

A farewell to arms

Nothing happened until afternoon. The doctor was a thin quiet little man who seemed disturbed by the war. He took out a number of small steel splinters from my thighs with delicate and refined distaste. He used a local anaesthetic called something or other "snow", which froze the tissue and avoided pain until the probe, the scalpel or the forceps got below the frozen portion. The anaesthetized area was clearly defined by the patient and after a time the doctor's fragile delicacy was exhausted and he said it would be better to have an X-ray. Probing was unsatisfactory, he said.

The X-ray was taken at the Ospedale Maggiore and the doctor who did it was excitable, efficient and cheerful. It was arranged by holding up the shoulders, that the patient should see personally some of the larger foreign bodies through the machine. The plates were to be sent over. The doctor requested me to write in his pocket notebook, my name, and regiment and some sentiment. He declared that the foreign bodies were ugly, nasty, brutal. The Austrians were sons of bitches. How many had I killed? I had not killed any but I was anxious to please -and I said I had killed plenty. Miss Gage was with me and the doctor put his arm around her and said she was more beautiful than Cleopatra. Did she understand that? Cleopatra the former queen of Egypt. Yes, by God she was.

Ernest Hemingway.
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QUESTIONS

1. Why did the patient have to have an X-ray?
2. Where was the X-ray taken?
3. What was the doctor who did it like?
4. Had the patient killed any Austrians?
5. Who was Miss Gage compared to?
6. Take out from the text all the verbs in the passive and say their tense.
7. Vocabulary.
 - Splinter
 - Thigh
 - Scalpel
 - Forceps