

## The Futile Nature of Rigid Structure Seen in *One of Ours*

*One of Ours* is a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Willa Cather. The story follows the main character Claude, a man born to a devout Christian mother and a successful capitalistic father. Claude finds himself damned to be the heir of a successful farm at a time when stability was as scarce as imagination. Throughout the story, it is shown that Claude's idealistic nature makes him isolated from those around him. He's re-energized when meeting and becoming close to a German family. Having never experienced such a culture shift before, Claude's doubts about his life doubled. Unable to accept the mundane success and settle for a simple life, he finds himself searching for a purpose as to why he's "here." When his life chooses her faith over him, Claude turns his back on this life in Nebraska. Due to Claude's new fascination with the Great War and Europe, he enlists and starts basic training. After enlisting Claude sees more brutal destruction of life than ever before yet is re-energized by his new life, he finds purpose fighting as a soldier. Ultimately dying, doing the thing that brought him the most autonomy and purpose in life. Fighting for something bigger than himself. The text is broken up into the two lives Claude ultimately lives, one as a farmer in Nebraska in an unhappy marriage to a woman as devoutly religious as his mother. And the other as a soldier in France fighting in trenches. The text explores the limited perspective some have, due to a lack of communication and exposure to the outside world. Explaining how the reinforcing of rules leads to the restlessness and rebellious tendencies found in youth. Additionally, Cather adds commentary as the story references world events, such as the Great Depression and the migration that comes with the tragedy of the Great War.