

Extended practice

The narrator here is an ambulance man working in Italy in World War I. A shell has exploded where he and his colleagues were eating.

I heard close to me someone saying, 'Mamma mia! Oh, mamma mia!' I pulled and twisted and got my legs loose finally and turned round and touched him. It was Passini and when I touched him he screamed. His legs were towards me and I saw that they were both smashed above the knee. One leg was gone and the other was held by tendons and part of the trouser, and the stump twitched and jerked as though it were not connected. He bit his arm and moaned 'Oh, mamma mia, mamma mia. Oh, Jesus, shoot me. Stop it. Stop it. Stop it. Mamma mia.' Then he was quiet, biting his arm, the stump of his leg twitching.

I tried to get close to him to get a tourniquet on the legs but I could not move. I tried again and my legs moved a little. Passini was quiet now. I saw that there was no need to try to help him, because he was dead already. I made sure he was dead. I sat up straight and as I did so something inside my head moved like the weights on a doll's eyes and it hit me inside my eyeballs. My legs felt warm and wet and my shoes were wet and warm inside. I knew that I was hit and leaned over and put my hand on my knee. My knee wasn't there.

(Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*)

Task: 'The writer makes this event horribly real.' To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you should:

- Write about your impressions of the scene.
- Evaluate how the writer has created these impressions.
- Support your opinions with quotations from the text.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Continue on lined paper if necessary.