When the Guns Fall Silent

Jack Loveless attempts to avert his grandson's questions about his role in World War I by taking the boy on a tour of the battlefield graveyards. But while he is there a memento of the 1914 Christmas truce, when the combatants abandoned their weapons to play football in No Man's Land, brings back suppressed memories of the horrors leading up to and beyond that event. This book is an attempt to detail those horrors from the point of view of a youth who joined up idealistically at the age of 16 and lost his naivety along with his friends and his youth. The unpolished writing is as jagged and staccato as a fusillade, told in arhythmic stretches of narrative, diary and letter writing. The stupidity, waste and sheer terror of the war are vividly emphasised, as is the pathos of the never-to-be-repeated Christmas truce.

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