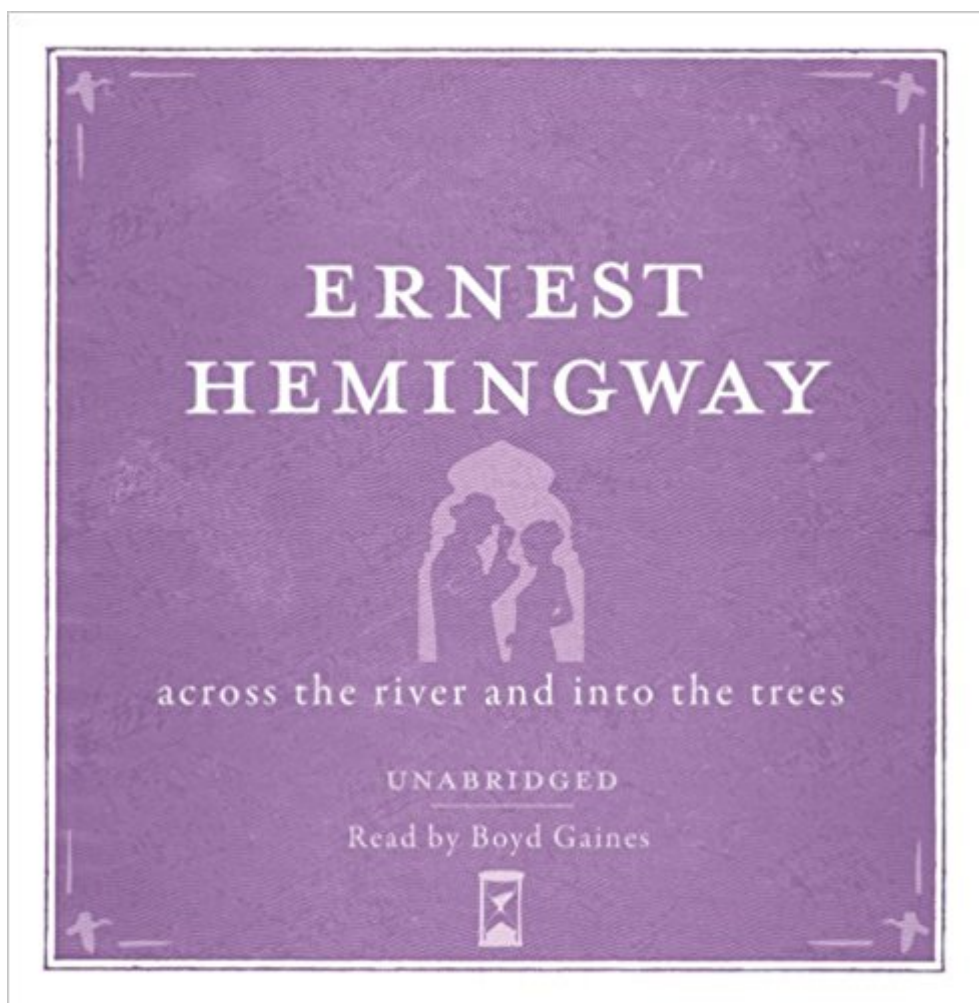


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# Across The River And Into The Trees Unabridged Audio CD



## Synopsis

Set in Venice at the close of World War II, *Across the River and into the Trees* is the bittersweet story of a middle-aged American colonel, scarred by war and in failing health, who finds love with a young Italian countess at the very moment when his life is becoming a physical hardship to him. It is a love so overpowering and spontaneous that it revitalizes the man's spirit and encourages him to dream of a future, even though he knows that there can be no hope for long. Spanning a matter of hours, *Across the River and into the Trees* is tender and moving, yet tragic in the inexorable shadow of what must come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ernest Hemingway did more to change the style of English prose than any other writer in the twentieth century, and for his efforts he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954.

Chapter One They started two hours before daylight, and at first, it was not necessary to break the ice across the canal as other boats had gone on ahead. In each boat, in the darkness, so you could not see, but only hear him, the poler stood in the stern, with his long oar. The shooter sat on a shooting stool fastened to the top of a box that contained his lunch and shells, and the shooter's two, or more, guns were propped against the load of wooden decoys. Somewhere, in each boat, there was a sack with one or two live mallard hens, or a hen and a drake, and in each boat there was a dog who shifted and shivered uneasily at the sound of the wings of the ducks that passed overhead in the darkness. Four of the boats went on up the main canal toward the big lagoon to the

north. A fifth boat had already turned off into a side canal. Now, the sixth boat turned south into a shallow lagoon, and there was no broken water. It was all ice, new-frozen during the sudden, windless cold of the night. It was rubbery and bending against the thrust of the boatman's oar. Then it would break as sharply as a pane of glass, but the boat made little forward progress. "Give me an oar," the shooter in the sixth boat said. He stood up and braced himself carefully. He could hear the ducks passing in the darkness, and feel the restless lurching of the dog. To the north he heard the sound of breaking ice from the other boats. "Be careful," the poler in the stern said. "Don't tip the boat over." "I am a boatman, too," the shooter said. He took the long oar the boatman handed him and reversed it so he could hold it by the blade. Holding the blade he reached forward and punched the handle through the ice. He felt the firm bottom of the shallow lagoon, put his weight on the top of the wide oar-blade, and holding with both hands and, first pulling, then shoving, until the pole-head was well to the stern, he drove the boat ahead to break the ice. The ice broke like sheets of plate glass as the boat drove into it, and onto it, and astern the boatman shoved them ahead into the broken passage. After a while, the shooter, who was working hard and steadily and sweating in his heavy clothes, asked the boatman, "Where is the shooting barrel?" "Off there to the left. In the middle of the next bay." "Should I turn for it now?" "As you wish." "What do you mean, as I wish? You know the water. Is there water to carry us there?" "The tide is low. Who knows?" "It will be daylight before we get there if we don't hurry." The boatman did not answer. All right, you surly jerk, the shooter thought to himself. We are going to get there. We've made two-thirds of the way now and if you are worried about having to work to break ice to pick up birds, that is altogether too bad. "Get your back in it, jerk," he said in English. "What?" the boatman asked in Italian. "I said let's go. It's going to be light." It was daylight before they reached the oaken staved hogshead sunk in the bottom of the lagoon. It was surrounded by a sloping rim of earth that had been planted with sedge and grass, and the shooter swung carefully up onto this, feeling the frozen grasses break as he stepped on them. The boatman lifted the combination shooting stool and shell box out of the boat and handed it to the shooter, who leaned over and placed it in the bottom of the big barrel. The shooter, wearing his hip boots and an old combat jacket, with a patch on the left shoulder that no one understood, and with the slight light places on the straps, where stars had been removed, climbed down into the barrel and the boatman handed him his two guns. He placed them against the wall of the barrel and hung his other shell bag between them, hanging it on two hooks built into the wall of the sunken barrel. Then he leaned the guns against each side of the shell bag. "Is there water?" he asked the boatman. "No water," the boatman said. "Can you drink the lagoon water?" "No. It is unhealthy." The shooter was thirsty from the hard work of breaking the ice and driving the boat in

and he felt his anger rise, and then held it, and said, "Can I help you in the boat to break ice to put out the decoys?" "No," the boatman said and shoved the boat savagely out onto the thin sheet ice that cracked and ripped as the boat drove up onto it. The boatman commenced smashing at the ice with the blade of his oar and then started tossing decoys out to the side and behind him. He's in a beautiful mood, the shooter thought. He's a big brute, too. I worked like a horse coming out here. He just pulled his weight and that's all. What the hell is eating him? This is his trade isn't it? He arranged the shooting stool so he would have the maximum swing to left and right, opened a box of shells, and filled his pockets and opened another of the boxes of shells in the shell bag so he could reach into it easily. In front of him, where the lagoon lay glazed in the first light, was the black boat and the tall, heavily built boatman smashing with his oar at the ice and tossing decoys overboard as though he were ridding himself of something obscene. It was getting lighter now and the shooter could see the low line of the near point across the lagoon. Beyond that point he knew there were two other shooting posts and far beyond it there was more marsh and then the open sea. He loaded both his guns and checked the position of the boat that was putting out decoys. From behind him, he heard the incoming whisper of wings and he crouched, took hold of his right hand gun with his right hand as he looked up from under the rim of the barrel, then stood to shoot at the two ducks that were dropping down, their wings set to brake, coming down dark in the gray dim sky, slanting toward the decoys. His head low, he swung the gun on a long slant, down, well and ahead of the second duck, then without looking at the result of his shot he raised the gun smoothly, up, up ahead and to the left of the other duck that was climbing to the left and as he pulled, saw it fold in flight and drop among the decoys in the broken ice. He looked to his right and saw the first duck a black patch on the same ice. He knew he had shot carefully on the first duck, far to the right of where the boat was, and on the second, high out and to the left, letting the duck climb far up and to the left to be sure the boat was out of any line of fire. It was a lovely double, shot exactly as he should have shot, with complete consideration and respect for the position of the boat, and he felt very good as he reloaded. "Listen," the man in the boat called. "Don't shoot toward the boat." "I'll be a sad son of a bitch, the shooter said to himself. I will indeed." "Get your decoys out," he called to the man in the boat. "But get them out fast. I won't shoot until they are all out. Except straight overhead." The man in the boat said nothing that could be heard. I can't figure it, the shooter thought to himself. He knows the game. He knows I split the work, or more, coming out. I never shot a safer or more careful duck in my life than that. What's the matter with him? I offered to put the dekes out with him. The hell with him. Out on the right now, the boatman was still chopping angrily at the ice, and tossing out the wooden decoys in a hatred that showed in every move he made. Don't let him spoil it, the

shooter told himself. There won't be much shooting with this ice unless the sun should melt it later on. You probably will only have a few birds, so don't let him spoil it for you. You don't know how many more times you will shoot ducks and do not let anything spoil it for you. He watched the sky lightening beyond the long point of marsh, and turning in the sunken barrel, he looked out across the frozen lagoon, and the marsh, and saw the snow-covered mountains a long way off. Low as he was, no foothills showed, and the mountains rose abruptly from the plain. As he looked toward the mountains he could feel a breeze on his face and he knew, then, the wind would come from there, rising with the sun, and that some birds would surely come flying in from the sea when the wind disturbed them. The boatman had finished putting out the decoys. They were in two bunches, one straight ahead and to the left toward where the sun would rise, and the other to the shooter's right. Now he dropped over the hen mallard with her string and anchor, and the calling duck bobbed her head under water, and raising and dipping her head, splashed water onto her back. "Don't you think it would be good to break more ice around the edges?" the shooter called to the boatman. "There's not much water to attract them." The boatman said nothing but commenced to smash at the jagged perimeter of ice with his oar. This ice breaking was unnecessary and the boatman knew it. But the shooter did not know it and he thought, I do not understand him but I must not let him ruin it. I must keep it entire and not let him do it. Every time you shoot now can be the last shoot and no stupid son of a bitch should be allowed to ruin it. Keep your temper, boy, he told himself. Copyright &copy; 1950 by Ernest Hemmingway Copyright renewed &copy; 1978 by Mary Hemmingway --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an extraordinary book that packs a whopping emotional punch. It'll grab you by the gut and squeeze until tears stream out of your eyeballs. I've recommended this book to a few friends and they've all reported back with "meh" reviews, some not even finishing it. Here's why: this isn't f\*\*\*ing cocktail hour, this is all business, and like all of Hemingway's books it takes a few hundred pages of build up to get to the real meat and potatoes, to the good stuff. A Farewell To Arms demands the reader's patience, and then rewards it ten-fold. For example, there is a specific passage toward the end of the book which F. Scott Fitzgerald praised as "the finest passage ever written in the history of the English language." (or something to that effect, \*not a direct quote\*, but you get the idea). Special note: this Library Edition is a beautiful book that contains all kinds of goodies (see product description) -- a must for writers and serious readers.

What can you say about the mature Hemingway? You like his writing or you don't. The amazing

thing is that you remember his stories more than most although at the time of reading you have doubts. One can forget how evocative he is of some things and how poor at others, like drawing believable women. This is very autobiographical and I for one am glad I re-read it after many years. It is an ode to love and an indictment of war.

This is a typical Hemingway novel: simple language, clear description, insightful comments on human nature. What isn't typical is that most of the action is presented as memories of a retired US Army colonel who returns to the area of Italy where he was involved in a memorable (to him, at least) military action in World War I. It opens with references to an upcoming duck hunt, returning to it later to bring things "full circle." There are interesting reunions with former Army buddies, some local friends, and a young woman who holds a mysterious, but clearly significant, place in his heart. If you like Hemingway's writing style, especially his reflections on human nature, you'll probably like this one.

This is true EH in his early career clear images that are actually palpable. Knowing about his Italian war injuries and his ability to exaggerate and fictionalize a lot of his experiences does actually add appreciation for his creativity in fiction with a faint basis in his life. Well worth a read or even a reread or two as your personal perspectives may have altered. Cactus Ken

Haven't really had much exposure to Hemingway in the past. This was ordered for my English class. I found much of the dialogue to be a bit tedious. I kept thinking, did people really talk to each other like this? I can away somewhat less impressed than I had hoped. The book itself is well made of good quality paper. As required texts go, this has to be one of the better bargains I've had. It also has a bunch of authors notes and alternate versions of some events and of the ending.

Ernest Hemingway's name has always been synonymous with classic American literature, so I wanted to view his particular writing style first hand. Indeed, *A Farewell To Arms* did not disappoint. It is a tragic love story for all times! I fell in love with the story when I saw the movie version starring Rock Hudson and Jennifer Jones, with my mother when I was a teenager. Hemingway's narrative prose style of writing tells a gripping tale of love and romance and the horrors of war. I discovered in the author's introduction to this edition that Hemingway had quite a dry sense of humor when it came to his personal viewpoint about the evils of war. I found myself laughing out loud! Ernest Hemingway was 30 years old when he wrote *A Farewell To Arms*. He

rewrote the ending 39 times in order to get the words just right. This edition collects all of the alternate endings, giving insight to his craft and creative process. His book is a masterpiece of literary craftsmanship. It achieves what only great art can do—it brings the reader into the experience. The realities and tragedies of war he describes are as relevant today as they were 86 years ago when the book was first published. However, Hemingway's non religious belief that life is a tragedy, where we all die in the end and there is nothing else to hope for, comes through loud and clear. And to me, his cynical, skewed viewpoint is the real tragedy of his love story. "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills." ~ Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell To Arms "Love is ... [not] passion and lust. When you love you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. We wish to serve. ... You cannot know about it unless you have it." ~ Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell To Arms

I really liked reading this book. It is about a man who has spent all of his adult life in the service. He has survived wars, both on the battlefield and on personal levels. This story takes place during a car ride when the main character, Richard, is under a great deal of stress and in pain from a heart condition. He is recalling the previous days that he spent with a young woman that he loves. He shares his thoughts and feeling, memories of how the weekend events occurred with the reader. Richard is the only point of view the reader has, and he is in pain, fearing his impending death, so the reader has a pointed (and restricted) view. He is facing the idea that the chronic heart problems he has will probably end his life, and he is recalling many of his regrets, both professional and personal, to the female character and the reader. The reader gets more information than does his lover because we have some insight into what he thinks, but isn't saying. The female character seems flat, but really I think that is just because she is seen through his eyes, and he is under a lot of stress. I really liked this book. It is Hemingway, his writing is emotional and detailed. It provokes thought about myself and how do I affect the people around me. What are they going through that I'm not aware of? The Kindle edition of this book is formatted without issue and all the chapter links work.

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