



The Medic: Life and Death in the Last Days of WWII

Leo Litwak

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Leo Litwak was a university student when he joined the Army to fight in World War II, "a na've, callow eighteen-year-old son prepared to join other soldier boys being hauled off to war." In 1944 he found himself in Belgium, in the middle of the waning European war, a medic trained to save lives but often powerless to do much more than watch life slip away. It was hard fighting that took Litwak and his rifle company into the heart of Germany at the close of the war. But Litwak learned there was more to war than fighting, more to understand than maps and ammunition.

In the final months of the war, he watched the men in his company tenderly serve food at a Passover seder for a dozen brutalized Jewish women newly liberated from slavery. He watched those same men torture and execute defenseless German soldiers. He fell in love at the Moulin Rouge in a scene straight out of a Toulouse-Lautrec painting.

The men in his company were dreamers, thieves, friends, killers, revolutionaries, and heroes. They were the men of their time: sometimes brave, sometimes compassionate, sometimes cruel, sometimes loving, usually scared. They were held together by loyalty, only to be scattered by the war's end. *The Medic* is the gritty, wise, bighearted, and unflinching account of one man's quest to find sense in war and its aftermath.



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