

Name: Date: Period:

**Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 8**

**Directions:** Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color

in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

**Themes Key**

The Horror of Modern War

Survival

The Lost Generation Comradeship

The Hypocrisy of the Older Generation

**Summary**

**Theme Tracker**

**Your Analysis**

**Paul** arrives at the training camp, and recognizes few people. The camp is in idyllic countryside, and Paul chooses to spend much of his time alone, reverently observing nature.

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Adjacent to **Paul’s** camp is a prison camp for captured Russians, who must sift through the Germans’ garbage to find food. Paul wonders what horrible refuse the men must be reduced to eating, as the German rations are quite thin themselves. Paul feels pity for the wretched prisoners, and notices that they have honest, peasant-like features that resemble those of the people of the German countryside. Some of the soldiers in Paul’s camp will kick the Russian prisoners out of spite, but most simply ignore them. In the evenings, the Russians come to the German camp to barter their possessions for food, and the Germans shrewdly trade for the superior Russian boots.

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**Paul** reflects that the Germans and the Russians understand one another very little. He observes that the Russians seem more

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**Summary**

**Theme Tracker**

**Your Analysis**

friendly with each other than the Germans do, perhaps because of their abject state. Imprisonment has made the Russians feeble and apathetic, and Paul can only see them as suffering creatures. If he knew more of their lives, he might be able to find sympathy for the men. Paul laments that Russians are the enemy simply because someone in power commanded it to be that way. In truth, officers are more of an enemy to recruits than the Russian soldiers are to their German counterparts, even though the Germans and Russians would fire upon one another immediately, if commanded to do so.

**Paul** becomes frightened by these thoughts, and decides to repress them until the war is over. He gives some of his cigarettes to the Russians, and is comforted by their glow.

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Nearly every day sees the death of a Russian prisoner, and **Paul** is placed on guard duty for one of the burials. After the funeral, Paul listens to one of the prisoners play violin and reflects that hearing the music outside makes it sound thin and melancholy.

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Because he already was given a leave, **Paul** gets none on Sundays. On his last Sunday before returning to the front, his father and eldest sister come visit him. The have little to talk about, and Paul’s relatives confirm that his mother has come down with cancer and will be operated on soon. His mother is in a crowded, inexpensive wing of the hospital; Paul’s father, poor and overworked, is worried about finances but afraid to ask the surgeon what the operation will cost, because he fears it might make the surgeon unwilling to operate. Paul thinks of his father’s dismal and grinding work routine, and tries to lighten his spirits with humor.

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**Summary**

**Theme Tracker**

**Your Analysis**

**Paul’s** father and sister leave him with jam and potato-cakes his mother has made. Paul tries some of the food, but has no taste for it, so makes up his mind to give it to the Russians. Paul then remembers that his mother must have been in great pain when she made the cakes, and decides to give only two of them away to the prisoners.

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