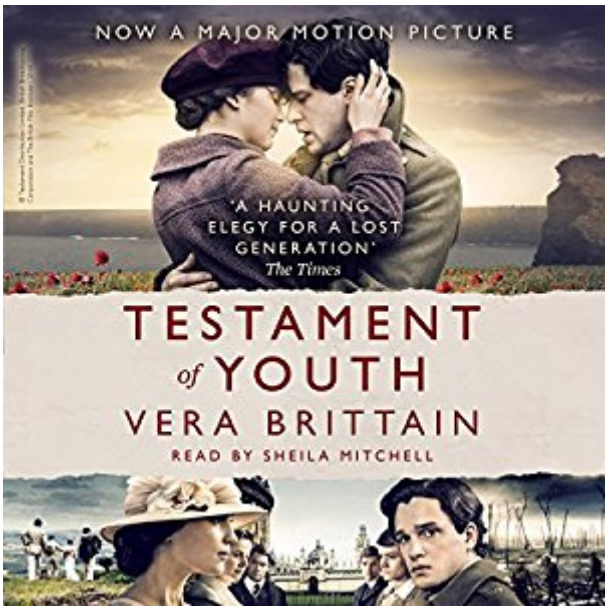
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Testament Of Youth



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Synopsis

This classic memoir of the First World War is now a major motion picture starring Alicia Vikander and Kit Harington. In 1914 Vera Brittain was 20, and as war was declared she was preparing to study at Oxford. Four years later her life - and the lives of her whole generation - had changed in a way that would have been unimaginable in the tranquil prewar era. Testament of Youth, one of the most famous autobiographies of the First World War, is Brittain’s account of how she survived those agonising years; how she lost the man she loved; how she nursed the wounded; and how she emerged into an altered world. A passionate record of a lost generation, it made Vera Brittain one of the best-loved writers of her time and has lost none of its power to shock, move and enthral readers since its first publication in 1933.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #127 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > World War I #387 inÃ Â Books > Audible Audiobooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Artists, Writers & Musicians #479 inÃ Â Books > History > Military > World War I

Customer Reviews

Overall I enjoyed Testament of Youth. I appreciated the author’s sincerity and dedication and this personal view of WWI history. Ms Brittain’s writing reveals her intelligence, intensity, and large vocabulary, and I was glad I read the book on Kindle so I could easily look up words new to me. Her writing style with long, convoluted sentences was tiresome and sometimes confusing but I realize in 1930’s England this may have been standard. At the beginning of the book I grew weary of all the anger expressed by Ms Brittain. It is tragic her generation lost so much of their youth, but her anger at her conventional parents who had no books in their home seemed misplaced. I was surprised later in the book when Ms Brittain was overseas and she referred to letters with her Mother that

there was such warmth. Ms Brittain expressed her ideas on so many things, it would have been interesting to know about the improvement in their relationship. The book is rich with the daily and personal experiences of people from all walks of life during WWI. At the end of the book Ms Brittain is ready to begin a new life chapter. Her edges are softening and she's beginning to give up some control. I was so glad for this resolution for her and it was a timely end. But, oh, it would have been wonderful to learn more of this next stage in her life.

About knee deep into this. A woman both in an outside of her time. She proves herself in her time by her writing style: Very correct and proper, always careful to prepare the reader for what is to come, so there are no surprises and the reading can at times get tedious. I find her out of her time in her advanced and well developed feminism (I'm a guy by the way). Her desire for an education and career above her desire for an advantageous marriage were radical even 50 or more years after she is writing. Positively scandalous in her time, although she does speak of some who share her views (even if she implies, or I infered, or both, that those were mostly lesbians.) As I am reading the war is just getting under way, so I have yet to sample the book's best known anti war theme, but even now I can see it as a study of another time by a sensitive, active, first rate mind as it causes me to think about the slow rate of human progress. If you want the Cliff Notes version, see the movie.

I watched the movie from this book on TV one evening without knowing anything about it other than the movie description. I took to the story so that at the conclusion I went on-line to purchase my Kindle edition. The writing is excellent and of course the book contains much more detail than the movie which is what I'd hope for. Having said that I found that from about 75-80% in the story was becoming repetitious and somehow no longer held me. Still, even allowing for that, the book is well worth the buy if you have any interest at all in how life was and how it changed for a young women in the early 1900s England. Born to upper middle class, Vera Brittain threw up her relatively privileged life and student days in Oxford to become a WW1 nurse, first in the UK and later shipped in submarine infested waters to foreign soils. The extraordinary brutality and horrific conditions of the so-called 'Great War' became the everyday nightmare of this lady of gentle breeding yet the experience and her resolve to see it through under circumstances in every respect foreign to her life are almost unbelievable and utterly admirable. A worthwhile read indeed.The Slope of Kongwa Hill: A Boy's Tale of Africa

Having just read a history of the First World War, and also visited, for the first time, Flanders and Ypres, Brittain's book is an excellent description, full of emotion, of how the war affected her personally and the generation of whom she became a spokesperson, but also what she chose to do about it. Written without question from her own context of class and period, it still transcends both of those and stands as an important work that asks questions that continue - and perhaps always will - to be relevant to us as individuals and as people. Worth reading.

Vera Brittain's experiences at Oxford and on the Western Front as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), render a fuller, more heartfelt portrait of the Great War and its psychological toll on the lives of soldiers, nurses, and civilians than Hemingway's overrated, and often tedious, "A Farewell to Arms."Brittain's autobiography includes her poetry and letters from her friends, lover, and brother. How disappointing that the Penguin editor neglected to translate the Latin poetry in the text. Archival photographs of Brittain and those she wrote of also deserved to be included.This testament is an invaluable addition to the literature of World War I, as well as a remarkable, diary-like account of a young woman's metamorphosis: The reader discovers how the war transformed Vera from an idealistic patriot to a discerning pacifist, from an obedient Victorian daughter to a modern independent woman. I especially enjoyed the later passages describing her friendship with Winifred Holtby, whose compassion and zest for life, helps heal Vera's brokenness. Together, they win Oxford degrees, find their first apartment in London, discover meaningful work as lecturers, attend peace conferences in Geneva and give speeches on behalf of the League of Nations, traveling throughout war-savaged Europe. Both young women bridge the chasm between aspiration and achievement when, after inches of rejection slips, they at long last publish their first novels.Though they carry their raw war identity close, never forgetting those they loved who died so senselessly, they gradually forge meaningful lives for themselves both professionally and personally, a testament to their courage and integrity and endurance. This elegy-driven memoir ends with a new beginning for Vera, which I will let the reader discover.Brittain's autobiography, not an easy read, is nonetheless a worthwhile book to give a teenage feminist on the cusp of becoming a woman.

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