Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks

The book tells of a young Englishman who in 1910 goes to France to learn the textile business. While there he plunges into a love affair with the young wife of his host, a passion so consuming that it changes him forever.

When war breaks out some years later he returns to France as a soldier on the Western Front, struggling through the bloody battles of the Marne, Verdun and the Somme. Sixty years after the end of the war, his granddaughter discovers a promise he made to a dying man and vows to keep it.