

Only our Father could save us.

I glanced at each of my allies' faces – every blank expression concealing true terror. Watching my hands quiver whilst I rocked my child of death in my arms – carefully placing its spiked-shaped tooth in its mouth, knowing that it would have to bite before I was bitten or else, I would end up in God's kingdom.

Earth looked like the furthest thing from Heaven.

The ground had wretched and spluttered over itself, creating craters and mounds of mud; every vibrant colour had been stained with the remnants of artillery and bloodshed the night before. All was silent, with only the occasional breeze penetrating the atmosphere, but I knew it wasn't for long. As I awaited the signal, rivers of sweat flowing down my forehead – whether it was the khaki uniform or the dangerous mission ahead I could not tell – all I could do was wonder. Wonder how I managed to end up about to fight for my country. Wonder how I managed to end up from the countryside to certain suicide. Wonder how I managed to end up...

A sharp trill pierced the air.

Like a flock of pigeons, immediately masses of men ascended ladders stumbled and tumbled through the barbed wire into no-man's land. Shrieks of artillery shells and the shouts of the soldiers composed a horrific harmony, intertwined with the drum-loops of rifle-fire. My heart was like a metronome, ticking faster and faster. Bolting through the land erupting at my feet. The rifle felt like a toy gun in my hands – the only illumination came from the everlasting artillery, giving me only brief moments to witness the slaughter around me - all I could see was bodies wrapped in bodies, forming a gruesome spaghetti of entangled limbs and innards.

I kept running, I had to keep running.

I had no time to wonder but still wondered how I ended up fighting for my life.

I was a pawn in a game of chess – one wrong move and I would be sniped across the board. Thousands and thousands sent to die for the sole purpose to protect and serve our king – a heroic act of patriotism they told us, but ultimately, I was going to end up as a name on a memorial, to do and die due to the trespasses of others; my destiny to be decided by warfare...

The goal was in sight. Through the smokescreens, I could see the enemy trench. Me and another and another plunged through the barbed wire, which had been reduced to pieces of filament, and submerged into the trench. Snatching the blade of my bayonet, I zig-zagged my way through the trenches carefully, manouvering over lifeless corpses, vigilant for any foes, checking each corner.

I saw him.

As we stood face to face, it was like I was looking into a mirror. Both of us panic-stricken, each wielding our respective weapons of war, with the power to determine the course of each of our lives. It was like there was a moment of understanding between each of us, humanity leaking out from our battle-hardened states. I felt the temptation to drop my weapon, and just shake his hand. Then he lunged...

But I beat my reflection.

I ran my bayonet through his chest. Watching his life leave his body will be a harrowing experience I will never forget. I witnessed him clutch his chest, squirming and wincing in pain. I witnessed him drop to the floor. I witnessed him perish – with bloodshed on my hands.

I wept.

I weep as I write down my experience. Constant streams of questions pace through my mind: Did I use my power correctly? Could we both have lived? What would have happened if he won? Is it worth being alive? Was the glory worth it?

This night, just like every other, I will sleep and no matter what I try, I will relive the worst moment of my life, watching his life dissipate from his body.

Forever.

And ever.

