



## A Time to Love and a Time to Die

*Erich Maria Remarque , Denver Lindley (translator)*

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**A Time to Love and a Time to Die** Erich Maria Remarque , Denver Lindley (translator)

After two years at the Russian front, Ernst Graeber finally receives three weeks' leave. But since leaves have been canceled before, he decides not to write his parents, fearing he would just raise their hopes.

Then, when Graeber arrives home, he finds his house bombed to ruin and his parents nowhere in sight. Nobody knows if they are dead or alive. As his leave draws to a close, Graeber reaches out to Elisabeth, a childhood friend. Like him, she is imprisoned in a world she did not create. But in a time of war, love seems a world away. And sometimes, temporary comfort can lead to something unexpected and redeeming.

## A Time to Love and a Time to Die Details

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Author : Erich Maria Remarque , Denver Lindley (translator)

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### **Daria says**

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### **Eshaan Kabir says**

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### **Sonia Reppe says**

Why is this not as popular as All Quiet on the Western Front? Like All Quiet, it's about a young German soldier in WWII, but this one has a great love story and was three times more pleasurable for me. \*note\* Don't read this if you're a recovering alcoholic because on every page, someone is drinking something.

update: Oops, I mean WWI.

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## Ça?da? T says

Kendinizi sava??n içinde ölümü de yan?ba??n?zda hissettiren kitap.

Nazi Almanyas?'n? yererken günümüzdeki gidi?at?n da benzer oldu?unu görmek ürkütücü.

Puan?m: 7/10

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## Dovil? says

– J?s šypsot?s, – tar? jis, – Ir esat toks ramus. Kod?l ner?kiate?

– Aš r?kiu, – atsak? Greberis. – Tik j?s negirdite.

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## arcobaleno says

### **Dove inizia la colpa? E fino a che punto arriva la complicità?**

Leggere il romanzo nella prima edizione del 1954 (usata bene, solo un po' ingiallita dal tempo) mi ha fatto assaporare un gusto più profondo; mi ha permesso di sentirmi dentro nella storia già alle prime pagine. Ambientato in un arco di tempo di poche settimane, durante la seconda guerra mondiale, ha come sfondi successivi il fronte russo e la città tedesca dove Graeber torna per una breve licenza, dopo due anni di prima linea. In realtà non sono precise ulteriormente date e luoghi: il nome della città, Werden, è fittizio e appena citato. Come fossero particolari di scarsa importanza, così da fornire alla storia un significato ancor più generale e potente, e farla diventare una universale condanna della guerra.

Ci si ritrova dunque in un tempo relativo, dove i giorni possono sembrare mesi e gli anni essere attimi; dove vita e morte si confondono: chi è vivo si sente sospettoso, diffidente, sprezzante del pericolo e indifferente alla morte; in essa si aspetta infatti una liberazione e una rinascita. Eppure, anche quando tutto è perduto, rimane un germe di speranza (*l'albero era stato quasi sradicato da una bomba. Una parte delle radici dondolava nell'aria, il tronco era spaccato e alcuni rami strappati, ma era tutto coperto di fiori bianchi con sfumature rosa*).

In una guerra *provocata dalla menzogna, l'oppressione, l'ingiustizia, la violenza*, tra decisioni senza umanità, Graeber (come Remarque) si chiede fino a che punto lui si debba sentire colpevole e responsabile dei "delitti" e va alla ricerca di confronti e risposte (suggestivo l'incontro col suo vecchio professore: *la colpa nessuno sa dove incomincia e dove termina. Se si vuole, incomincia dappertutto e non termina in nessun luogo, ma può essere anche viceversa*).

Nel frattempo, intorno, si muove una moltitudine di soldati e di gente comune che reagisce e si comporta in maniera differente. Molto bene R. ne rappresenta i tanti stati d'animo nelle numerose situazioni; in qualche momento mi hanno ricordato quelli descritti dalla Némirovsky nel primo libro (*Tempesta in giugno*) della sua *Suite francese*.

Qualche perplessità solo per il finale un po'...scenografico e inaspettato, in contrasto con lo stile semplice e sobrio di tutto il romanzo; una scrittura, quella di Remarque, ancor più efficace in quanto asciutta, in genere priva di eccessi e di note teatrali.

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## **Nazzarena says**

T.T

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## **Torsten says**

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## **Lilirose says**

Cosa succede quando ti accorgi di combattere dalla parte sbagliata? Questo è il tema portante del romanzo, la presa di coscienza del soldato tedesco Ernst Graeber. I primi dubbi esistenziali cominceranno a manifestarsi sul fronte russo, troveranno ampio sviluppo durante il periodo passato in licenza (in una Germania devastata dalle bombe, ma soprattutto dal sospetto e dalla paura), e arriveranno a compimento nel finale, di nuovo al fronte, in una perfetta chiusura del cerchio.

E' un libro che ha due anime, entrambe espresse al meglio grazie ad una prosa mutevole ma sempre all'altezza: poetico quando narra dell'amore che nasce tra i protagonisti, crudo e cinico nelle scene di guerra. Questa dicotomia non è altro che un'eco del tormento interiore di Ernst, deluso di fronte al crollo degli ideali di cui è stato imbevuto, ma incapace di trovare una strada diversa e quindi destinato a tornare a combattere per una causa in cui non crede più, semplice ingranaggio della storia. L'epilogo è molto evocativo e in fondo l'unico possibile: (view spoiler)

Ernst Graeber è il simbolo di un'intera generazione di giovani tedeschi, l'opera quindi esce dalla dimensione individuale per arrivare a quella sociale e far riflettere sul tema sempre scottante della complicità del popolo tedesco con i nazisti e i loro abomini. Remarque sulla questione presenta un punto di vista che non credo di condividere appieno (accorgersi dei propri sbagli solo quando le cose vanno male non è una vera e propria presa di coscienza), ma leggere questo romanzo mi ha confermato una volta di più che nella vita non è mai tutto bianco o nero.

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## **Lee says**

Teleportive WWII novel, top-notch dramatization of the complexity of humanity, formal and thematic excellence throughout. It's about a German soldier who leaves the Russian front during WWII as the tide is turning for the Nazis and goes on furlough to his home city for a few weeks. He can't find his parents in the bombed-out ruins and runs into an old classmate, a comely young woman, and falls in love as, every few days, air raid sirens sound and buildings rise into the air as all hell breaks loose. A completely absorbing reading experience, couldn't put it down, woke up early to read with coffee, that sort of book. Few reviews on here in English -- many in Arabic, Russian, and maybe Romanian. My third novel by this author and I have another coming tomorrow.

Super-conventional form perfectly done, always patiently pushing ahead, therefore it feels like an

organic/natural/real (ie, not imposed by the author) plot, the procession of days as a solider's on leave for a few weeks "between death and death," the first bloom of love as everything around the lovers not so much withers as it explodes and incinerates; everything super-charged by the potential arrival of devastation from above, the inevitability of horror ("a howl arose, increasing until it became maddening and unbearable, as though a huge steel planet were plunging straight at the cellar") and gruesome scenes of, for example, a five-year-old girl impaled on a shattered staircase. Streaks of gnarly description, always utilitarian and accessible prose, never clipped or degraded or showy -- the tone is perfectly centrist, flowing, poetic at times, but best of all it disappears and yields to visions of this shattered German city, its inhabitants trying to survive, everyone living not so much under the thumb of the Nazis but more so under the rule of Luck. As with his famous WWI novel and every other WWII- and Holocaust-related novel or memoir I've read, survival always depends on luck.

But this earns the full five stars more so because it so naturally detonates Literature's primary payload: it dramatizes the complexity of humanity more clearly than most novels I've read. Not all Germans are anti-Semitic monsters intent on taking over the world and eradicating their racial inferiors. The novel depicts arch-evil types, superhuman thoughtless automaton murderers in the S.S., as well as devastated, philosophical citizens who hide Jews — and other well-characterized characters most concerned with self-preservation during the worst of times. Toward the end, it's impossible not to root for the hero Ernst even though he's fighting with the Nazis -- he's an absolutely 3D sympathetic free-thinking human being in an extraordinarily difficult situation trying to stay focused and survive even as the guts of a new recruit splatter all over him after catching a flung grenade in the stomach.

Everyone's read All Quiet on the Western Front but it seems like few have read the author's other novels, most of which were semi-recently re-published in attractive modern paperback form. The title of this one probably in part accounts for it being previously totally unknown to me -- it seems like an Ian Fleming/James Bond ripoff by way of The Byrds' appropriation of biblical verses. Alternate titles could have been "Switzerland" (not reduced to rubble and therefore often mentioned as an ideal place to escape to, although it seems impossible to get to), "An Eden in Hell" (good assonance, bad pun -- suggests a few of the spots where Ernst and Elisabeth take mental, spiritual, physical refuge and just live a normal life for a few moments), "Shelter from the Storm" (novel was published in 1957, pre-dates Dylan's song by almost two decades) -- the actual title seems a little too sentimental and monumental, a little too B-movie?

Here's a fantastic passage where our hero Ernst and his future wife Elisabeth are sitting on a hill in a wooded area where the trees are covered in strips of tin foil that fall before air raids to jam and distort radio transmissions: "The trees around the clearing were covered with strips that fluttered from their twigs, twisting and sparkling in the breeze. The sun broke through the mountainous clouds and transformed the woods into a glittering fairyland. What once had fluttered down in the midst of ravening death and the shrill noise of destruction now hung silent and shiny on the trees and had become silver and a shimmering and the memory of childhood stories and the great festival of peace."

"Oh man" I said as I finished it, but I don't want to spoil the end for anyone.

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### **Antje says**

Frühjahr 1945: Ernst Graeber kehrt für drei Wochen von der russischen Front in seine Heimatstadt zurück. Das Wohnhaus seiner Eltern findet er von Bomben zerstört, während von ihnen jede Spur fehlt. Auf der Suche nach ihrem Schicksal trifft er alte Bekannte aus seiner Schulzeit wieder, darunter auch Elisabeth,

deren Vater denunziert wurde und im Konzentrationslager gefangen gehalten wird. Zwischen Ernst und Elisabeth entspint sich eine Liebe von zwei jungen Menschen, durch den Krieg zu schnell erwachsen geworden und auf der Suche nach Sinn und etwas Leben.

Es wird wieder seine Zeit dauern, auch diesen Remarque zu verdauen. Sagenhaft und typisch, wie er den Leser zurück in den Krieg zieht und ihn bis zum Schluss nicht entkommen lässt, sondern ihn zum Bleiben zwingt.

Seine schnörkelfreie Erzählweise packt wie gewohnt. Sofort ist die Beziehung zu seinem Protagonisten und seiner Gedankenwelt da. Er analysiert (den) Krieg, stellt Fragen, findet Antworten und warnt die nachkommenden Generationen. Ein weiteres großes und wichtiges Buch aus seiner Feder!!!

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### **Andrei Tama? says**

Foarte bine scris! Pentru asta cinci stele! Subiectul -e drept!- nu e tocmai genul meu, desi in fata judecatii istorice are un cuvant de spus...

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### **c?ng r?m says**

cu?n sách ??c bi?t :D

vì v?a ??c r?t ch?m, ch?m t?ng câu t?ng ch? t?ng d?u ch?m d?u ph?y, v?a ??c r?t nhanh, r?t nhanh v?i n?i h?m h? ??c cho ??n h?t n?n n? ?ã ??c bi?t l?i c?n ??c bi?t h?n th?t nhi?u :D  
b?n hoa xuân n?i b?n th?ch nh?ng c?y h?ng trong v??n h?u lang c?a Phía Tây, c?n kho?nh kh?c ??p ?? ??u ti?n c?a Remarque m? m?nh ???c g?p, l? h?ng hoa t?m Graeber ch?t ng?i ???c trong m?t qu?n r??u kh?ng quen, h??ng hoa t?m ng?t ng?o khi?n ch?ng th?y m?t nho?i nh? v?a b?ng qua tr?m s?ng ngh?n n?i, v?a b?ng qua m?t v?ng m?nh m?ng hoang ho?i, r?i tr? l?i, tr? l?i d??i m?i nh? y?u d?u, gi?a nh?ng h?ng c?y ?o?n, tr?n b?i c? n? hoa, r?i ch?ng g?p Elisabeth, trong b? áo d?i m?u v?ng ??ng ? c?a s? v?y tay v?i ch?ng...  
th?y Pohlmann b?o ??ng c?u v?t nh?ng gi?c m?ng, nh?ng kh?ng, dù kh?ng c?n hy v?ng, m?nh v?n mu?n gi? l?i nh?ng gi?c m? ??p ?? ??n ?au l?ng nh? th?

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### **Veleka Georgieva says**

A Time to Love and a Time to Die is a marvelous book which, despite being very dark and hard to read at times, turned out to be my sweet escape from the real world. It issues World War II, but it can really refer to any everyday routine which seems to suck the life out of us. Because despite there being a very clear story and storyline, this book is above everything else a search for peace, for love, for hope. What I was left with in the end was not the image of the cold muddy Russian fields – I was left with that beautiful small house which resembled paradise in the middle of hell. I was left with a beautiful love story which started so suddenly and lasted so short, but which never really ended. I was left with so many questions when I turned the last page. I was sad, I was surprised, I was angry, and I was crushed having finally understood the damn title. Why couldn't it have been A Time to Love and a Time to Fight? Why did he have to die? And why did that happen just when he finally stood up for himself, for what he believed was right and for those ungrateful wolves undercover who he thought to be innocent?

This book is the very example of how cruel life sometimes can be, but also of how genius an average man can be. I marvel at the change in the main character from the beginning until the end of the book. And the

most horrible thing after all was the fact that only he and his wife were changed, and everything else remained the same. It didn't matter what he believed in; it didn't matter what he knew or didn't know; it didn't matter if there was someone he loved or not – there was war and he was a soldier, and that was all that mattered. The devastating truth is that Graeber was no one in the face of war, and he was no one in the face of history. And perhaps, there was more than one Graeber in the battlefield.

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### **Walter says**

I have always been a fan of Erich Maria Remarque's novel "All Quiet on the Western Front", which I consider to be one of the best war novels ever written. So, when I saw "A Time to Love and a Time to Die" at a used book store, I was excited to read it. I had hoped that "A Time" would live up to the high standards of "All Quiet". I was not disappointed.

"A Time" is arguably an even better novel than "All Quiet". Set in World War II, it is the story of Ernst Grueber, a soldier in the German Army on the Russian Front who, after two years of constant combat, is suddenly granted a three week leave. He goes home, excited to put the devastation and privation of war behind him and enjoy the luxuries of home. But when he gets to his hometown, he finds the same blown up buildings, the same human misery, the same piles of bodies that he saw in Russia and Africa and France and other places where he had served with the Wehrmacht. The Nazis had brought the horrors of war to so many other countries since 1939. Now, the allies had taken to bombing the town, and the bombing raids brought the horror of war home to Germany. But even worse than the bombing raids, the Nazi party had turned neighbor against neighbor and brother against brother, until nobody could speak openly about anything. It seems that the Nazis destroyed Germany once, and the allies destroyed the country a second time.

Ernst returns home to find his family home destroyed and his family missing. While he's in town he runs into Elizabeth, a young woman whom he had known in school but had never given a thought to before. Elizabeth lost her father because a Nazi had denounced him, and her father was sent to the concentration camp. So here are two disillusioned young people who have lost their families and wonder what it is all about. Why should the German people continue to suffer for the Nazis. Why can't the war end?

Remarque is an amazing author who brings the awful reality of war home to the reader. His prose is very vivid, and his characters are likeable. He captures the silly banter of soldiers while also describing the horrors that soldiers have to live with every day. He reminds us that wars are not about ideologies or patriotism or even about national interests. They are about soldiers, human beings who long to end the suffering and return to civilian life. German soldiers hated the Nazis as much as the Allied soldiers did, perhaps even more so because they saw the Nazis who were naked opportunists who denounced their fellow citizens in order to improve their standing with the party. But like all men of honor, they fought for their country and were willing to lay down their lives for the fatherland.

This is an amazing novel, and I highly recommend it to everyone, especially to anyone who is interested in the Second World War.

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### **Just? says**

## **miršantis miestas**

Remarko knygas stengiuosi šiek tiek pataupytį, seniau skaitytas po truputį skaitau antrą kartą, bet vis tiek jau s?raš? ?pus?jau ir li?džiu, nes kiekviena Remarko knyga – atskiras šedevras, kaskart kuo nors nustebinantis, ir kartu gerai žinoma, niekada nenuviliant konstanta.

„Laikas gyventi ir laikas mirti“ – septinta mano skaitoma Remarko knyga ir pirma kurią skaitau apie antro pasaulinio karo kareivio potyrius fronte. Keista buvo pradžioje rasti kareivio mintis, kurios dar n?ra pilnai suformavusios antimilitarizmo. Pradžioje Ernitas – pasimet?as. Jis mato, kad valdžios pažadai neturi nieko bendro su realybe ir pradeda pamažu suvokti didži?j? apgavyst?, bet dar iki galo nesuvokia karo beprasmyb?as ir žiaurumo. Šiai ar taip, galiausiai vis tiek atsiduriame ?prastoje Remarko knyg? veiksmo vietoje – vokie?i? kasdienyb?je. Tiki ši v?lgi nauja – vokie?iai jau pralaimi kar?, miestai bombarduojami ir žmon?as lieka be nam?. Labai simboliškai visos knygos metu atstogaujan?io kareivio gimtasis miestelis pamažu miršta – sugriaunamas vienas namas, kitas, ž?va žmon?as, pus? miestelio nebeturi kur apsistoti, lieka palapin?as ir mainai vakarienei. O greta viso to – ta sunki kova mintyse tarp „mes šito nenusipeln?me“ ir „bet nenusipeln? ir jie“. Kiekvien? kartą skaitydama Remarko knygas dar kartą aplanko graudus suvokimas – kiek daug besmegeni? šioj žem?j.

Tiesa, man pritr?ko š? kartą Remarko knygas pagyvinan?i? epizodini? istorij? – užuomazg? lyg ir buvo, bet bendrai pa?mus š? kartą koncentruosi ? karo pasekmes bendruomenei, ne atskiriems individams. Labai miela ir nors li?dna, bet kartu labai šviesi, jaunatviška ir žaisminga š? kartą buvo pagrindin? istorija – man labai patiko mergina – nors kartą Remarko moteris paprasta ir žemiška, ne kokia nors nušokusi nuo proto ar šiaip ekscentrik?.

Šis Remarko romanas – labai paprasta istorija su ne tokiu paprastu, bet labai aiškiu moralu. Man šio bei to pritr?ko, bet vis tiek kaip visada su Remarku – geras laikas garantuotas. Kiek tik geras, aišku, gali b?ti laikas su karo vaizdais.

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## **Dennis Ioffe says**

This book was quite amazing. It is from the viewpoint of a Nazi soldier who gets to go home from war. He finds out that things home are terrible, everything is turned upside down. He falls in love and among the chaos there are moments of peace and beauty. There is amazing social commentary on concepts such as collective guilt, our responsibility to standing up to evil and war. The ending of the book is quite haunting and I can't wait to read more of his books

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## **Thea says**

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## **Cassio Queiros says**

"...a novel that does for World War II and the German soldier, what 'All Quiet on the Western Front' did for the World War I. Remarque's best book- profoundly moving without every slopping over into sentimentality ; an angry book, accepting the responsibility of the canker at the heart of Germany for Germans at all levels; at times an ugly and at times a beautiful book, penetrating the surface of attitudes and acceptances, of "man's inhumanity to man", and of the spark that occasionally lights the darkest corners." (Kirkus Reviews)

Congratulations to the Kirkus reviewer. Brilliant analysis of this powerful and memorable anti-war novel by Erich Maria Remarque.

But it is also a beautiful and poignant love story.

And in the end, with tears in my eyes, I remembered Virgil's words (Aeneid vi.86): Bella, horrida bella!  
(Wars, terrible wars!)

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