



SOLDIER'S HOME

— BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY —

RETOLD BY SARA SIMPSON

Soldier's Home (1925)
By Ernest Hemingway
Retold by Sara Simpson

Before World War I, Krebs was going to college in Kansas. There is a picture of him and his frat brothers, and they all look exactly the same. He joined the Marines in 1917, fought in Germany, and came home in the summer of 1919. There is a picture of Krebs and another marine standing next to the Rhine River with two German girls. The girls weren't very pretty, and you can't see the river in the picture.

When the first soldiers, men who had been drafted, came back from the, there were parades and celebrations. Krebs never got to see any of that. He was one of the soldiers who came back very late after the war. By the time he got back to his hometown in Oklahoma, nobody cared about the soldiers anymore. There weren't any parades.

Krebs fought in many famous battles in the war. At first, he didn't want to talk about the war. Later, he wanted to talk, but people didn't want to listen. The soldiers who came home before him had talked about all the horrible things they had seen, and people back home didn't want to know any more. He had to lie to get people to pay attention, like his own reality hadn't been enough. He started to hate the war and hate himself for lying. The lies about the war made his real memories cheap.

The lies he told weren't big lies. He would tell people stories about the war that he had heard from other men, but make it sound like the stories had happened to him. When he went to play pool with old friends from before the war, they told stories they had heard about German girls chaining themselves to machine guns. Krebs's stories sounded boring compared to that.

Krebs felt sick to his stomach every time he told a small lie to another soldier who had fought in the war. The truth was, **he had been badly, sickeningly frightened all the time** during the war. He had lost everything important to him when he went away to war.

During this time, late in the summer of 1919, he slept late every morning. When he got up, he walked to the library to get a book, went home and ate lunch, then

What other wars can you think of where the soldiers came home and nobody seemed or care? Google it if you need to!

Explain why Krebs feels like he has to lie when he tells stories about the war.

What "important things" do you think a person loses when he/she fights in a war? Hint: What would change about a person's view of the world or personality?

didn't want to come back to Oklahoma. He wished he could have stayed there.

He sat on the front porch and watched the pretty girls walking along. They were prettier than the girls in France or Germany, but they didn't understand what he had been through. He didn't want to get into a relationship. It was too much work, and he was finally starting to feel better.

He was reading a book about the war. He was reading about the battles he had been in. It was the most interesting thing he had ever read. He felt like he was finally learning about the war. **He had been a good soldier.** That was important.

One morning, about a month after he got home, his mother came into his room and sat down on his bed.

"I talked to your father, Harold," she said, "and he says you can use the car in the evening if you want."

"Really?" Krebs said, still half asleep. "He says I can use the car? I'll bet you made him do it."

"No, it was your father's idea," she said. "Will you come eat breakfast with us today?"

"I'll get dressed and come down," he said.

He washed, shaved, put on clothes, and went downstairs to the dining room. His little sister came in with the newspaper.

"Harry! You're a sleepyhead. Do you ever get up?" she said.

Krebs looked at her. He liked her. She was his favorite sister. He took the newspaper and started reading the sports page while he ate his cereal.

"Harold!" his mother said. "Be careful with the paper. Don't mess it up. Your father doesn't like it when the paper is messed up before he gets to read it."

"I won't mess it up," he said.

His sister sat down at the table and watched him.

"We're going to play softball today," she said.

Why do you think it is important to Krebs that he was a "good soldier"?

Describe something Krebs's family does to try to help him feel better? Do you think this would help? Why or why not?

"I'm your mother," she said. "I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby."

Krebs felt sick to his stomach.

Why do you think Krebs feels sick to his stomach when his mother talks about how she held him close to her heart when he was a baby?
