

The Sleepwalkers Study Guide

The Sleepwalkers by Hermann Broch

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Plot Summary

The Sleepwalkers, by Hermann Broch, is a story about several men who lived in pre-World War I Germany, whose fates brought them to a small German town at the end of World War I, and how their lives were forever changed from what happened to them there.

Joachim Von Pasenow is a young man from an aristocratic family, who has been chosen by his father to have a military career. His brother, Helmuth, will be trained to take over the management of the family estate. Joachim is stationed in Berlin, and meets two people who make a huge impact on him. The first is a fellow military officer named Eduard Von Bertrand, who quits the military to become a broker. The other is Ruzena, a Bohemian prostitute with whom Joachim falls in love.

When Helmuth is killed in a duel, Joachim is required to come home for a lengthy period of time, and Ruzena goes back to being a prostitute. Joachim marries Elisabeth, a woman from his own socio-economic level, and eventually takes over management of the family estate.

August Esch is a spirited man who is a bookkeeper. He is wrongfully terminated from his position in a Cologne warehouse, and finds employment in Mannheim. He moves to the new town, but stays in touch with his friends from Cologne: Martin, a labor organizer, and Frau Hentjen, an older woman who owns a restaurant. When Esch takes a job as a bookkeeper for Bertrand's company, he begins to hear rumors about Bertrand being a sodomist, and this greatly disturbs Esch. Esch boards at a house with a man named Korn and his old maid sister Erna. Esch takes them both to a theater one night, and Esch is fascinated with the acts. Esch goes to the theater the next day and becomes friends with the managers. One night Martin is in Mannheim and asks Esch to attend a meeting. At the meeting, Martin is arrested for being a socialist, and Esch blames Bertrand for this. Esch quits working for Bertrand and begins promoting wrestling matches for the theater, but all the while he is figuring out a way to make Bertrand pay for Martin's imprisonment.

Finally, Esch travels to see Bertrand and tells him he must tell the police what he knows about Bertrand. Bertrand treats Esch well, gives him dinner, shows him around the estate, and sends him on his way. The next day, Bertrand commits suicide.

Esch decides that the accounts are now balanced, and decides to marry Frau Hentjen. Esch ends his various affairs and stops working for the theater.

Many years later, World War I is winding down and Germany is being defeated. Joachim and Esch wind up in the same town in rural Germany, Moselle. Joachim was called back into the military as an old man, and is the Town Commandant. Esch runs the local newspaper. A deserter, Huguenau, wanders into town and decides to buy the newspaper, curry the Commandant's favor enough to finagle money out of the town, and present himself as an upright citizen and businessman. Over the months,



Huguenau accomplishes all these goals, but the Major does not like him. The Major and Esch have an uneasy and unexplainable friendship. The Major writes a column about God for the newspaper and it changes Esch's life forever. He converts to being a Protestant, and begins a Bible Study class. To Huguenau's annoyance, the Major and Esch begin taking evening walks together.

Towards the end of the war, there are rumors of prison outbreaks and unruly soldiers, so the town sets up guards around the perimeter. The townspeople hear explosions and form a mob. The prison is broken down and the prisoners are loose. Joachim is on his way to quell the riot, but is in an automobile accident. Esch and Huguenau have been assigned guard duty, but Huguenau is more worried about the printing press. He comes home, rapes Frau Esch, then follows Esch through the town and stabs him in the back with his bayonet. Huguenau then escapes back to his home in Alsace and becomes a prosperous businessman.



Part One, Chapter I - II

Part One, Chapter I - II Summary

Joachim Von Pasenow, the son of an aristocratic German family in the years before World War I, is reminded of the events before his enrollment in the academy. Joachim had known since childhood that his destiny was to enter the military, and as the time approached, he began giving his toys and possessions to his younger brother, Helmuth, in preparation. The two boys shared a pony, and one muddy morning, Joachim decided to take the animal out for a ride. Joachim was feeling superior because of his impending academy life and disregarded the weather, and as a result, the pony was hurt and had to be shot. Joachim's angry father sent him ahead early to military school because of this incident. Years later, Joachim presented his younger brother with a fine horse, but in Joachim's heart, the gesture never truly made amends.

It is years later, and Joachim's father has come to visit him at military school. They go to a dance hall for drinks, and this is where Joachim meets Ruzena, a young Bohemian prostitute. He falls in love with her. Another person who is prominent in Joachim's life is Bertrand, a man with whom Joachim once served in the military. Bertrand is now in trade and commerce, and Joachim pretends to be embarrassed about Bertrand but secretly admires him. Joachim is very comfortable wearing a uniform and wonders how men can feel good about themselves in civilian clothes. He ponders the need for uniforms and how donning the uniform is like a protective skin for him. Ruzena and Joachim begin their affair even as Joachim's father is trying to match him up with Elisabeth, the daughter of another estate holder. When Joachim's brother Helmut is killed in a duel, Joachim returns home for the funeral. He feels no deep affection for his father or his mother, and when he leaves after the funeral he is surprised to hear that his father will need him to return to manage the estate.

In Chapter II, Joachim introduces Bertrand to Ruzena one night and the two men discuss romanticism, honor and freedom while the Bohemian prostitute behaves like a wife to Joachim. The conversation and situation bothers Joachim, who has problems rectifying his desires for the company of Ruzena and Bertrand with his obligations as a military man and the son of a wealthy German estate landowner. Joachim responds to his father's letters of entreaty by making visits to the estate. When there, Joachim spends time with Elisabeth; they take long walks by a still lake and he brings her flowers. When Elisabeth comes to Berlin, Joachim has difficulty imagining sharing passion with her, even though his family have chosen her as his future bride. Joachim's passion for Ruzena is boundless, and he is possessive and jealous of her. When Bertrand goes to Bohemia and then mentions the beauty of Ruzena's country to Joachim in a letter, Joachim is furious. Ruzena doesn't like Bertrand, even though he assists her in getting out of the casino and into being a chorus girl in the theatre.

While Joachim is in the country visiting his father's estate, he is concerned about Ruzena. His father, once a strong leader and confident man, is becoming very



eccentric. Elisabeth is trying to decide whether or not she loves Joachim, and her life is described as very protected and wealthy. Joachim returns to Berlin briefly to see Ruzena, and her theatre career makes him jealous. His father is growing impatient for an answer from Joachim about taking over the estate. Bertrand checks in on Ruzena while in Berlin, then comes to Stolpin to see Joachim. Joachim's father takes a special liking to Bertrand and decides this is the man to take Helmuth's place at the head of the estate instead of Joachim. When Joachim and Bertrand go for a ride with Elisabeth, Bertrand and Elisabeth have a powerful moment discussing love.

Part One, Chapter I - II Analysis

These chapters are the exposition portion of the novel, outlining the main characters and providing setting, mood and tone for the story. Victorian Europe is a world of strict adherence to society's demands, with no tolerance for deviation from class distinctions. In such a world, men are expected to follow the traditions of their fathers and women are expected to marry well and subsequently fade into the background of life, managing households and bearing children.

The main character of the novel's first section is Joachim Von Pasenow, a young man whose life has been designed for him. He is to conduct a dignified and successful career in the military and marry Elisabeth, a delicate young woman from a nearby estate who is his equal in class and wealth. Joachim enters this world hesitantly, but learns to love the protocol and uniform of the military. He pays the required attention to Elisabeth, but enters into a bizarre affair with a Bohemian prostitute and manages to delay his marriage to Elisabeth for many years. The story of Joachim's mistreatment of a poor pony just before he enters military school is symbolic of Joachim's lifelong careless attitude towards people in his life. While he concentrates on the minute details of his personal uniform and becomes upset about any small impropriety, real or imagined, the substance of his relationships are covered with neglect and disregard.

Elisabeth and Ruzena are foils to each other in this story. Elisabeth is cosseted and protected by her parents, has pale and delicate features and speaks quietly, with each movement fragile and measured. Ruzena is wild and exotic, dark in coloring, driven by passion and animalistic desires, and does not hesitate to use Joachim's gun on Bertrand when she is enraged.

Joachim is fascinated and obsessed with Bertrand's every movement, every thought. In another society, another time, these two men could well have been lovers. Alternately repulsed and irrevocably drawn by Bertrand's behavior and lifestyle, Joachim continues to include the man in his life, introducing him to both Elisabeth and Ruzena, and becoming jealous of each of them with him.

Bertrand is all things to all people, while keeping his own aberrations to himself. Elisabeth sees him as a potential husband, Joachim's father sees Bertrand as a replacement for Helmuth to manage the estate. Bertrand's true desires are hinted at by

the author when Bertrand realizes his main attraction to Elisabeth is that she reminds him of a beautiful boy.



Part One, Chapter III - IV

Part One, Chapter III - IV Summary

In Chapter III, it is the next day. Bertrand tells Joachim he must return to Berlin for business. Joachim's father breaks down at this news and the doctor is called. For this reason, Joachim must delay his return to Berlin. When his father is more stable, Joachim rushes to Ruzena, and she convinces him to stay longer than planned. Joachim resents these demands on his time, from his family and from Ruzena, and spends his time between the two. Once while he is in Stolpin, Bertrand goes to check on Ruzena, and after a misunderstanding, she shoots him in the arm and then runs away. Joachim comes back to Berlin to find her. As Joachim looks for Ruzena at the casinos and cafes, he is alarmed to see how many of the prostitutes know who he is. When he finds Ruzena, she rejects him and leaves with another man. Joachim is depressed and thinks about suicide. Bertrand tries to console him, but Joachim hears only callous disregard for his heart. Joachim goes to see Elisabeth's father and asks for her hand in marriage.

Elisabeth goes to the hospital to see Bertrand, where the bullet wound has required an operation. She tells him Joachim has asked for her hand, but she loves Bertrand. He tells her he loves her but can never marry her. Elisabeth meets with Joachim later and they decide marriage is the best route for them. Elisabeth and Joachim marry, and on the wedding night they both fall asleep before they can consummate the marriage. In Chapter IV, it is announced that eighteen months later they have a child.

Part One, Chapter III - IV Analysis

Joachim's father is steeped in the routine and order of the Victorian and German ways of life and duty, but Helmuth's untimely and inconvenient death throws the entire system into disarray. Joachim is now expected to take over the estate and give up his military career and Berlin lifestyle. The family will never recover from this event, as Joachim's life is now tied to the estate, and his father, knowing that Joachim is totally unsuited for the job, finally goes mad.

Joachim's relentless and tireless search for the prostitute Ruzena, and his continued desire for her even after finding her filthy, smelly and with another man, points to the low self esteem and intense self hatred he has for himself.

Joachim is a man trapped in the roles society has demanded of him. After bending his personality so severely to conform and even come to love the role of a military man, he is torn from it to play another role, the one his dead brother has left for him.

Elisabeth's love for Bertrand is another unsuitable and unrealistic match, but they allow themselves to entertain its possibilities even while Elisabeth is delaying her response to Joachim's proposal of marriage.



The meeting of Elisabeth and Joachim after her trip to the hospital to visit Bertrand is one of the most telling scenes of the novel. The two of them recognize their respective love of Bertrand, and although nothing is spoken out loud, they decide to join in their grief and anger of losing his love, and manage a life together in spite of it.



Part Two, Chapter I - II

Part Two, Chapter I - II Summary

It is March of 1903, in Cologne, Germany. August Esch is a young bookkeeping clerk who has just been sacked by his employer over a misunderstanding about accounts. He is on his way to his favorite restaurant when he encounters his friend, Martin Geyring. Martin is on crutches and works as a trade union organizer, a profession not approved of by the government. The two men go into a restaurant owned by another friend they call Mother Hentjen. Frau Hentjen hates her restaurant and the people she serves, and would rather be in a business more suited to a woman. She is an excellent cook, but a poor manager of her employees. Esch secures a position in Mannheim, and his new employer is Bertrand, Joachim's friend. He stays in touch with his friends in Cologne by sending postcards to Frau Hentjen. Esch soon rents a room from Customs Inspector Balthasar Korn. One day at the warehouse, Esch befriends the director of the Thalia Theatre and is given three tickets to the next performance. Esch invites Korn and Erna to attend with him. Esch returns to the theatre again and again, and Korn begins an affair with the woman in the knife throwing act. Korn and Esch meet others in the neighborhood, including Lohberg the tobacconist. Erna begins serious attempts at seducing Esch, but he is not interested in marrying her, only in sleeping with her.

Martin comes to Mannheim to speak at a union organizing meeting, and meets with August at his job. That night Martin is arrested and imprisoned. Esch becomes more involved in the theatre and come up with an idea about promoting women wrestling matches. Esch begins to think about making money and emigrating to America. He approaches Erna and Korn about investing in the scheme. Esch decides to leave Mannheim and his job and devote himself to the theatre women wrestling events.

In Chapter II, Esch returns to Cologne, and receives a lukewarm greeting from Frau Hentjen. Esch begins his new life as a women wrestler promoter while living in his old apartment, and eating his midday meals at the restaurant of Frau Hentjen. Esch begins to take Frau Hentjen into his confidences and to seek approval from her, although she seldom grants it. The wrestling events open and are successful. Esch decides he will seduce Frau Hentjen.

Part Two, Chapter I - II Analysis

These chapters introduce the lively, vindictive and calculating August Esch, a bookkeeper/entrepreneur who comes to Mannheim for a new job. His employer is Edmund Bertrand, who he learns to admire and hate throughout the remainder of Bertrand's life.



August believes that life is meant to balance, just like accounting books. He also sees himself as a man who is tasked with making this balance happen, in some cases. His dealings with every man in his life is measured in this way.

August does not have a high regard for women, but recognizes his character and appearance attracts them constantly, so he finds a use for each of them. Whether the woman is a sexual dalliance or a means to balance the accounts, August does not ever really love anyone but himself.

The biggest injustice perceived by August in these chapters is that Bertrand is allowed to disobey the law by being homosexual and poor Martin is jailed because he was promoting trade unionization. August ponders on this injustice for a long time before he actually decides to do something about it.

The theatre represents the wild, unorganized, unbalanced side of life that August wishes he could lose himself in. He is constantly rationalizing his interest in the theatre with a scheme to eventually allow him to emigrate to America.

America is seen as a place of new beginnings, as remote to August as the surface of the moon, but it gives him hope and a means to escape the daily toils of life that he finds so dreary and uninteresting.



Part Two, Chapter III - IV

Part Two, Chapter III - IV Summary

In Chapter III, Esch and Frau Hentjen become lovers. Esch begins to follow up on a rumor that he heard, that Bertrand is a homosexual. Esch begins to frequent homosexual haunts and talk to male prostitutes, asking for information about Bertrand. Finally he is directed to a man named Harry, who supposedly spent weeks on the boat with Bertrand. When he locates him, Harry confesses that he fell in love with Bertrand and will never be the same again. Esch is disturbed in many ways, and unsure about what to do. He clings to the idea of moving to America. He loves Frau Hentjen but despises her, and cannot understand why he desires her so much. He decides to go to Mannheim and tries to get Erna and Lohberg's investment money back to them. After a visit to Martin in prison, Esch makes the decision to confront Bertrand in person. In Esch's mind, Martin's imprisonment needs to be balanced out by an exposure of Bertrand's homosexuality. Esch goes to Bertrand's house, he is admitted to see the man, and tells him he will turn him over to the police. Esch is in a trancelike, sleepwalker state while with Bertrand, walking with Bertrand through the gardens and even staying for dinner. After leaving Bertrand, Esch is overwhelmed with guilt and loneliness, and begins to fear he is losing his grip on reality. He fears he will never be able to make the debits and credits of life balance.

Esch spends the night thrashing about with his thoughts, his loves, and his feelings, and decides finally that he will be with Mother Hentjen, and that somehow, this choice will help save Ilona, the woman in the knife throwing act. He returns to Cologne and writes out the charge against Bertrand for being a sodomite. He folds the charge up and places it in his pocket. This night is a turbulent one, where he and Frau Hentjen get into a terrible physical fight over her display of her dead husband's portrait and his dreams of going to America. Esch demands they get married, and she agrees to do so. Esch posts the letter to the police. This letter specifically names Bertrand as a sodomite, and Esch claims to have a witness as proof. Esch sets out to find the women he has in mind for the American wrestling tour, and decides to visit Harry, the homosexual man who was in love with Bertrand. He finds out Harry has killed himself out of love for Bertrand. Esch then finds out that Bertrand has shot himself as well.

The theatre manager who held the investment money disappears, and suddenly, everything Esch has planned must be changed, as the funds from his investment for the theatre are gone. Esch gets a job in Cologne, working in his old profession, and marries Hentjen. Hentjen feels safe and secure now, and able to talk about America as a dream, knowing it is now quite impossible that she and Esch will ever go there. In Chapter IV, Esch is able to recover financially when he obtains an excellent post in Luxemburg. He stops beating his wife.



Part Two, Chapter III - IV Analysis

These chapters represent the resolution of August's crisis of spirit. He appears to be headed in many different directions as he tries to come to grips with his emotions, desires and ambition.

August's visit to Martin, and Martin's kindness and blithe acceptance of fate, drives August to Bertrand's door. The dreamlike quality of the meeting with the wealthy sodomite carries through and the two men depart as if they were longtime lovers and friends, yet August accomplishes his goal of telling Bertrand he will report him to the authorities for being a homosexual.

Riding on the success of this confrontation, August uses Erna and then matches her up with her future husband. Ilona represents an unbalanced account, and the visions August has of her on the stage being used by the knife thrower haunts August terribly. His solution is to marry Frau Hentjen, and in his confused and addled life accounting, this will save Ilona.

August's complete disregard for the value of women is displayed in his rough treatment of the woman he is to marry, as he makes unrealistic demands of her, takes her property and inheritance as his own, and even beats her.

The end of his theatre dreams is at an end, and so are thoughts of emigrating to America. A married man with responsibilities now, August returns to his old profession of accounting, returns to his home town of Luxemburg, and even stops beating his wife.



Part Three, Chapter I - VII

Part Three, Chapter I - VII Summary

In Chapter I of Part Three, Huguenau spends his first night on the front lines of the war between Germany and England and deserts. In Chapter II, he makes his way through the Belgian countryside with his friendly manner and learns to use parsonages to hide in while he travels. He neither wants to return to the work day world, nor to be a soldier. In Chapter III, Huguenau decides to set up business there in the town of Moselle. In Chapter IV, Ludwig Godicke is a bricklayer who is unearthed from a trench and thought to be dead, but is revived. Somehow, his soul recovers. As Chapter V begins, Huguenau writes out an advertisement in the local paper, offering to buy wine, and heads to the newspaper office to place the ad. In Chapter VI, Lieutenant Jaretzki is an officer whose arm has been severely wounded, and he is in the officer's section of the military hospital. In Chapter VII, Huguenau goes to the newspaper offices where he meets August Esch, the owner. Huguenau looks around the place and decides he will come up with a financial scheme to purchase it. He begins negotiating with Esch.

Part Three, Chapter I - VII Analysis

These chapters introduce new characters and bring the reader up to date on the status of some of the older ones. The setting is now at the end of the Great World War, the beginning of the new century, and a substantial shift of class, aristocracy and society as a result of the War.

Business is held in much higher regard in this new age; indeed, Huguenau rationalizes all of his actions as good because they are in the pursuit of business. A good citizen and a good businessman are now synonymous. In such an atmosphere, men like Joachim are respected only because of their war efforts, and luckily for him, he has been called back to active service.

The loose atmosphere of the time can be attributed to Germans realizing they are on the verge of losing the war and must look to their own survival in the years to come. A deserter like Huguenau can assume any role he desires, because the old system has fragmented so severely.

There are more characters introduced, and the writing style of the author has changed dramatically, with choppy short chapters and an elongated, somewhat haphazard plot. The author is trying to convey the disjointed, fearful and chaotic mood of the time his characters are enduring.

Some of the characters are one dimensional, but it is clear that the villain of the story, Huguenau, has finally entered the plot.



Part Three, Chapter VIII - XVII

Part Three, Chapter VIII - XVII Summary

In Chapter VIII, Hanna Wendling, the wife of an advocate who is away at the war, is described. She is a woman of leisure who can sleep away the day. In Chapter IX, Huguenau meets Major Von Pasenow, the Town Commandant of Moselle. The Major is much older, and has been called out of retirement to serve in this capacity. Huguenau decides to cultivate the Major's friendship as a hedge against being discovered as a deserter. In Chapter X, Esch compares his current position as a newspaper editor with his previous successful profession, as a bookkeeper. The strict rigors of checks and balances, credits and debits, are unknown to his present occupation, and it frustrates him. Chapter XI begins the subplot of Marie of the Salvation Army. The unnamed narrator has been at a Salvation Army meeting in the streets, and the meeting is moving to another location. He starts to walk with Marie, one of the uniformed band members.

Chapter XII is a dissertation entitled Disintegration of Values, bemoaning the fact that common people are wrenched from their normal school teaching, factory working lives and thrown for no reason on the barbed wire battlefields. The dissertation goes on to claim the average man is swayed to hatred by propaganda and idealism. In Chapter XIII, Hanna Wendling is aware that the horror of war is always at the edge of her mind as she sleepwalks through her day. In Chapter XIV, Huguenau follows up with Esch regarding the arrangements to buy the press. Huguenau is entranced with Marguerite, a young girl who hangs around the property. Esch explains that she is almost an orphan, and he and his wife care for her. Marguerite comes back to the press room and asks Huguenau for money, and he gives it to her. In Chapter XV, Godicke, the severely injured patient, is recovering slowly, and has chosen only parts of his psyche to return to his personality. Chapter XVI is a verse about Marie. Marie lives a simple and spare existence, devoting herself to spreading the word about God. In Chapter XVII, Hanna Wendling realizes she feels nothing for anyone, even for her son. Hanna looks in the mirror and does not know the person she sees.

Part Three, Chapter VIII - XVII Analysis

This section contains another series of chapters devoted to new characters, all symbols of the time and mood of the country and its people.

Hanna is a full time sleepwalker. She looks into the mirror and sees no one, and she realizes she does not feel anything. She represents the aristocracy of Germany and all of Europe, who have lost their way and their purpose. Her pale passions are with intimate objects like furniture and art, but she feels completely out of touch with the reality of wartime Europe, motherhood and marriage.



Huguenau's character becomes even more villainous as he begins manipulating the townspeople and Esch into swindle, and offers to spy for Joachim. Huguenau's role as villain also allows him to represent the seedy side of the German people, looking for quick wealth, riding on the backs of others.

Lt. Jaretzki represents the tired yet valiant German Army, beginning to question the purpose of the battles, the cost of the war, and his own role in a conflict that has no end.

Godicke, physically and mentally destroyed, within an inch of life, represents Germany after years of war. Godicke is putting pieces of his personality back together, rebuilding his damaged ego. He is confused and dazed, and cannot even express himself above a coarse bark.

The author introduces two more subplots that have nothing directly to do with the plot: excerpts from an essay on the disintegration of values, and a story written in first person about a young German man in Berlin and his interactions with a Salvation Army worker named Marie. Both of these obtuse plot devices detract from the storyline, diffuse any tension building in the plot, and only vaguely contribute to the mood or setting of the novel. The essay slows the action to a complete stop whenever it appears in the novel, and each installment of the Salvation Army girl story causes the reader to expect this subplot to eventually lead into the Moselle town story, but it never does.



Part Three, Chapters XVIII - XXVIII

Part Three, Chapters XVIII - XXVIII Summary

In Chapter XVIII, the story of Marie the Salvation Army girl continues with the narrator thinking about the German Jews who share rooms at his boarding house. In Chapter XIX, Lt. Jaretzki is in the garden of the hospital, and his arm has been amputated. In Chapter XX, the Disintegration of Values dissertation describes the modern architecture as depressing and inspired by machine guns.

In Chapter XXI, Huguenau presents a devious plan to the men of town, a plan designed to allow him control over the paper and the funds, and also designed to prevent any of them from checking into his own credentials. In Chapter XXII, Huguenau meets with Esch to discuss terms, and Esch says he must talk to his wife about the idea. In Chapter XXIII, Lt. Jaretzki is walking with the doctor, and they are discussing the war. Jaretzki was an engineer before the war, but cannot think the war will ever end. The two men discuss how many millions of men have lost their lives already. Jaretzki is thinking about his future, but in reality believes the war will continue forever. The Disintegration of Values dissertation in Chapter XXIV focuses on the need for ornamentation in modern architecture. Yet, the unknown author says, if ornament is meant to represent an epoch, the current epoch is too full of death and hell to warrant any sort of ornamentation. In Chapter XXV, Hanna Wendling no longer feels the harmony in the marriage she once shared with her husband. She feels an overwhelming disenchantment.

In Chapter XXVI, Huguenau spends more time with Marguerite, and the little girl tells him that when they have enough money they will go away together. Chapter XXVII is another story of Marie the Salvation Army girl, and the reader now finds that the author is Bertrand von Muller. As Chapter XXVIII begins, three doctors at the military hospital are taking a much needed break from surgery. They reflect on their jobs of putting men back together so they can go back and be shot again. They all realize they are being swallowed up by the war, unable to think beyond the next patient.

Part Three, Chapters XVIII - XXVIII Analysis

In these chapters, the overall feeling of Germany in these final months of World War I is highlighted by the behavior and attitudes of the characters in the story.

The writer of the Salvation Army story is intrigued with the Jews he finds himself sharing a rooming house with, and to further complicate the plot, the author gives the writer a name similar to an earlier character, Bertrand. This subplot also seems to be set in a different time, perhaps before the war. Bertrand Von Muller is fascinated with the rituals and religion of the Jews, and it is a subject of amusement to him, not to be taken seriously by German citizens.



The wraith Hanna's marriage is compared to a furniture room arrangement, and all references to this sad one dimensional woman are ethereal and wispy, like the memory of a world that has disappeared.

A complete disintegration of the once strong, if somewhat ignoble characters of Esch and Joachim is obvious from the ease with which Huguenau manipulates them. Joachim has long been married to Elisabeth and has children, but whatever passions consumed him as a young man are completely suppressed as the Town Commandant of Moselle. Esch, who one shied away from being seen with Martin the trade union organizer, now is a champion of the little man, defender of the poor, but all with words, and little action. These two characters have begun to live full time as sleepwalkers.

The military hospital is the scene of many conversations between cynical doctors, and witness to the survivors of the battles on the front of the war. The use of gas as a weapon is looked down upon by Joachim as an "unchivalrous" method to fight, as if there were a more well mannered way for men to kill each other. The doctors observe the irony of them repairing soldiers only to send them back to be damaged once more.



Part Three, Chapters XXIX - XXXVII

Part Three, Chapters XXIX - XXXVII Summary

In Chapter XXIX, Godicke cannot equate the man he is with the bricklayer and lover he had been. In Chapter XXX, Huguenau comes to the Esch house and is able to come to fantastic terms with Esch to buy the business, obtain quarters in the Esch house, and even breakfast every morning. As of June 1st, the Herald becomes Huguenau's paper. In Chapter XXXI, is the fourth essay on the disintegration of values. The previous essay regarding the lack of ornamentation in architecture for this epoch is now compared to a man like Huguenau, a man who acts with a single minded purpose, and whose life is devoid of ornamentation. Chapter XXXII discusses the differences between a career criminal and an honest citizen. The difference between a rebel and a criminal is that the rebel wants to change the world order, and a criminal just wants to fit into it. Huguenau the deserter, does not fit completely into either of these classifications, but the negotiated deal of obtaining the paper sets his world to rights.

In Chapter XXXIII, the first newspaper edition under Huguenau's rule begins with an article by Major Joachim Von Pasenow, Town Commandant. The piece leans heavily on scriptures and Martin Luther's sayings to enforce the belief that the Germans are in the war on a holy cause, and the Fatherland is the priority. Chapter XXXIV represents the fifth essay on the disintegration of values. It is a lengthy description of logic and axioms, and asks profound questions about the logic of God and the existence of madmen on earth. In Chapter XXXV, all Esch can think about it are the themes of the article the Major wrote. Esch has it memorized and the impact it has made on Esch is considerable. In Chapter XXXVI, the surgeon general is in the hospital, joking with some of the cleaning women. Suddenly Godicke emits a laugh, the first sound he has made since his injuries. Chapter XXXVII is a story written in verse about the romance between Marie the Salvation Army girl, and the Jewish man, Sussin. It is a dark and foreboding poem.

Part Three, Chapters XXIX - XXXVII Analysis

These chapters lay the ground for the upcoming conflict and foreshadow the difficult times ahead for all characters, and further explores the mindset of the country at this point of the War.

Godicke, representing the country of Germany, struggles to realize that this shell of a being that his mind now occupies used to be a healthy, lustful bricklayer with dreams and ambitions and not a care in the world. The doctors and nurses at the military hospital are shocked he continues to live, and his sudden burst of sound, a laugh, is an indication that the country will survive this horror and even laugh again.



Huguenau completes his transaction with Esch and not only takes over the paper, but moves into the house and has bargained for meals to be served him. A town newspaper is regarded as the voice of the citizenry, the only source for truth, and a deserter and swindler now has control of it. The reader does not know who to trust now, and any admiration of Esch for his noble efforts is gone.

The plot comes to a halt for two chapters while the author continues his dissertation on the disintegration of values. This plot device is being used in these chapters to point the reader directly at the character of Huguenau, and expound for many pages upon the difference of the values between a criminal and an honest citizen. This method of waxing philosophical on any given theme in a novel without furthering the action of the plot was common at the time this book was published, but in today's fast paced forms of literature, it would not be acceptable.

The dark poem at the end of these chapters, foreshadowing trouble for Salvation Army girl Marie and her new lover, a married Jewish man, is another plot device. At this point in the novel, the reader must slow down and lower their expectations that the story is going to be told in a logical, chronological manner, and try to enjoy the various paths the author takes away from the plotline.



Part Three, Chapter XXXVIII - XLIV

Part Three, Chapter XXXVIII - XLIV Summary

In Chapter XXXVIII, Hanna receives a letter from her husband that he is coming home, and she has wildly mixed feelings about his arrival. In Chapter XXXIX, the military doctors run into Major Von Pasenow in the inn dining room and join him. The Major remarks that the war has turned bad, but there can only be peace if it is honorable peace. The men speak of honor and materialism, and the doctors do not speak their true feelings about the horror of war, out of respect for Major Von Pasenow. Joachim has become very reflective and speaks of his children, and says his oldest boy was killed in the war. In Chapter XL, Godicke is still struggling to bring his personality and mind back together, while dealing with the tremendous injuries to his body. He does not eat for two days, then something happens that causes him to speak again. Chapter XLI is the sixth installment in the subplot concerning the Salvation Army girl Marie, and Bertrand Von Muller is becoming very ill. In Chapter XLII, the excitement of owning a newspaper has dulled for Huguenau. He goes to the office late, if at all, and spends his time with Marguerite and looking at the printing press. Esch continues working daily on the paper, but now with the goal of furthering the Major's grand ideas.

In Chapter XLIII, Jaretzki is being examined by the doctor, and Jaretzki contends the doctor cut the wrong arm off, as it was the right arm that threw the grenade that killed men. Chapter XLIV is the sixth part of the Disintegration of Values, and refers to the logic of each profession and institute, from the military arm of the government to a painter, is to take every act, revenue and effort to its maximum potential with all their might. The logic allows for no consideration of the consequences of all this effort, and the insertion of this logic into daily life eliminates faith.

Part Three, Chapter XXXVIII - XLIV Analysis

These chapters highlight an increasing tension in the town of Moselle. Hanna's dreamlike existence is rudely interrupted by the announcement that her husband is coming home after a two year absence for a furlough from the war.

Joachim hints to the military doctors that the war is going badly, something the doctors have realized for themselves because of the number and types of wounds, and the comments from the soldiers who have recently returned from the front. Joachim speaks haughtily of "honorable peace" while the exhausted doctors shake their heads at the attitude of the military in the face of such wasted human lives.

The author tells us that an event is about to happen that will cause Godicke to regain his voice, meaning that Germany is about to pull herself together to face the end of the war.



Huguenau has tired of his conquest of Esch, and is looking about for more mischief to entertain him. He is determined to acquire Marguerite, an orphaned child who is currently under Esch's protection, as his next conquest. Marguerite represents the innocence of the German people, and the childlike way they were led to war.

Jaretzki, symbolizing the German Army, is rapidly going mad. Salvation Army Marie has taken up with a Jewish married man and symbolizes the relaxation of the Victorian era rules of society, and the abandonment of faith and duty.

The essays in this section of the book begin to dwell on the existence and proof of faith. The contention is that the pursuit of business, in taking the purpose of work to its logical conclusions, eliminates faith.



Part Three, Chapter XLV - L

Part Three, Chapter XLV - L Summary

In Chapter XLV, Huguenau and Esch have a conversation about the meaning of freedom. Chapter XLVI is a secret report from Huguenau to Major Von Pasenow concerning Esch's activities. Huguenau believes the Major will be happy to receive this letter, but the Major is instead mildly threatened by it. In Chapter XLVII, some of the doctors in the military hospital are discussing Lt. Jaretzki's drinking and crazy talk. Chapter XLVIII finds Esch at the paper factory, where he and one of the foremen, Liebel, talk about finding answers. Chapter XLIX is the seventh installment of the story of Marie, the Salvation Army girl. Dr. Litwak has come to Bertrand von Muller to ask him to intervene between Sussin and Marie. Sussin is married and has children, and it is shameful for a Jewish man to be with a Christian woman. In Chapter L, Huguenau waits in vain for an expression of approval from the Major regarding his letter. Huguenau decides the small paper and town need to be engaged in a charitable effort, just like the larger papers and towns in Germany.

Part Three, Chapter XLV - L Analysis

The tension builds further in these chapters, heading towards the resolution of conflict involving Esch and his religious views, Joachim and his military duty, and Huguenau's further meddling in the affairs of the town.

Esch's character is undergoing a serious crisis of spirituality, more serious and relevant than his crisis as a young man when he was wondering who to marry in order to balance the accounts. Esch is moving away from his old world view of credits and debits, and is exploring the mysticism of religion. He wants real answers to his questions, and these questions were all raised by Joachim's article for the newspaper, about duty and religion and how they were inseparable. He decides answers can only be obtained by men working together.

At the military hospital, an argument about whether or not Jaretzki is crazy leads the doctors to realize everyone is crazy. Bertrand Von Muller's experiences with the Jews and Marie give him a false sense of superiority.

Huguenau's continuing attempts to make himself look good to the citizens of Moselle lead him to form a committee dedicated to honoring the war, of super patriots and defenders of Germany. This is a thinly veiled attempt to get Joachim to like him. There is considerable irony in watching a deserter try to win favor from a military commander.



Part Three, Chapter LI - LVII

Part Three, Chapter LI - LVII Summary

In Chapter LI, Hanna's husband returns and at first they are very uncomfortable with each other. In Chapter LII, a young patient at the hospital has died of gas poisoning, and the hospital holds a funeral. Godicke, not quite understanding the ceremony, attends. At the gravesite, Godicke climbs down into the grave with the coffin. When he is pulled out, he sits on a bench with his eyes closed, and the patient's brother sits with him, comforting this strange man. As a result, most of the crowd misses Huguenau's pompous offering of a wreath from the newly formed Moselle Memorial Association. Chapter LIII is the eighth installment of the Salvation Army girl Marie's story, this time done in verse, and concerns a man who has received bad news. In Chapter LIV, Esch goes to see the Major. Esch asks for assistance in finding the way to salvation for himself and his friends, and the Major is thoroughly confused. The Major is old now, and his grasp of reality mixes often with memories of the past. The Major tries to direct the conversation towards the newspaper, but Esch is insistent in pleading with the Major for religious understanding. Lost in his thoughts about his own salvation and memories, the Major tells Esch that all men must find that spark inside themselves and turn themselves over to God. The next day, Esch joins the Protestant Church. Chapter LV is the eighth installment concerning the Disintegration of Values, and continues on the theme of the Middle Ages being a defining epoch of man. In Chapter LVI, the deceased patient's brother, a watchmaker named Samwald, begins regularly visiting the hospital to see Godicke. In Chapter LVII, Huguenau is upset with many things. When the Major arrives to examine the printing press, he first asks after Esch's wellbeing.

Part Three, Chapter LI - LVII Analysis

The tension is relaxed in these chapters, dissipating with the resolution of some of the minor conflicts, but a heightening of the larger plot involving the evil Huguenau.

Hanna's husband arrives and she is amazed that she does not simply disappear. Godicke's return to the world is symbolized by his entering a grave dug for a deceased patient and coming back out. He begins a friendship with a watchmaker, symbolizing the country's search for logic when it will emerge from the damages of war. Nothing clear is happening with Marie, as the chapter concerning her is lined with heavy archaic poetry.

Esch turns to Joachim for answers regarding religion, and Joachim begins teaching him. The reader may find this turn of events startling, because Joachim's religious training consisted mainly of going to church on Sundays and is tainted by his recent long trips into the past. He has begun to resemble his long deceased father at the end of his life, even using the phrases "it doesn't matter" as his father did. Joachim often mistakes his office visitors for religious figures and constantly thinks Esch and Huguenau are Satan himself.



The dissertation on values expends several pages extolling the virtues of the Middle Ages, when man was ignorant enough to appreciate God. Man's increasing ability to think and work, according to the author, made him lose sight of God.

Huguenau is growing angry and vindictive as he watches the subject of his overdone currying, the Major, turn away from him and to the hated Esch. The reader knows Huguenau is not a man who nurses his grievances quietly.



Part Three, Chapters LVIII - LXII

Part Three, Chapters LVIII - LXII Summary

Chapter LVIII is another installment about the Salvation Army girl. Muller invites Sussin and Marie to his apartment, and the three sing Salvation Army hymns. Chapter LVIV is written in the form of a play, and is entitled The Symposium or Dialogue on Redemption. It begins with Esch, the Major, Frau Esch and Huguenau at the Esch dinner table, eating and drinking wine. Soon Esch and the Major are ending each other's sentences, they are so much on the same level of thought. The two men, with occasional derisive interruptions from Huguenau, begin to chant verses back and forth to each other, and even Huguenau and Frau Esch join in when the men begin singing religious songs. In Chapter LX, Jaretzki is at a dance sponsored by the Moselle Memorial Association, and alarms one of the nurses when all he does is talk about the war never ending. Huguenau is everywhere that evening, shaking hands and making new friends. Huguenau dances very well, and imagines himself making a good show in front of the Major, yet the Major is in another realm in his thoughts, and sees the dancing as evil and demonic. Chapter LXI is the tenth installment of Marie's story. Bertrand von Muller goes to see Marie at her hostel. He wants to know that there is more to this woman than her good works and constant espousing of religious sayings. He tells her there is a scandal coming if she continues to see Sussin, so she says only the two of them will sing from this point forward. Chapter LXII is the eighth installment of the Disintegration of Values, and expands on the theme of Christian Protestants' split with the Catholic Church. The essay examines the purpose of the Catholic Church, the revolutionary Protestantism, and then the Jewish religion.

Part Three, Chapters LVIII - LXII Analysis

These chapters reveal the disintegration of the characters, facades slipping away, ugly truth rising, and a growing frustration among all the characters.

Bertrand Von Muller continues to bring Marie and the Jewish married man together, enjoying the tumult this is causing with his fellow rooming house members. He ignores his feelings for Marie, but finally decides to get to know her better, but this is a very weak character in the story, espousing only religious platitudes, even when pressed by Bertrand.

A dance arranged by Huguenau's committee is a disaster because the German citizenry is not yet ready to acknowledge that their class society is gone forever. Joachim is propelled further into his own personal madness at this dance, which may have reminded him of his happy days in Berlin with the tempestuous Ruzena. Such memories would collide with his current status as religious teacher and commander of the town.



Two plot devices are used in these chapters: one entire section is devoted to Esch, the Major, Frau Esch and Huguenau at dinner, and is presented in the form of a play. The purpose here is to highlight in this novel form the harmony of Esch and Joachim's thoughts and beliefs, to the consternation of Huguenau, and their own folly. Esch and Joachim are so deep into their religious study and conversations they fail to realize the danger in making Huguenau angry.

The other plot device is a continuation of the dissertation, but this time, the essay goes heavily into the history of Christian and Jewish religion and begins to resemble a religious philosophy lecture with little or no bearing on the movement of the plot of the novel.



Part Three, Chapters LXIII - LXX

Part Three, Chapters LXIII - LXX Summary

In Chapter LXIII, Major Von Pasenow joins Esch's Bible study group. Esch is overwhelmed by the Major's arrival, and there is silence from the entire group at first. Major asks them to continue, so Esch begins reading from the Bible, the Book of Acts. Godicke is at the meeting as well, and interjects strange words. The Major is having an unusual experience, partly religious, partly memories, but he is not completely aware of his surroundings or the people in the meeting. Godicke is approaching Esch, screaming that one cannot speak of life until he has been buried, and Esch says the dead are murderers. In the middle of this confusion, the Major stands up and looks towards the door. Huguenuau chooses this moment to drop in from a stroll, and the Major equates Huguenuau with murder and Satan. The Major mutters something about traitors and murderers, then is overcome with weariness and sits back down. After the service, Huguenuau approaches the Major and is surprised at the man's aloofness to him. The Major asks Esch to accompany him on a walk, and the two men leave Huguenuau standing alone.

In Chapter LXIV, Hanna is trying to decide if she is eager for Heinrich's furlough to end, or dreading it. She has trouble rationalizing the passion filled nights with her husband to the discussions about war and the future that occur between them during the day.

Chapter LXV is a series of sentences about the characters and profound sayings, all of which relate to the state of the plot at this time.

Chapter LXVI and Chapter LXVII continue the story of Marie. Bertrand von Muller meets Dr. Litwak on the stairs of the apartment building, and Litwak asks Bertrand why he has put the idea of joy in the heart into Nuchem's head because it is causing great consternation within the family. Next is a poem about a man and a woman discussing the road to Zion.

Chapter LXVIII finds Lt. Jaretzki at the door of the hospital, telling one of the nurses that he is headed to a convalescent home soon. The nurse somewhat reluctantly accompanies Jaretzki for a short walk. He talks more about how the war will never end and she goes back to the hospital while he heads towards a tavern.

In Chapter LXVIX, the Major has begun taking a walk every evening, and Esch joins him. The two men feel very comfortable together. The Major has begun avoiding Huguenuau, almost fearing him. Marguerite often joins the men on their walks. One afternoon their walk is interrupted by an official car arriving at the gate of a prison, and the prisoners are rebelling because they are hungry. The Major almost faints, saying that it is the end, then goes inside the prison. Esch and Marguerite wait outside, and night begins to fall. Esch feels very remote from his body. A crowd from the town



gathered around, including Huguenau. When the Major finally emerges, the car takes him back to his residence and Esch walks home.

In Chapter LXX, Huguenau writes an article in the newspaper about the incident, with the purpose of annoying the Major enough to have the walks with Esch stopped. Huguenau is in a high state of excitement, waiting for the article to be published and have the desired effect. He tells Frau Esch he is not feeling well, and she brings an omelette to him in his room.

Part Three, Chapters LXIII - LXX Analysis

There is a touch of madness upon all of the characters in these chapters, which tells the reader something big is about to happen. None of the characters is completely sane, which will allow the author to cause almost anything to happen and be able to justify it happening.

The Major is quickly becoming insane, borne along the road to madness by religious visions, hallucinations and long confusing discussions with Esch. Esch even feels remote from his body.

Hanna is losing touch with reality since resuming physical contact with her husband. She does not know if she wants her husband's furlough to continue or end. Godicke can talk now, but he does not make much sense, constantly interrupting people to say one cannot know life until they have died.

Within these chapters, the author thoughtfully provides the reader with an entire chapter of character status updates, sprinkled with profound sayings, to remind the reader there is a story going on here. This is a valuable insertion, as the chapters immediately following this plot update there is another rambling and obtuse poem about two people in search of Zion.

The Major and Esch are fast friends now, and neither of them ever mention their shared friend of long ago, Edmund Bertrand. Edmund would not have recognized either of these men now, lost as they are in finding the meaning of God.

Part Three, Chapters LXXXI - LXXVI

Part Three, Chapters LXXXI - LXXVI Summary

In Chapter LXXXI, Heinrich Wendling has departed. Hanna finds herself quickly forgetting what he looks like.

Chapter LXXXII is another installment of the story of Marie. Bertrand von Muller is asking himself if he should continue living among the Jews and continue manipulating Nuchem and Marie. He shouts at both of them, questioning their forms of religion, but they both reply with confidence that they are happy and he is bleeding to death.

Chapter LXXXIII is another installment in the thesis regarding the Disintegration of Values. This essay questions the reality of the age. It goes on to state that reality and existence is merely the unity of mankind.

In Chapter LXXXIV, Lt. Jaretzki is being fitted with his artificial arm, and the doctor is suggesting he give up drinking and smoking. Jaretzki is his usual sarcastic and joking self, and suggests the new arm should come with a cigarette holder.

In Chapter LXXXV, Huguenau and Esch argue about the article, but in the end stop their quarrel because it is upsetting Frau Esch. Marguerite has not been around the house much, but Huguenau finds her and gives her money to buy some clothes.

In Chapter LXXXVI, the Major goes to visit the military doctors, thinking they might be playing music. He has received a secret order implying the town might be evacuated, and he is troubled. One of the doctors sees that the Major is depressed, so he brings out his cello and begins playing. The Major's mind is constantly at war now with images of Huguenau causing the war and the need for Esch to say something comforting to him. The Major leaves the doctors, taking refuge in the military correctness and comfort of his own uniform.

Part Three, Chapters LXXXI - LXXVI Analysis

The purpose of these chapters is to reaffirm the madness descending on the characters. Hanna's husband is gone, allowing her to return to being a sleepwalker. Bertrand Von Muller is ill, railing against the religions of the Jews and of the Salvation Army.

The dissertation even seems a bit insane, dwelling on reality and existence, and choosing religion and unity of man as the true reality, but taking an inordinate amount of pages to do so.

Jaretzki displays the typical military black humor in the face of danger. The Major is troubled by thoughts of evacuation, but chooses to deal with it by concentrating on the

exact correctness of his uniform. This is the Joachim of old, ignoring the pressing realities in order to dwell on unimportant details. As always, this will lead to trouble for Joachim and the town he is tasked with protecting.



Part Three, Chapters LXXVII - LXXXVIII

Part Three, Chapters LXXVII - LXXXVIII Summary

Chapter LXXVII concerns the Salvation Army girl Marie, as told by Bertrand von Muller. He says his perceptions have changed, possibly as a result of his not eating properly for a long time. He feels like a sleepwalker moving towards the light. Bertrand von Muller is now staying at home all of the time, visited by Dr. Litwak, who says he is anemic, and by Marie, who brings him food. Sometimes he goes for a walk with Marie. One day he tells her he wants to commit suicide, but needs her to go with him. She refuses.

In Chapter LXXVIII, Hanna has called the doctor to discuss some anxiety she is having about Walter, her son. She is losing her identity, and mixes up Walter with Lt. Jaretzki. When the doctor tells her the lieutenant has left the town for a mental hospital, suddenly Hanna has no concerns about her son at all and goes to town to make purchases. Her loneliness at the villa turns into a paranoia about safety, and she arranges for a locksmith to make the villa more secure.

In Chapter LXXVIX, the Major is in his office and receives a list of deserters from the central headquarters. Huguenau's name is on that list. The Major is not well, and often says "it doesn't matter", touches the ribbon that secures the Iron Cross on his chest, and sees apparitions. He waits a few days, then calls Huguenau to his office, handing him the list with Huguenau's name underlined. Huguenau says it is all a mistake, to be blamed on paperwork. It is a good story, but the Major does not believe him. Huguenau blames Esch for this problem, claiming Esch has falsely turned his name over to the authorities. The Major insists that Esch is a good man, and Huguenau turns the table, accusing the Major of protecting a traitor. Huguenau leaves and the Major is severely unsettled. He wavers from committing suicide to resigning; he ruins his ink pen, turns over his ink bottle onto his uniform pants, and then just sits there.

In Chapter LXXX, the doctors and nurses are discussing Jaretzki and his emptiness. One of the doctors says Jaretzki is a dead soul, and perhaps all of them are. One of the nurses exclaims that one must have ideals, and the doctor says no one who has been at war comes away with any ideals anymore.

In Chapter LXXXI, Huguenau is handing out paychecks at the printing press. He is aware that the Major knows he is a deserter, but as a businessman, Huguenau cannot justify running away. He feels he has a stranglehold on the Major and on Esch. The printers tell Huguenau the pay is short of union rates, and Huguenau says he will work on it. Huguenau goes to the local tavern, where he finds a number of the men of the town and some from the military. He begins speaking about justice and spies and claims he is an honest man. He aligns himself with the Russians in sympathy and against socialism and communism.



In Chapter LXXXII, Marguerite is walking along the river, and when she reaches a certain point, she decides she will leave the town. She is only eight years old, but the encounters with new territory are exciting and much more interesting to her than turning back. She proceeds like a sleepwalker, into strange lands.

Chapter LXXXIII is another verse regarding Marie. It is about two people who are saying farewell in the autumn of the year.

Chapter LXXXIV begins with an observation that the Bible study class now consisted mostly of the regular town men, as others are too busy preparing for the end of the war. Huguenau stops into the Esch kitchen and two of the Bible study men are in there. They are talking about the flu, which has struck down many people in the neighboring towns. Esch and Huguenau have a contentious argument on the stairs as Huguenau is leaving, but both of them walk away from it feeling as if they have asserted themselves and are in the right.

In Chapter LXXXV, the German front has collapsed, and the town is filled with rumors and fear. People are afraid that the prisoners have broken out, and there is a demand of the Major that private citizens be armed from the military stores. He is unable to stop this from happening. These men are assigned guard duty; Esch is during the night and Huguenau is in the afternoon. One day Huguenau is on duty and very bored, thinking of running over to the brothel for comfort. Marguerite is suddenly there, and he cuddles her for a moment. Then there is an explosion near the trees, Huguenau throws himself to the ground, and Marguerite is gone. A crowd of men are running towards the jail, and he is surprised to see the little girl running with them. Huguenau joins them, and is part of the team that opens the prison doors.

When the explosions begin, Esch sends his wife to the basement for safety then goes to join the Major and protect him. He is told the Major has gone to the prison to quell an outbreak, so Esch heads that way. When the scene at the prison becomes violent, Huguenau flees, running back home to secure the printing press from any mobs.

Hanna is in bed with a fever, and the doctor has diagnosed it as the flu. Her house is near the explosions and the windows are blown out, then the roof is half lifted off. She leaves her bed to find her son. She finds him and the cook in the kitchen, which is warm and safe. The other servants join her, and they wait for it to pass.

Esch encounters a huge mob of men, over two hundred, who are carrying a cross with the dead warder on it. Esch hides in the bushes for safety. Very soon after the mob has passed, the Major's car comes down the road, and Esch tries in vain to stop it. He races to follow it, and when he arrives, the car has turned over, the mob is torching houses in the town, and Esch tries to find the Major. Finally he and another soldier are able to free the Major, who was pinned under the car. Esch sits down on the road beside the Major, who appears to be uninjured but is not awake.

The hospital is in chaos and Godicke is exulting over the flames from the horizon.



Huguenau returns to the house and finds the printing press unharmed. When he goes to the Esch house, he is surprised and confused by the destruction. Frau Esch hears him and thinks it is Esch. She is frantic when Huguenau sees her, and he wants her to comfort him and put him to bed, and not be worrying over Esch. Huguenau forces himself on her on the sofa. When he finishes she pleads with him to go save Esch and he leaves, checking on the printing press, then getting himself something to eat. Town Hall is burning.

One of the soldiers helps Esch take the Major to his house. The Major is hallucinating, thinking he has fallen from his horse. Esch secures the Major in the basement, and hearing nothing from the house, Esch imagines his wife secure as well. He gets his rifle and goes back to town, in order to help one of the other soldiers who was injured in the automobile accident. He does not realize that Huguenau has seen him put the Major in the basement and is now following Esch. In the town, along a narrow street, Huguenau stabs Esch in the back with his bayonet.

Hanna leaves the house in her nightgown and walks out into the lane, followed by her servants. She collapses and they bring her back. The next morning she dies.

Huguenau returns to the Esch cellar and begins speaking to the Major. On some level he realizes the Major is not listening, so he goes upstairs to get food. He tells Frau Esch that her man will return shortly, then returns to the cellar to feed the Major. The Major drinks a little milk, then falls asleep. Huguenau stays with him all night, and in the morning, steps outside. Huguenau goes into town and sees that the riot is over, and he goes to the hospital to tell them to come get the Major. When the Major is taken to the hospital, Huguenau insists in going along, after he gathers his money and his things. Huguenau arranges also to accompany the Major to Cologne, complete with military papers. Huguenau goes from Cologne back to home, clears out the bank account that belonged to the newspaper, and departs.

Chapter LXXXVI finds Bertrand von Muller is still an invalid, and never sees Marie. Nuchem sometimes sits with Bertrand in his room, thinking of Marie.

Chapter LXXXVII is another poem about Marie, and describes a ship lost at sea.

In Chapter LXXXVIII, Huguenau does not consider his murder, theft, rape or even his desertion to be a crime. This is another installment in the thesis of the Disintegration of Values, and discusses the rational and the irrational, and their places in systems. Huguenau writes a letter to Frau Esch, suggesting that she now owes him 8,000 francs for his part in the business. He tells her that if she does not respond within two weeks, he will turn the matter over to his lawyers. Frau Esch pays the sum, and Huguenau returns home to take over his father's business. He marries, prospers in business, and becomes fat. He forgets about his wartime adventures until he begins to believe these actions were committed not by him, but by someone else. As time goes on, Huguenau grows older and becomes a sleepwalker in his own life.



Part Three, Chapters LXXVII - LXXXVIII Analysis

All of the characters are returning to their comfortable sleepwalking state just before the world collapses around them. Bertrand Von Muller sleepwalks through life in Berlin, lost and dazed and dying. Hanna returns to her life without her husband, and even forgets his face and dies of the flu a few days after his departure. The military doctors remark about the number of dead souls surrounding them.

Joachim suffers a complete break from reality, and fails in a suicide attempt. It is symbolic that his attempt results only in a nasty stain of ink on his immaculate uniform, the embodiment of his character and soul. Huguenau has exalted his citizenship so highly he feels comfortable making patriotic speeches to the citizenry. Esch, in his sleepwalking state, argues with Huguenau but does not take it to the next level, as he is too busy contemplating God.

The conflict reaches its climax in these chapters, with the collapse of the German front, the prison breakout and the subsequent melee in the town. Huguenau uses the cover of this confusion to accomplish an astonishing number of evil deeds: rape, murder, and finally escape.

There is no retaliation or punishment for this villain for any of his foul deeds. Eventually, though, this character also becomes a sleepwalker, fading into a confusing, but successful future.



Characters

Joachim Von Pasenow

Lieutenant Joachim von Pasenow attends Cadet school in Culm, Germany - ponders life deeply, and is profoundly embarrassed at anything that is not chaste and honorable. His shock and dismay at any impropriety is painful, although he is having a sexual affair with Ruzena without benefit of marriage. He feels guilty about not being with Elisabeth, but cannot control how he feels about Ruzena. Joachim is romantic, but not in the modern sense of that term. He thinks only of emotions and manipulations and affairs of his own heart. He loves the routine and discipline of the military, because when left to his own devices, he listens only to extreme emotional drives within himself. Joachim makes choices based upon his needs only, and one of those needs is that everyone looks at him with respect and love.

Joachim is required by family duty to return to the estate during his father's illness, and it is at this time he loses Ruzena forever. He marries Elisabeth and they have a quiet life together. In later years, Pasenow is required to return to the military as an old man, serving as the Town Commandant for a town called Moselle. It is here that he meets Esch and Huguenau.

The years have not been kind to Joachim's mind, and he is often lost in thought about spiritual matters and memories of times past. Joachim begins to lose touch with reality, and equates people to Satan and God. One night there is a terrible riot in the prison and the town, and Joachim's vehicle is overturned. He is rescued by Esch and placed in Esch's cellar. In the meantime, Esch is murdered by Huguenau, who returns to the Major and makes the claim to the hospital and military authorities that he has rescued the Major. The Major is sent to another hospital in Cologne.

August Esch

August Esch is a young man who is attractive and personable, but carries heavy demons within himself. He has firm opinions about what is right and what is wrong, but manipulates himself often to satisfy his immediate needs. Esch carries a list within his heart, a list of debits and credits regarding his dealings with people in his world, and he is constantly engineering events to make this checklist balance. It terrifies and enrages him, and as a result, Esch stumbles through life like a sleepwalker.

Esch's story begins with his discharge from a bookkeeping position in Cologne, where he is aware one of the clerks has been falsifying records. Esch spends time at a restaurant owned by Frau Gertrud Hentjen, a widow. Wherever he moves, he stays in touch with Frau Hentjen and thinks of her often, although she is much older than him and not as attractive as the women he spends his nights with. He moves to Mannheim for a better position, and is dismayed to learn his new boss is a homosexual. Esch's



friend Martin is imprisoned because of the actions of Bertrand, Esch's boss, and Esch tries frantically to figure out a way to get Bertrand in trouble and force him to take Martin's place in prison.

Esch becomes involved with some theatre people, and the lives of the theatre people, his Mannheim landlord, and Frau Hentjen of Cologne all become entangled as a result of Esch's influence and interference in their lives. Because of him, his landlord Korn's sister Erna becomes engaged to a tobacconist named Lohberg, but only after Esch himself has slept with Erna.

Esch quits his job with Bertrand to spend time promoting women wrestling matches in Mannheim, with the thought he might join with one of the theatre men, Teltscher, to take the show on the road to America. In an attempt to set things to rights, Esch visits Bertrand and threatens to turn him over to the police. Soon after, Bertrand commits suicide. Martin remains in prison for anarchy and union organizing.

Esch returns to Cologne, works with the theatre, and continues his strange and troubled relationship with Frau Hentjen. She agrees to marry him and go to America, although she does not want to leave her business in Cologne.

The theatre fails because one of the managers runs off with the investment money, and Esch's dreams of America end. He and Frau Hentjen marry, and Esch finds a good job with a company in Luxemburg. Many years later, in Part Three, Esch is the owner and editor of a newspaper. He goes through a crisis of religious spirit and becomes a Protestant and a deeply religious man. He becomes friends with Major Von Pasenow, and saves the man's life in Moselle. Esch is murdered by Huguenau.

Wilhejm Huguenau

Wilhejm Huguenau is a man who rationalizes his every action, and forgives himself for every atrocity he commits throughout his life. He appears in this novel in Part Three, as a deserter. He is thickset, wears glasses, and was not suited to become a soldier when Germany went to war with France. Nonetheless, he was transported to the front, and on the first night of cannon barrages, he leaves his post. Huguenau wanders about the countryside and ends up in Moselle, where through lies and manipulations, he takes over a printing press and newspaper run by Esch. Huguenau has a way with words and manages to fool the entire town into believing he is an upright citizen.

When the war is at an end, Huguenau uses the town's revolt as a cover to murder Esch, rape Frau Esch, steal the money from the newspaper, and leave under military privilege to Cologne. Huguenau returns to his home state of Alsace, and begins a successful career as a businessman, allowing the crimes of his wartime adventures to dissipate in his mind.



Herr Von Pasenow

Herr Von Pasenow was seventy in 1888, and is the father of Joachim and Helmuth. He is a German aristocratic landowner, and presides over his estate with an iron hand. When his son Helmuth is killed in a duel, Herr Von Pasenow loses his mind, slips into a coma and dies.

Elisabeth

Elisabeth is the only child of doting parents, and has been surrounded by wealth and new possessions all her life. She has no career, only a life preparing her to be someone's wife. Her mother and father indulge her every wish, but she really doesn't have any wishes. She is like a sleepwalker, aimless and shadowy. She is awakened by meeting Bertrand, and he makes her think and use her wit and feel like a woman. Yet he refuses to intercede when Joachim asks for her hand, and Bertrand turns away, leaving for India soon thereafter. She and Joachim marry although their hearts belong to others, and stay together for the remainder of the novel. Elisabeth's character does not appear in the novel after Part One, although she is referred to occasionally by Major Von Pasenow in Part Three

Helmuth Von Pasenow

Helmuth Von Pasenow is Joachim's younger brother who stays at the family home when Joachim goes into the military. Helmuth runs the estate, and is considered a huntsman. He never married. He and his brother were close, but when Joachim leaves home, they drift apart. When Helmuth is killed in duel, Joachim discovers Helmuth has left him a long and touching letter, wishing him happiness, warning him against getting railroaded into running the estate, and poignantly hoping that Joachim does not find the world as lonely as it has been to him.

Ruzena

A young woman of exceptional beauty, Ruzena is Bohemian. Joachim has difficulty thinking that Ruzena had a conventional upbringing. She has black hair and inviting eyes, and her German is not fluent. Ruzena is attractive because she is sensual and almost alien to Joachim. When Joachim is called to Stolpin for an extended time because of his father, Ruzena decides he has forsaken her and she returns to prostitution. Joachim tries to get her back and then to provide money for her, but she rejects his advances. Finally she takes his money, but spends it all quickly. Ruzena is seen briefly in Part Two, at Esch's theatre, and has the reputation as a crazy Hungarian.



Eduard von Bertrand

Eduard von Bertrand is a young man who knows his own mind. He was scheduled to be a military man by his family, but rejected that and went into trade and business, making a lot of money and a good name for himself as a cotton importer. He is at ease with himself, and likes life. Bertrand falls in love with Elisabeth because she reminds him of a beautiful boy. He and Elisabeth can never be married, and in Part Two of the novel, it is revealed that Bertrand is a homosexual. As he grows older, he is fabulously wealthy, but spends his time lonely and having endless relationships with male prostitutes. Soon after Esch clumsily confronts him, Bertrand shoots himself dead.

Martin Geyring

Martin is a Socialist union organizer, and a friend of Esch. He is jovial and good natured, and accepts his fate when arrested. Martin is symbolic to Esch as one who needs to be rescued, and Esch feels he has somehow failed Martin.

Frau Gertrud Hentjen (Esch)

Frau Hentjen, also referred to as Mother Hentjen, is a businesswoman in Cologne who manages a restaurant that was begun by her late husband. She offers great food, a nice atmosphere, and has many regular customers. Hentjen hates her business and her customers, especially the men. She considers them all beneath her. She succumbs to the persistent courtship of Esch, a man much younger than herself. During the entire affair, she treats him badly in the company of others, believes that he is simultaneously carrying on affairs with other women, but she welcomes him to her rooms. She endures his anarchist talk, his comings and goings, and his brutality, and eventually she and Esch are married and find a way to be happy together. When they appear in Part Three, they are a loving couple, and Frau Esch is devoted to August. She feeds and cares for him, and listens to his rantings. On the night of the town riot and fires, she is brutally raped by Huguenau, and does not realize that he has murdered her husband.

Bertrand Von Muller

Bertrand is a young man who has ended up in an apartment complex surrounded by Jews. His contribution to the novel is to write dissertations on the disintegration of values, and to tell a disjointed story about a young woman in the Salvation Army, Marie, and her love for a Jewish married man, Nuchem Sussin.



Objects/Places

Iron Cross

The Iron Cross is a medal awarded by the German military to its heroes. Joachim's Uncle Bernhard had one, and the medal was in his family's home, occupying a place of honor. Joachim revered it, and somewhere in his military experience, he earns one that he wears around his neck while as Town Commandant of Moselle. During times of stress, the old man touches the ribbon holding the medal around his neck, and this comforts him.

Pasenow Family Estate

This is a huge land holding for the Van Pasenow family, ruled by Joachim's father with an strong hand. Helmuth was in line to take over the estate, but his untimely death in a duel prevents this, and the management falls to Joachim. The estate represents the connection to the Fatherland and to the aristocracy. Joachim is prevented from marrying Ruzena because of this class difference, and his obligations there take him away from Berlin for such a long time that Ruzena believes she has been replaced.

Moselle, Germany

This is a small town that is struggling to survive during a long and expensive war. In the German countryside, it depends on its citizens to keep it functioning, and Von Pasenow is garrisoned there to keep it safe. As Major Von Pasenow declines into senility, and Huguenau begins amassing power, the town breaks and falls into fire and riots

Printing Press

This venerable machine, representing freedom of speech and a certain power, is greatly admired by Huguenau.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is a Christian sect of the Protestant religion, and its members dress in uniforms, sing and dance, and evangelize in Europe before the war, and during it. Its principles and activities are personified by Marie, a woman who catches the fancy of Von Muller, and is the subject of several chapters in the novel. At the end, she simply disappears, leaving two men to think about her: Von Muller who is now an invalid, and Nuchem Sisson, a Jewish man who loved her.



Hanna's House, The Rose Cottage

Hanna and her home, the Rose Cottage, are linked together. Both perfect and orderly, they exist in a dream state through most of the novel. When the furniture is arranged perfectly and the landscaping is done, Hanna and her husband are happy and peaceful. When it is disharmonious, so is their relationship. When the explosions begin on the night of the town's downfall, the windows of the Rose Cottage are blown out, the roof partially disappears, and Hanna's grasp of reality is gone as well.

Korn and Erna's House in Mannheim

Esch takes up residence in this house where the brother and sister have lived for years. With Esch's arrival, everything changes. He brings the theatre to their lives, and Korn begins a passionate love affair with Ilona from the knife throwing act. Erna the old maid attempts clumsy seductions for Esch, and he finally takes her; however, she loses him to Mother Hentjen. The house represents a center for the wandering and confused Esch. It gives him a place to return to in the tumultuous times while he seeks to make the accounts balance between Martin and Bertrand.

Mother Hentjen's Restaurant

Part Two begins and ends in this restaurant, where Esch meets and courts the much older woman who becomes his wife. It is the scene for many meetings with her, with Martin, and where Esch sorts out his feelings about the world around him.

Martin's Crutches

Martin is a union organizer who is lame, for a reason never explained. The frailty of this young man is symbolized by the crutches, and the lameness engenders sympathy and guilt from Esch.

Theatre

The theatre and its occupants represent a wildness never imagined by Esch. He is fascinated with the symbolism of the knife thrower and the helpless Ilona. He considers the theatre a more noble occupation than the bookkeeping, but his preoccupation with balance in life cannot be resolved by the theatre people.



Themes

Reality

The author contends that all mankind are sleepwalkers, and sets out to present characters from every walk of life and purpose who are aimless and lost in their own egos and thoughts. Each character is drawn and outlined, and as the reader becomes familiar with their traits, each character loses its way in the plot and becomes a sleepwalker.

Joachim leaves the reality of his love for Ruzena and slips peacefully into a loveless and mindless marriage. When seen again in Part Three, Joachim is older, but no wiser, and has begun mixing his dream life with the reality of a wartime town.

Esch is active and vibrant in the beginning of Part Two, a man determined to set the world right. He has dreams of success and emigrating to America. He dabbles in the theatre, but begins to lose his way when he meets Eduard von Bertrand in person and is swayed into Bertrand's voice and way of life. From that point, Esch begins to behave like a sleepwalker, ending all of his subplots and wicked ways and taking the paths of least resistance for his life. In Part Two, his old rabble rousing ways start to show, but the Major lulls him back to religious sleep with his article, and Esch's actions become almost robotic in his attempts to please the Major.

Hanna is a sleepwalker from the moment she is introduced to the reader. Her drifting mind is a continuing separation from reality.

Several of the dissertations entitled Disintegration of Values question reality as it is seen by religious views, by politicians, and by academicians.

The author's theme is a warning that if one is not careful, life can be reduced to a sleepwalking state.

Justice

There are many crimes committed in this novel. Ruzena shoots Bertrand, Herr Von Pasenow molests his maids, Bertrand is a homosexual in a land where that is illegal, and Huguenau is a deserter, rapist, murderer and a thief. Yet the only man who is imprisoned or even brought to court for a crime is the hapless Martin, who made the mistake of being at a meeting where socialism was being promoted.

The characters are all in constant fear of reprisal. The police and the military are in every setting, watching, observing, available for service, but not called upon by any of the characters to correct any of the situations. The German war machine is respected and reviled by the townspeople, yet they are careful not to be seen as traitors to the Fatherland.



The author's theme is that there truly is no justice in this world. His character Huguenau commits unspeakable acts, but is allowed to live out his life with a selective memory, lots of healthy children, a successful business and no retribution ever exacted. The good people like Esch and his wife, little Marguerite, and Lt. Jaretzki are treated with indifference by the author, and the reader is left to wonder whatever happened to them.

Disintegration of Values

This theme takes up several lengthy chapters in Part Three of the novel. It is the author's opinion that everything has disintegrated in the modern times from a more pure state that existed in the medieval times.

This theme is expounded upon through many pages, saying that the breakup of the church from one Catholic to a number of Protestant churches blurred the lines and caused man to move away from God.

When man tries to use science and math to explain religion and God, he becomes lost in trying to prove there is a reality.

Even architecture, claims the author, has disintegrated, and provides the example of ornamentation. During the renaissance, buildings were elaborate and decorated with columns and beautiful sculptures. Modern architecture was created in a time of lessening values, of machine gun mentality, and does not deserve any ornamentation.

The author's contention is presented through his characters, who begin as bold people, with ideals and dreams and purpose, but disintegrate over the years into mindless, aimless sleepwalkers.



Style

Point of View

This novel is primarily written from an omniscient third party point of view until Part Three, when the chapters about the Salvation Army girl are written in first person narrative, with Bertrand Von Muller being the narrator.

Because of the third person omniscient narrator, the reader is privy to the thoughts of all characters; however, the author tends to spend most of the novel in the minds and actions of a few major characters. The thoughts and opinions of the major characters are religiously and politically slanted, so when the characters present a statement, the reader is aware that these prejudices exist, and can apply these statements to the characterization process rather than a presentation of immutable facts concerning the story.

Remoteness is inherent in the third person narrative style, and it is compounded in this novel by the number of characters, the insertion of essay-like chapters which seem to be extracted from a seminary student's final paper, and the author's prose.

Setting

The novel is set in Germany, in the years leading to, and during World War I. The characters all reside in Germany, and the plot does not take the reader from that country except to mention America as a possible land where Esch might finally find freedom and balanced accounts.

The author uses time of day and weather to create moods for his characters, and in the scenes where Elisabeth and Joachim are talking, Elisabeth is compared so much with the landscape that Joachim is startled when she moves.

Hanna Wendling's story takes place almost exclusively in her Rose Cottage. Hanna's personality and destiny is inexorably tied in with the architecture and orderliness of the building. On the night of the explosions and fires, the house is seriously damaged, and Hanna dies the next day.

The politics of German war and socialism is the backdrop for many of the character's conversations, and especially important to the plot in Part Three, in Moselle. Joachim is the consummate military man, Esch the anarchist, and Huguenau the deserter, are the primary characters, all involved on some level with the German wartime society.

In Part One, Joachim's visits to the family estate remind him that although he has a Bohemian lover in the city, his fate is tied to the aristocracy and his family obligations. His time with Elisabeth consists of sedate walks along a park-like river, while his time with Ruzena is spent in his apartment bedroom and seldom where others can see them.



Whereas some novels are plot driven, *The Sleepwalkers* leans heavily on the time and place that its characters inhabit, and this determines the patterns and outcomes of their behaviors.

Language and Meaning

The Sleepwalkers was originally written in German, and translated to English. The book was finished by the author in 1931, so the prose and ideas are somewhat antiquated. There are many references to writers and political figures, and these references hold no meaning to an average reader.

The author uses a well balanced vocabulary during the chapters where the plot is moving forward. When the story is interrupted in Part Three with excerpts from the *Disintegration of Values*, however, the language departs from dialogue and action and descends into lengthy lectures and essays. At these points, the novel becomes a platform for the author's opinions and dissertations, and the plot does not move forward as it would in a modern novel.

The book was written at a time when many of the terms held a different meaning, and the reader must keep this in mind when studying the novel.

The author had specific lessons for his reader. The themes are strong and continuous throughout the book, and the vocabulary and language of the characters reflect these themes.

Structure

The Sleepwalkers has three parts, separated into chapters. The book is 648 pages long, with a six page introduction at the beginning.

Part One is about the Von Pasenows, an aristocratic German family. Joachim and Helmuth are the sons of Herr Von Pasenow. As the boys became men, they were placed by the father to their professions. Joachim is a military man, and Helmuth is chosen to be the manager of the estate. Joachim is stationed in Berlin and takes a Bohemian lover. When Helmuth is killed in a duel, Joachim is required to return to the aristocratic lifestyle, marry appropriately, and run the family business.

Part Two concerns another German man, August Esch, who is a bookkeeper and not wealthy. Esch is a thinking man who is obsessed with making the world behave like accounting books. He has many lovers, but eventually marries an older woman who has a restaurant. Before this marriage, however, Esch becomes involved in a theater and is determined to bring his last two employers to justice for wrongs he imagines against him. The second employer, Eduard Von Bertrand, is especially vexing to Esch, and he finally goes to Bertrand and threatens to have him imprisoned for being a homosexual. Bertrand commits suicide.



Part Three occurs many years later, during World War I. Esch and his wife live in Moselle, and Joachim Von Pasenow has been recalled to the military as an old man to serve as the Town Commandant of Moselle. To this small town comes a deserter, Wilhelm Huguenau, and the town is never the same again. Esch is murdered and Von Pasenow descends into madness. Frau Esch is raped by Huguenau. Huguenau escapes from any criminal charges and lives the rest of his life fat and oblivious in Alsace.

The structure of Parts One and Two are straightforward, following a plot line in chronological order. Part Three deviates from this order, almost as if it were a separate book. Characters from Part One, Esch and Von Pasenow, are brought together during World War I. Chapters are randomly inserted into this plot about a character named Bertrand Von Muller, who apparently has no connection with the character with a similar name in Part One, and, who has no connection with the characters in Moselle. The extraneous chapters appear in two forms: one is a continuing story about Bertrand von Muller and his interactions with a Salvation Army girl named Marie, and two, a dissertation written by von Muller regarding the disintegration of values.

The author uses the dissertation to expound on his views regarding a variety of subjects, and these chapters are much longer than the ones concerning the plot. Part Three has over fifty chapters, some less than a page long. As well as narrative prose, there are poems, songs, and a play. Part Three is very difficult to follow, and the reader might do better to skip the chapters regarding the Salvation Army and the Disintegration of Values, then read them after finishing the plot.



Quotes

"Joachim too felt himself being floated away, as though the longing which filled him were a soft, light out-flowing of his heart, a breathing flood longing to be merged in the breath of his beloved, and to be lost as in an ocean of immeasurable peace." Part 1, Chap. 1, p. 37

"Love mean to take refuge from one's own world in another's, and so in spite of his jealousy and shame he had left Ruzena in her world, so that her flight to him should be ever sweet and new." Part 1, Chap. 2, p. 49

"To him Joachim and Ruzena seemed creatures who lived only with a small fraction of their being in the time to which they belonged, the age to which their years entitled them; and the greater part of them was somewhere else, perhaps on another star or in another century, or perhaps simply in their childhood." Part 1, Chap. 2, p. 79

"I must warn you again. Never pity anyone in this business. A love born of pity is no better than a love that's bought." Part 1, Chap. 2, p. 99

"Redemption is in God's hands. If He grants anyone the great gift of love it will last for all eternity." Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 212

"But disorderly accounts meant a disorderly world, and a disorderly world meant that Ilona would go on being a target for knives, that Nentwig would continue with brazen hypocrisy to evade punishment, and that Martin would sit in jail for ever." Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 216

"Everyone must fulfill his dream, whether it be unhallowed or holy. Otherwise he will never partake of freedom." Part 2, Chap. 3, p. 300

"No, nothing could be undone, nothing must be undone, for justice and freedom were involved, freedom, shoes safety one dared no longer leave to the demagogues and the Socialists and the venal hirelings who wrote for the Press." Part 2, Chap. 3, p. 331

Part Three, Chapter I, Page 348, Huguenau

The serious issues of life threatened him again in a new and different guise. Something had to be done to secure and prolong his holiday.

"For although every man believes that his decisions and resolutions involve the most multifarious factors, in reality they are a mere oscillation between flight and longing, and the ultimate goal of all flight and all longing is death." Part 3, Chap. 4, p. 364

"Amid a blurring of all forms, in a twilight of apathetic uncertainty brooding over a ghostly world, man like a lost child gropes his way by the help of a small frail thread of logic through a dream landscape that he calls reality and that is nothing but a nightmare to him." Part 3, Chap. 7, p. 373

"Nevertheless, there is here a principal and objective distinction; the essence of a crime lies in the fact that it can be repeated; and the fact that it can be repeated characterizes it as nothing else than a social profession." Part 3, Chap. 32, p. 416



Topics for Discussion

Discuss Erna Korn, Frau Hentjen (Esch), Ruzena and Ilona. What part did romance play in their lives?

Compare Elisabeth and Hanna. The lives of these women of privilege were secure and protected, but do you think these women were happy?

Why do you think Joachim was so fascinated with Eduard Von Bertrand? Do you think Joachim realized Bertrand was a homosexual?

Esch was determined to have a life of balance, where the columns of debits and credits were even. Did he accomplish this at the end of his life?

Describe the effect the Major's article in Esch's newspaper had on Esch. What changed? Why?

Discuss Lohberg and Martin. These men are seen by Esch to be weak, but are they?

What is the significance of Marie the Salvation Army girl to the plot?

Marguerite is the small child in Part Three, who does not belong to anyone, and at the end of the novel runs away from her protectors and joins an unruly mob. What is the symbolism here?

Many of the women in the novel do not like men. Is this the author's way of showing the reader that all men are evil?

Discuss the literary term of anti-hero. Describe how the main characters: Esch, Joachim, Bertrand and Huguenau are anti-heroes.