, to the branch line and back, to reflect on today's lessons.

A beat. The SOLDIERS reform the line.

HIMMELSTOSS: Let it sink in deep... remember—change at Löhne. Don't get lost again—where do you change?

ALL: Löhne.

HIMMELSTOSS: To reach the branch line, take the tunnel at where?

ALL: Löhne.

HIMMELSTOSS: Where, Recruit Leer?

LEER: Löhne, sir.

HIMMELSTOSS: Where, Sergeant Katzinsky?

KAT: That'd be Löhne, sir.

HIMMELSTOSS: Show me, gentlemen.

HIMMELSTOSS blows a whistle. The SOLDIERS start into calisthenics, shouting—"Change at Löhne!"

HIMMELSTOSS: Louder, Baumer. Westhus, you lumbering hulk, move it. Louder, Leer. Louder, gentlemen! Tjaden—go. Faster, Kemmerich. Change at Löhne—don't forget it! (*Blows a whistle.*) Form up. And move out.

ALL SOLDIERS salute, HIMMELSTOSS begins to exit.

KROPP: Let's get this over with.

TJADEN: I'm not lazy. I'm not.

KAT: We know, Tjad—we know.

HIMMELSTOSS blows a last shrill whistle and exits. ALL SOLDIERS begin to march. Light changes. Time passes as they march. Four weeks later. It is dark. They settle in a heap in the barracks.

KROPP: You think they try to make it so miserable back here to make us almost glad to be at the front?

TJADEN: More miserable than marching the branch line every night for the past four weeks?

BERTINK enters.

BERTINK: Gentlemen. Second Company is being sent to the garrison in the morning for outfitting before our forward deployment to the front. Congratulations. I believe you have changed at Löhne for the last time. See you in the morning.

BERTINK exits to a warm salute from the SOLDIERS.

MÜLLER: Done with Himmelstoss.

LEER: Finally.

WESTHUS: I'm not. (*A beat.*) A fella in the mess outfit told me Himmelstoss stumbles home on the same road, from the same pub, at the same time, in the same drunken way every night.

KROPP: Alone?

WESTHUS: *(Nods.)* I'd like to say goodbye.

TJADEN: —I'd like to join you.

KROPP: Me too.

WESTHUS: Paul? *(Look to PAUL—who nods yes.)*

WESTHUS, TJADEN, PAUL, and KROPP set off. The others exit.

KAT: *(While leaving, with a salute.)* Young heroes.

The light changes—it is late, near a deserted road. The friends set up their ambush for HIMMELSTOSS. They wait.

After a few moments—a whistling is heard, and footsteps. HIMMELSTOSS is whistling and singing—maybe in broken, drunken German. HIMMELSTOSS stumbles along.

As HIMMELSTOSS passes by the friends, a blanket is thrown over top of their head and HIMMELSTOSS is wrestled to the ground by WESTHUS and KROPP.

PAUL, KROPP, and WESTHUS get in a few blows, kicks, and punches.

Silently, they signal to TJADEN to take a turn.

TJADEN slowly approaches and gives the body in the blanket a kick. Then a second. Then TJADEN straddles HIMMELSTOSS and begins to rain down blows.

It grows so severe that PAUL, KROPP, and WESTHUS have to drag TJADEN off.

TJADEN: Get off—

WESTHUS: *(Hushed.)* Shhhhhh! He'll recognize your voice.

TJADEN: I hope he does. And I hope he runs right to the commandant. Because then there will be an inquiry—where we can tell them all what Himmelstoss has done. But he won't say a thing. He won't risk it. You know why?

Because if the higher-ups make an inquiry, they'll see how he treats us, us soldiers heading up to do all the work at the front—and if they hear truth of what he's been doing, the corporal knows he'll be on the next truck right up there with us...

...and he doesn't want that.

He wants to hold on to this soft job as long as he can. So he's not going to say a thing.

A beat. TJADEN turns coldly away, starts a line. SECOND COMPANY enters in darkness at the back of the stage to join the line, leaving HIMMELSTOSS downstage. PAUL, WESTHUS, and KROPP rejoin the line. HIMMELSTOSS slowly stands, tossing the blanket aside.

Lights warm to early morning. HIMMELSTOSS inspects them before they are deployed. TJADEN coughs.

HIMMELSTOSS: What's that Recruit Tjaden? (*Silence.*) You were saying? (*Silence.*) Maybe you do not understand the gravity of what awaits you? That is something I cannot let stand... you already know what this means, gentlemen. (*Blowing a whistle.*) PREPARE TO ADVANCE!

ADVANCE!

The SOLDIERS remain motionless at attention. HIMMELSTOSS blows the whistle.

HIMMELSTOSS: ADVANCE!

Nothing.

HIMMELSTOSS: LIE DOWN! LIE DOWN!

LIE DOWN, Damn it!

Slowly, PAUL, steps forward, and defiantly lowers themselves to the ground. A smirk appears on KROPP'S face. The smirk and the idea grows around the SOLDIERS, as they all slowly go the ground. HIMMELSTOSS catches their breath.

HIMMELSTOSS: You'll drink this. All of you. *(HIMMELSTOSS goes to exit.)*

MÜLLER: *(From the ground.)* Sir.

Chorus of laughs. The laughing turns to coughing. The hospital is recreated with only KEMMERICH'S bed during the coughing.

SIX—HOSPITAL #2

The light changes. KEMMERICH'S breathing gets labored. PAUL tries to help them get comfortable. Some time.

KEMMERICH: You can take my boots with you... for Müller... you can have them after him.

PAUL: No, Franz.

KEMMERICH: Fine. Then Kropp can have them... then you if you want them.

PAUL: Franz—I...

KEMMERICH starts to whisper. PAUL can't hear, but does not dare to get too close. Some time. Then whispering louder to PAUL. KEMMERICH is struggling, the breaths labored and far apart. PAUL sits next to the bed, counting the seconds between the breaths, as each inhalation grows more and more of a surprise. KEMMERICH dies. Some time. ORDERLY #1 approaches.

ORDERLY #1: Is he done?

ORDERLY #1 checks KEMMERICH, then snaps for some STRETCHER BEARERS to carry him out.

ORDERLY #1: You taking those boots with you?

PAUL picks them up.

ORDERLY #1: Do you want his pay book?

PAUL holds out their hand. ORDERLY #1 gives the book to PAUL, exits. Like a vigil, the SOLDIERS enter. KROPP, LEER, KAT, TJADEN, and MÜLLER stand at the edges of the stage, just out of the light, then in their own time and own way, slide into the scene. They are once again in the meadow, awaiting orders.

KROPP: Paul?

PAUL tosses the boots at MÜLLER. MÜLLER says nothing.

PAUL: (To KROPP.) He said you can have them after Müller.

Some time. PAUL rejoins the group, KROPP and MÜLLER follow.

SEVEN—THE PATROL

Afternoon—a few days later. BERTINK enters with a report and REPLACEMENT.

BERTINK: Second Company—form up. We're being sent up on a patrol—in and out job. Heading up in the trucks tonight and back before the morning. Battle report has light shelling and no discernable troop movements as of late, so chances are it will be a quiet evening.

BERTINK nods. No formality, all familiarity. The SOLDIERS nod.

BERTINK: Some replacements have arrived. (*Jerking their head to REPLACEMENT.*) Kat—see to it they're squared away?

KAT: Yes, sir.

BERTINK smiles, salutes, and exits.

KROPP: Look at the new infant.

LEER: Only two years younger than you from the looks of it, Kropper.

The REPLACEMENT gives a salute. KAT waves it away as the rest hide their laughs.

KAT: It looks like a long time since you've had anything decent to eat?

REPLACEMENT: Only turnip-bread, turnip stew, these turnip cutlets—

KROPP: Mostly turnips then?

Muffled laughs. REPLACEMENT nods.

KAT: Want some haricot beans? Like what the officers eat?

REPLACEMENT: You're kidding?

KAT: (*Leaning over and pulling out a mess tin from their rucksack.*)
You think I'd kid about food, my friend?

REPLACEMENT runs forward, smells it.

REPLACEMENT: How'd you get those?

LEER: How does Kat get anything?

PAUL: How does Kat get everything?

KROPP: Got a magic nose for it, old Kat.

WESTHUS: He's famous on the front.

MÜLLER: It's like he's got a compass in his brain for it—a sixth sense.

TJADEN: Once, we were in a place—even worse than this—

LEER: —way worse—

TJADEN: We pull up in the trucks. All the locals bellyaching how there isn't any food.

KROPP: Kat says he's going for a little explore around.

LEER: Thirty minutes later he walked up with his masterpiece—

MÜLLER, PAUL, LEER, KROPP, TJADEN, WESTHUS: Four boxes of lobsters.

DETERING: *(Just a little behind, excited at the memory.)* ...Lobsters.

KAT takes the beans from REPLACEMENT, wiping off the spoon.

KAT: Good? Now, anytime you need something, you come looking for Kat. Just bring a cigar or a chew of tobacco for me and we'll get you squared right up—you see? *(REPLACEMENT nods.)* Tell the other new boys that too, Private Replacement.

REPLACEMENT: It's—

TJADEN: No—no names.

KROPP: Makes it easier when you're blown up if we don't know you.

Same gurgle from REPLACEMENT. A beat. KAT comes to the rescue.

BERTINK: Time to go.

KAT: Get yourself together and see you on the trucks—tell the others—good?

They finish preparing and gearing up. Everyone but REPLACEMENT and BAUMER line up. The sun is going down.

PAUL: You're alright. You'll be alright. But you got to change up there—wake something up in you—like... like this some... this animal part of you. It helps. Out there, that part of you is faster, smarter than here—*(PAUL taps his head.)*—that sounds stupid, I know. But you got to do it.

Music.

PAUL: You'll be alright.

REPLACEMENT and PAUL join the rest of the SOLDIERS. It grows dark. The SOLDIERS transform from the fellows we have seen to hardened soldiers. The explosions of the front grow louder and closer as they stare straight ahead, in the fog and haze and dark light.

BERTINK: Smokes out. Light discipline, gentlemen.

The SOLDIERS snuff out their smokes. The transformation complete as the music hits. Sounds of distant rumbles, but mostly quiet.

KAT: We're in for it tonight.

REPLACEMENT: I thought the report said it's going to be nothing.

A look from the SOLDIERS.

BERTINK: Listen up—stay low and be careful. We'll head out past the communication trenches towards the small wood at the top of the rise there—next sector over. Once it's clear, we'll be back in the trucks and headed to the rear by morning. Good?

REPLACEMENT: GOOD.

A beat.

BERTINK: Kropp—out front.

KROPP nods. The SOLDIERS make their way on patrol—almost dance like, similar to the first battle. There are a few bodies strewn across their path. The SOLDIERS step across them, looking for identification.

WESTHUS: They're ours.

LEER: How'd they get here?

KROPP, at the head of the patrol, kneels down. The line stops. BERTINK looks off with their binoculars. There's a whistling of a shell.

KAT: Damn it.

The SOLDIERS take cover. There is an intense barrage. The SOLDIERS are thrown down. A beat. There is a coughing from the wounded REPLACEMENT.

BERTINK: Who is it?

TJADEN: (*Crossing to REPLACEMENT.*) Didn't get his name.

KAT: Where's it got you, friend?

REPLACEMENT can't talk through the hacking cough, reaches desperately at their leg.

BERTINK: Easy, son.

REPLACEMENT howls as BERTINK and KAT try to search for the wound.

BERTINK: Gently, gently. Spread out and find a stretcher.

TJADEN, DETERING exit to find a stretcher.

REPLACEMENT: Stay here—!

KAT: They'll be right back.

The REPLACEMENT cries, whimpering for their mother, repeating the word over and over. Some time.

KAT: He won't even survive us carrying him through this muck. Now he's in shock. In an hour it will be terrible. It'd be better to put an end to it.

STRETCHER BEARERS enter. KAT nods. They pick up the wounded REPLACEMENT. The REPLACEMENT cries in pain at every bump.

KAT: Such a kid.

EIGHT—ARRIVAL OF HIMMELSTOSS

Light. It is afternoon, back in the meadow, as KAT, PAUL, KROPP, MÜLLER, WESTHUS, and TJADEN sit on thunder boxes. They are picking lice off their clothes.

MÜLLER: This is tedious, kill one and find a hundred more.

KAT: (*Holding one up to the light.*) I think I have a particularly fine brand of louse here, gentlemen—look—doesn't that look like a small red cross on its head?

Hands it to TJADEN, who examines, agrees, and throws it away after pinching it dead. KAT picks another.

WESTHUS: I bet I got these from that hospital at Thourhout.

KAT pinches and tosses away another louse.

MÜLLER: Albert?

KROPP: Professor?

MÜLLER: What would you do... if this was all over?

KROPP: Get drunk.

MÜLLER: Talk serious.

KROPP: I am serious. What else should I do? What else am I good for—after all this?

WESTHUS: I'd meet somebody real nice—and jump straight into bed. I wouldn't put on pants for a week.

KROPP: I amend my answer. I'd do that too.

MÜLLER: Come on.

KAT: (*Pulling out a wallet and a photo.*) My family... and kids. If I ever got to be a non-com, I'd stay with the Prussians—serve out my time. Be an officer.

PAUL: Are you crazy?

KAT: Got to see that they don't go hungry.

TJADEN: Nobody is going to starve with you around, Kat.

PAUL: You'd seriously stay in the army?

KAT: Can't be worse than all I've done before this. Regular food, retire after a few years and become a constable.

WESTHUS: Think of all the drinks you'll never have to buy—everybody wanting to be in good with the constable.

MÜLLER: They'll never make you an officer, Kat.

KAT: And why's that?

KROPP: Too competent.

PAUL: Make the rest of them look bad.

KAT: Maybe. You're probably right.

MÜLLER: Tjad?

TJADEN: I'd join the postal service. Become a postman.

KROPP: Why'd you want to do something like that?

TJADEN: Because Himmelstoss is a postman.

PAUL: And?

TJADEN: And, I'd get a transfer to whatever miserable town he hails from, go there, become his boss and grind him to a pulp every single day.

DETERING: (*Quietly.*) I'd see to the harvest.

MÜLLER: What Detering?

DETERING: (*Standing. A letter in their hand.*) They've already taken two more of my horses. And they haven't been able to bring in the hay yet.

DETERING walks off, mulling over the letter. Some time.

PAUL: I want to live by myself somewhere. Quiet. With a lot of trees. If this gets over.

KAT: I say give both sides the same grub and the same pay and we'd get this all finished up today.

MÜLLER: But what's going to really happen when we go back?

PAUL: I don't know.

KROPP: Let's get back first, then we'll find out. We're dead already. What does it matter?

LEER: (*Entering in a rush, breathless.*) He's here.

TJADEN: Who?

LEER: Himmelstoss. He's been sent to the front. He was beating on some magistrate's son at the camp and got written up.

TJADEN: They sent him here?

LEER: He's walking this way now.

LEER nods and TJADEN mobilizes his long crafted plan.

TJADEN: All right. All... right. Yes. All right.

TJADEN settles at the ready. HIMMELSTOSS enters. They stand at a loss, not knowing what to say. Some time.

HIMMELSTOSS: Well. (*A beat. Turning to KROPP.*) So you're here too, Kropp?

KROPP: A bit longer than you.

HIMMELSTOSS: You don't recognize me, Albert?

KROPP stares back coldly, not answering.

TJADEN: I do.

HIMMELSTOSS: Tjaden, isn't it?

TJADEN: And you know what you are?

HIMMELSTOSS: Tread carefully, private.

TJADEN: Do you know what you are, Corporal Himmelstoss?

HIMMELSTOSS is flustered.

TJADEN: You are a chicken shit, pig-eyed dog.

A beat.

HIMMELSTOSS: You dirty peasant—salute your superior officer.

The SOLDIERS do their best to keep it together.

HIMMELSTOSS: I'll have you court martialed for this.

KROPP: That rot doesn't work out here, Himmelstoss.

HIMMELSTOSS: This is none of your business, Kropp.

KAT: Careful, corporal—this ain't the parade ground anymore.

WESTHUS: Rules are different out here.

HIMMELSTOSS: You salute me, goddamnit.

KROPP: That's why we're losing the war, isn't it boys—we don't salute well enough.

HIMMELSTOSS: Stay right here.

TJADEN: Gladly.

HIMMELSTOSS exits, tripping on the way out. The SOLDIERS explode with laughter.

KAT: If he reports you... it's at least five days close arrest.

TJADEN: (*Shrugging.*) Five days of arrest are five days not being shot at.

MÜLLER: What if they send you to the fortress, like a criminal?

TJADEN: Then the war is over for me. You know any French bullets hitting Germans in the fortress?

BERTINK and HIMMELSTOSS return—HIMMELSTOSS in a huff, BERTINK annoyed.

HIMMELSTOSS: Him—that one—Tjaden.

The SOLDIERS rush to stand.

BERTINK: Easy—at ease. At ease. Tjaden?

TJADEN: (*At perfect attention.*) Sir.

BERTINK: Did you fail to salute Corporal Himmelstoss?

KROPP: He did in his own way, sir.

BERTINK: Kropp—(*KROPP pipes down.*) Did you, Private Tjaden?

TJADEN: Yes, sir.

BERTINK: And act in an insubordinate way?

TJADEN: Insubordinate, sir?

HIMMELSTOSS: I swear to you, Tjaden that I'll—

BERTINK: (*Turning on HIMMELSTOSS.*) You'll what, corporal? Tell me?

HIMMELSTOSS: This man should be tied to a tree—both of them.

BERTINK: We don't do that anymore.

HIMMELSTOSS: Then we'll think of something else. I'll—I'll—

BERTINK: You'll what—? You'll make this man sleep beneath somebody who pisses themselves in the night, through no fault of their own?

HIMMELSTOSS: I—

BERTINK: Make them train in the cold till they are sick? Beat them? Diminish them? Isn't that the kind of behavior that got you sent up here?

HIMMELSTOSS: I never did such a thing.

KROPP: You did.

PAUL: Yes, you did.

BERTINK: Kat?

After a moment, KAT nods.

MÜLLER: We all saw it, sir.

BERTINK: Tjaden? (*TJADEN nods.*) Why didn't you report it?

TJADEN: Never had much use for complaining, sir.

HIMMELSTOSS: I—I—

BERTINK: Enough. Your training camp stunts are of no use up here, Corporal Himmelstoss. Those days are done. You don't want to be looking for a bullet from behind you when there's more than enough flying from the front. Am I clear? (*HIMMELSTOSS nods.*) Dismissed.

A beat. HIMMELSTOSS exits.

BERTINK: Tjaden—three days... open arrest. There's a chicken coop near the orderly tent that's been cleaned out. You can think about your crimes in there. Kropp—one day's open arrest. You can keep him company. Can't be helped boys. Report straight away—or when you finish up here. (*BERTINK tries to hide a smile. Gives a small salute.*) Good day, gentlemen. (*Exits.*)

TJADEN: Damn decent fellow.

KAT: Open arrest—that's not bad. No bars, open air.

TJADEN: Let's go you ol' convict.

KROPP, TJADEN, LEER, WESTHUS, and MÜLLER exit. KAT sits next to PAUL. Some time.

KAT: Lots of trees... quiet. I could see that.

PAUL: I don't know if I can see anything at all.

KAT and PAUL share a cigarette. PAUL starts to cry, silently. KAT sees but doesn't let on, gives PAUL the smoke to finish.

PAUL: I'll never forget you, Kat. None of this.

After some time, we hear the sound of hammers and saws—a few SOLDIERS are seen building wooden coffins. Light. The rest of SECOND COMPANY enter, ALL stop, staring at the coffins.

NINE—FRONT TWO—COFFIN OFFENSIVE

MÜLLER: Those are for us.

WESTHUS: Don't talk rot.

KROPP: You think the army'd make a nice pine box for you? We'll be lucky for a rubber sheet in the bottom of some shell hole.

TJADEN: Can't get us food on time but they can get coffins done early?

BERTINK and HIMMELSTOSS enter.

HIMMELSTOSS: Form up.

BERTINK gives a look.

BERTINK: The duty report is... we're being sent up two days earlier than we expected. We're taking up the old concrete dugouts left off the forward batteries.

The SOLDIERS march to the trenches, then settle into their cover from the bombs. The bombardment grows—a pulsing kind of metronome droning in the back. The SOLDIERS sink lower with each drone. It has been almost a week. A SOLDIER vomits. The bombing grows worse. There's an explosion and the creeping sound of gas, as a fog seeps in. The SOLDIERS put on their gas masks. It grows dark. The SOLDIERS pull out their pocket torches. They light each other and the trench hauntingly. The gas subsides. The SOLDIERS take off their masks. The shelling persists.

BERTINK: This is it.

The SOLDIERS start prepping for the attack. HIMMELSTOSS is lost and afraid. Music begins.

TJADEN: If you find any of those corn beef tins over there—I'll take them. *(KAT nods.)* And some cheese.

HIMMELSTOSS: What?

PAUL: They have better food over there.

KROPP: We sometimes go on raids just to stock up.

LEER: French, English—they feed their sides.

WESTHUS: It's like shopping.

BERTINK: Shhh... ready now.

The SOLDIERS crouch. They wait.

There is the sound of a star shell—the flare that floats beneath the coveted silk parachutes. It lights up No Man's Land.

As it floats over the SOLDIERS, we hear the French whistle for their charge.

Like before, almost like a dance, the SOLDIERS break into a battle—first fighting from their trenches, then the German whistle blows and they stream up and over.

HIMMELSTOSS cowers and PAUL pounds on them, cursing them till they stand up and continue the charge.

The battle takes them over No Man's Land and they stream into the enemy trench—clearing it with bombs and firing SOLDIERS lagging behind the French retreat.

They return to their trenches, exhausted and repelling the enemy attack.

Nothing but the sound of their breathing is heard.

LEER: *(Pulling out a loaf of bread from their belt. The end crust is bloody.)* Damn it.

TJADEN: You can cut the bloody bit off.

KAT pulls out two French canteens and takes a huge gulp from thirst, almost spits it out, then drinks greedily.

PAUL: What is it, Kat?

KAT tosses a canteen to PAUL, finishes and tosses to TJADEN. Both take a sip.

KAT: Cognac. Honest to god cognac.

Wiping their mouths, they pass around the canteens. BERTINK enters, waving the SOLDIERS down before they can stand at attention.

BERTINK: Gentlemen, we need somebody in the sentry outpost once it grows dark. *(PAUL raises a hand.)* Thank you, Baumer.

TJADEN: Did the mess companies make it up today?

BERTINK shakes head no.

HIMMELSTOSS: *(Stepping forward.)* I was able to find this though.

Offers some bread wrapped in oilcloth to TJADEN, who freezes, refusing. KAT takes it.

KAT: Thank you, corporal.

LEER: *(Holding up canteen to BERTINK.)* Lieutenant?

KROPP: It's a fine vintage, sir.

BERTINK drinks. Laughs.

BERTINK: Indeed. Thank you. (*Hands back the canteen.*) Where's Haie? (*No answer as the SOLDIERS look. A beat.*) Where's Westhus? (*The SOLDIERS notice their friend is missing for the first time. KAT shakes their head that they didn't know.*) Baumer— (*Checks watch, checks sky.*) You have a bit of time before they finish dinner over there and start firing again—probably a good time to take up now.

PAUL: Yes, sir.

BERTINK: Night, men.

SECOND COMPANY finds a spot to try to sleep for at least a moment. Some time as PAUL keeps watch. Then, there is a crying out in No Man's Land, unseen.

WESTHUS: (*Weakly.*) ...help... somebody... help. I'm here.

PAUL tries to hush the voice.

PAUL: Shhh.... shhhh. Quiet. Haie—quiet down or they'll—

WESTHUS: (*Quietly.*) Please. Please.

The SOLDIERS join PAUL, looking out for WESTHUS.

WESTHUS: Paul? Paul? (*WESTHUS starts to cry. Not much, but the breathing is difficult. They cough and moan, grows hoarse.*) Can you get me some water, Paul? ... Paul?

PAUL: We're trying, Haie. We are.

WESTHUS: It's all up, Paul. It's all up.

PAUL: Where are you?

Haie?

Where are you?

Haie?

Haie?

Just the sound of small coughs, quiet crying in the distance. KROPP tries to go. BERTINK stops them, with a shake of their head. HIMMELSTOSS disobeys and shimmies over the trench.

TJADEN: Where's he going?

BERTINK lets HIMMELSTOSS go. SOLDIERS line up, watching HIMMELSTOSS. WESTHUS' crying continues, then silences.

HIMMELSTOSS appears, carrying WESTHUS back to the trench. As HIMMELSTOSS gets close, the SOLDIERS break into action and help get them both into the trench. HIMMELSTOSS lies down, wheezing from exertion. WESTHUS is in a bad way.

TJADEN: Damn...

PAUL: There you are, Haie. There you are, my friend.

KAT gives HIMMELSTOSS a nod. So does KROPP. TJADEN can't. STRETCHER BEARERS enter.

KAT: Let's go.

The SOLDIERS gather their gear and tend to WESTHUS. The STRETCHER BEARERS try to take WESTHUS, but HIMMELSTOSS takes one end of him, not letting anybody take their place at the head, bearing most of the weight. WESTHUS is carried off. The stage goes dim. In half-light, KROPP, LEER, and PAUL gather themselves upstage. We hear the voices in the dim light as we watch them clean off the battle.

BERTINK: Second Company, form up.

Second Company, over here!

Is that all? *(Silence.)*

Number off.

SOLDIERS: *(Overlapping and exhausted.)* One-two-three-four-five-six-seven— *(The sound of numbering is heard—it continues quickly but wearily to thirty-two.)*

BERTINK: Anyone else? *(A little louder.)* Anyone else? *(Softly, with difficulty.)* By squads... by squads—*(Can't finish.)*

Second Company—

Second Company—move out.

The sound of bombs give way to running water of a stream, then splashing.

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ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Stage adaptation by Matt Foss

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CAST OF CHARACTERS*(10-38 either, extras)*

PAUL BAUMER	<i>(176 lines)</i>
KAT	<i>(58 lines)</i>
KROPP	<i>(93 lines)</i>
MÜLLER	<i>(37 lines)</i>
LEER	<i>(43 lines)</i>
TJADEN	<i>(59 lines)</i>
WESTHUS	<i>(21 lines)</i>
DETERING	<i>(9 lines)</i>
HIMMELSTOSS	<i>(43 lines)</i>
BERTINK	<i>(46 lines)</i>

ENSEMBLE CHARACTERS:

KEMMERICH	<i>(13 lines)</i>
GINGER	<i>(11 lines)</i>
CHIEF SURGEON	<i>(10 lines)</i>
REPLACEMENT	<i>(7 lines)</i>
RED CROSS NURSE	<i>(4 lines)</i>
MAN #1	<i>(16 lines)</i>
MAN #2	<i>(17 lines)</i>
MAN #3	<i>(16 lines)</i>
OFFICER	<i>(10 lines)</i>
ANNA	<i>(9 lines)</i>
MOTHER	<i>(14 lines)</i>
KANTOREK	<i>(5 lines)</i>
DRILL SERGEANT	<i>(7 lines)</i>
SISTER LIBERTINE	<i>(14 lines)</i>
SISTER TEA COZY	<i>(9 lines)</i>
FIELD SURGEON	<i>(4 lines)</i>
STRETCHER BEARERS	Two or more. <i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
SENTRY	Optional. <i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
WOMAN #1	<i>(6 lines)</i>
WOMAN #2	<i>(2 lines)</i>
WOMAN #3	<i>(3 lines)</i>
ORDERLY #1	<i>(7 lines)</i>
ORDERLY #2	<i>(4 lines)</i>

RUSSIAN PRISONERS	<i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
SOLDIER.....	<i>(1 line)</i>
FRENCH SOLDIER.....	<i>(1 line)</i>
DUVAL	<i>(2 lines)</i>
VILLAGERS	<i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
PATIENTS.....	<i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
LEWANDOWSKI	<i>(8 lines)</i>
HAMMACHER	<i>(20 lines)</i>
PATIENT #1.....	<i>(Non-Speaking)</i>
PATIENT #2.....	<i>(4 lines)</i>

PRODUCTION NOTES

This text can be staged in a myriad of ways—more than can be explained in a few simple notes here. More than anything it is written with a hope to accommodate almost any need (allowing it to fit any ensemble and space.)

SET: The design for the set is highly variable to help catalyze a solution that best fits each production. The speed and episodic nature of the play not only allows—but asks for—a fluid, transparently theatrical approach to most effectively navigate the breadth and depth of the story. Productions have used static unit sets or kinetic uses of everyday options like tables and chairs to create the varied settings of the play.

STYLIZED VIOLENCE: The call for stylized movement or dance like battles can be handled as the creative teams see fit. It is worth noting that there is not a single gun in the production, and only one weapon—Paul’s knife—is used throughout. Using the dance like movement and low tech solutions—like holi powder—to create stylized violence was helpful in the creation of the first few productions.

PRONOUNS: Within the stage directions, gender-neutral pronouns are employed to preserve this space for you and your collaborators, while the gender specific pronouns from Remarque’s original novel are preserved within the dialogue spoken by the characters.

GENERIC NAMES: The generic names given in the play text, as supplied from Remarque's novel, are preserved for most characters. Though not identified by a specific name, these characters are not represented as generalizations in order to allow both humanity and flexibility in the casting.

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