



Hemingway on Hunting

By Ernest Hemingway

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The companion volume to the bestselling *Hemingway on Fishing*.

Ernest Hemingway's lifelong zeal for the hunting life is reflected in his masterful works of fiction, from his famous account of an African safari in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" to passages about duck hunting in *Across the River and Into the Trees*. For Hemingway, hunting was more than just a passion; it was a means through which to explore our humanity and man's relationship to nature. Courage, awe, respect, precision, patience—these were the virtues that Hemingway honored in the hunter, and his ability to translate these qualities into prose has produced some of the strongest accounts of sportsmanship of all time.

Hemingway on Hunting offers the full range of Hemingway's writing about the hunting life. With selections from his best-loved novels and stories, along with journalistic pieces from such magazines as *Esquire* and *Vogue*, this spectacular collection is a must-have for anyone who has ever tasted the thrill of the hunt—in person or on the page.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Hemingway at his purest. . . artfully spare, gracefully descriptive, and faithful to his professional commitment.”—*The Washington Post*

“[A] trophy-sized catch to enjoy in and out of season.”—*Library Journal*

About the Author

Ernest Hemingway did more to influence the style of English prose than any other writer of his time. Publication of *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* immediately established him as one of the greatest literary lights of the 20th century. His classic novella *The Old Man and the Sea* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953. Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. He died in 1961.

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Hemingway on Hunting

Introduction

1

In the summer of 1934, Hemingway wrote to a friend: “. . . outside of writing I have two well developed talents; for sea fishing where there is a current and migratory fish and shooting with a rifle on targets at unknown ranges where the vital spots are not marked but have to be understood to be hit. . . .” Hunting remained for Ernest Hemingway a favorite pastime when he was not writing and was a subject that he wrote about often throughout the course of his life. This book brings together for the first time the author’s many fine short stories, selections from books, essays, and even excerpts from letters, that illuminate the art of hunting and the pleasures of being in the outdoors through recollections and carefully crafted tales of hunts in North America, Europe, and Africa. It has been an especial pleasure for me to compile this rich collection of my grandfather’s works on hunting because of my own love of the outdoors, a sentiment that my grandfather fostered in his three sons and which my father, Gregory, and my uncles, Patrick and Jack, engendered in me from childhood.

Hunting has been a defining characteristic of human behavior for over two million years. The magnificent cave paintings at Lascaux in France, among our earliest artistic representations, celebrate the hunt and its bounty. Beyond its fundamental function as a means of providing food and clothing, hunting is ritualized by many cultures and the sanctity of taking a life is acknowledged as a natural part of the cycle of life. It has been recorded that the Bushmen of the Kalahari, for example, always celebrate the success of an eland hunt with ritual dances. In ancient Greek mythology, the hunting and successful killing of stags and wild boars were distinguished as heroic acts of valor that marked the completion of a significant rite of passage. For the Greeks, the hunt was sacred to the goddess Artemis, and foremost among hunters was the hero Orion, who as a constellation shines brightly in the night sky, a harbinger of hunting season. Hunting constituted a social class in ancient Egypt, where the sport was reserved for rulers and their nobles; likewise, the kings of Assyria and later Persia were also partial to the chase, as is shown by hunting scenes depicted on the walls of their temples and palaces. In the first, second, and third centuries, the Romans turned hunting wild animals into a spectacle, importing all manner of big game from Africa for mock hunts in the Coliseum and other

amphitheaters throughout the empire. The distinction between hunting for food and hunting for sport, however, was made early on, and from the latter a code of behavior developed for the hunter. By the Middle Ages in Europe, codes of behavior demanded that a hunter track down and kill any animal he may have wounded.

Hunting game with firearms, which began in Europe as early as the sixteenth century, enabled the hunter to kill game at greater distances and in larger numbers. The extreme consequence of this innovation was that by the nineteenth century, overhunting of areas around the globe had led to the tragic extinction of a number of species, notably the passenger pigeon in America, and the virtual extermination of others, such as the American bison. The concept of game conservation soon developed, especially in Africa, where conservationists recognized the need for stewardship in order to preserve wildlife and its natural habitat for future generations. Of course, the need for wildlife conservation is not simply a result of overhunting, as has been pointed out by many specialists, including Norman Carr, one of the first game wardens in Africa and an avid hunter and naturalist with whom I apprenticed in the Luangwa Valley, Zambia. Norman often said that even more important than managing wildlife—animals usually can look after themselves—it is important that there is sufficient habitat for the complete range of all the species to live in harmony with one another. As all of the world's landscapes become increasingly fragmented by human activity, the need for wildlife and habitat conservation remains acute.

Hunters are at the forefront of wildlife conservation in America, where hunting continues to have great appeal despite ever increasing urbanization and suburbanization. However, the act of killing is, I believe, a deeply personal matter about which every individual has strong views. Hemingway offered his own insight in his treatise on bullfighting, *Death in the Afternoon*: "Killing cleanly and in a way which gives you aesthetic pleasure and pride has always been one of the greatest enjoyments of a part of the human race. Because the other part, which does not enjoy killing, has always been more articulate and has furnished most of the good writers we have had a very few statements of the true enjoyment of killing. One of its greatest pleasures, aside from the purely aesthetic ones, such as wing shooting and the ones of pride, such as difficult game stalking, where it is the disproportionately increased importance of the fraction of a moment that it takes for the shot that furnishes the emotion, is the feeling of rebellion against death which comes from its administering. Once you accept the rule of death thou shalt not kill is an easily and naturally obeyed commandment. But when a man is still in rebellion against death he has a pleasure in taking to himself one of the Godlike attributes; that of giving it. This is one of the most profound feelings in those men who enjoy killing. These things are done in pride and pride, of course, is a Christian sin, and a pagan virtue." Hemingway, like the old man talking to Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, specifically refers to the killing of animals, not human beings, which, of course, is another matter entirely. The clarity and conviction evident in the above statement arises from an extraordinary combination of qualities: Hemingway's lifelong love and pursuit of hunting, and his carefully developed talent for writing as true as he could.

2

Born in 1899 in Oak Park, Illinois, the eldest son in a sporting family, Ernest Miller Hemingway grew up with the outdoors close at hand. His father, Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, loved to hunt and fish. From early on, he took the young boy along with him hunting near their summer cabin, Windemere, on Walloon Lake in northern Michigan, and on outings in the fields flushing snipe north of Chicago. In 1902, when Hemingway was only two years old, his mother, Grace Hall Hemingway, reported that her son "... loves to play the sportsman. He straps on an old powder flask and shot pouch and half an old musket over his shoulder. He calls different shaped pieces of wood—respectively—'my blunderbuss,' 'my shotgun,' 'my rifle,' 'my Winchester,' 'my pistol,' etc., and delights in shooting imaginary wolves, bears, lions, buffalo, etc." By the time he was three, Hemingway had learned to load, cock, and shoot a gun by himself, and at

four he was trekking as much as seven miles on hunting expeditions with his father, carrying his own gun over his shoulder. One wonders at such an early tutelage! In an anecdote in one of Grace's scrapbooks, she relates how the little hunter and provider shot a duck for their dinner, but with tongue in cheek added that Papa (Clarence) shot at the same time. Nonetheless, young Ernest continued to work at his marksmanship, later joining the rifle club in high school, where he recorded a consistent score of 112 out of 150, shooting a rifle prone at a twenty-yard range—all in spite of a defective left eye that was later to keep him from enlisting in the army.

Clarence Hemingway, a fine wing shot and a member of the Chicago Sharpshooters Association, taught his son how to shoot with a shotgun at an early age. In fact, all of the children, the girls included, worked up to shooting by themselves with their father's first and favorite shotgun, a 12-gauge, lever-action Winchester that shot a very close pattern. Once a week on Sundays during the summer months at Windemere Cottage, Clarence Hemingway would organize for his family shotgun target shooting with a hand trap and clay pigeons. Ernest received his first gun, a 20-gauge, single-barrel shotgun, from his grandfather, Anson Hemingway, on his tenth birthday, and Ernest celebrated his eleventh birthday at Windemere among friends and family with a barbecue followed by a shotgun shooting competition. There were also hunting trips in southern Illinois with his father on his uncle Frank Hines's farm, where the young boy shot pigeons and quail, and hunted raccoon and possum at night with dogs. Clarence taught him gun care and safety, how to dress a kill, and even how to make bullets from an old Civil War mold that his father, Anson, had given him.

Throughout his childhood Hemingway heard about the deeds of pioneers of the Old West and soldiers of the Civil War, especially from his grandfather Anson. The elder Hemingway had come West in a covered wagon when he himself was a boy and had later fought in the Civil War as a volunteer in the Illinois infantry regiment. Ernest's father told of his own hunting exploits as a young man, tracking and shooting bear in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. But for any young boy growing up in the first two decades of the twentieth century, it was Theodore Roosevelt—western rancher and huntsman, President of the United States, and later African hunter and South American explorer—who inspired the imagination and fueled the desire to explore and hunt in the great outdoors. Young Hemingway identified with much of Teddy Roosevelt's hunting prowess, enthusiasm, and determination. In 1910, when Roosevelt came to Oak Park on a whistle-stop tour after his African safari of the previous year, Ernest, in his own little khaki safari outfit, was standing alongside his grandfather Anson, cheering on the great African hunter and rough rider of San Juan Hill. More than any other individual in his time, Roosevelt opened the African frontier to the imagination of America's youths. The fresh scent of a new frontier and the thrill of the hunt, both with their overwhelming sense of valor and excitement, would captivate Hemingway for the rest of his life.

Clarence Hemingway educated his boy about nature and taught him the fundamentals of scientific observation. He frequently read to Ernest from natural history books filled with colorful illustrations. At a young age, Ernest joined the Agassiz naturalist club, of which his father was a leading member. As part of his early instruction, young Hemingway would accompany his father to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago to see the zoological specimens, especially the incredibly lifelike displays of animals that were an innovation of the master taxidermist Carl Akeley. In particular, the great Hall of African Mammals, with its sealed glass cases enclosing gazelles, wildebeest, rhino, cheetah, leopard, and kudu, would have impressed the boy, as frequent trips to the Roosevelt Hall of African Mammals at the American Museum of Natural History with my father did me in my childhood. Clarence was himself an amateur taxidermist and maintained a small collection of specimens of his own; some of his creations can still be seen at the Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park. He taught Ernest how to skin and prepare an animal.

Lessons learned in our youth often make a lasting impression. Early on, Clarence Hemingway taught his son the hunter's code—no killing solely for killing's sake. Although Clarence believed that wild animals and

birds had been put on this earth to be hunted, he insisted that any animal killed must be eaten and that nothing should be wasted. When Ernest strayed from this principle and shot a porcupine with his friend Harold Sampson in the woods near Walloon Lake during the summer of 1913, his father insisted that the boys eat its leathery flesh. On another occasion, while hunting on the North Prairie near Oak Park, Ernest accidentally triggered his 20-gauge shotgun and barely missed his companion, Lewis Clarahan, a chilling reminder of the need for care when handling a firearm. Perhaps the most significant shooting incident of Ernest's youth, however, occurred in the summer of 1915. While out with his sister Sunny, exploring a remote area of Walloon Lake called the "Cracken," Ernest poached a great blue heron, intending to add it to his father's collection of bird specimens. The son of the game warden, who lived on the lake, heard the shot and confiscated the bird. Later, the warden himself came by Windemere Cottage looking for Ernest, who fled and lay low for a while. The incident was resolved when Ernest turned himself in to a judge in Boyne City and paid the \$15 fine. Hemingway never forgot this brush with the law, and he used the incident as the focus of his unfinished short story "The Last Good Country."

Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, which even today retain their natural beauty, were remote and wild territories in Hemingway's youth. He knew the local Native Americans, the Ojibwa, who clung to their traditions, and old-timer fur trappers, whose way of life was rapidly vanishing. Some of his earliest fiction, such as the "Judgement of Manitou," a dark tale about two frontier trappers framed in the mysticism of Indian folklore, draws on these early impressions. Many of the Nick Adams stories were inspired by Hemingway's experiences hunting, fishing, and exploring in northern Michigan.

After returning, in 1919, from the Italian front of World War I, where he was wounded as a Red Cross volunteer, Hemingway spent much time up in Michigan, where for the first time he had the opportunity to hunt during the fall. When he moved to Paris as a foreign correspondent for The Toronto Star in the winter of 1921 with his new bride, Hadley Richardson Hemingway, he eagerly took to hunting in Europe and wrote his dad about his experiences. Even on assignment, he managed to work in some shooting. While covering the Greco-Turkish war in 1922, he shot quail in the open prairies of Thrace, bagging twenty-two birds in a single day. One of his very last journalistic pieces written for The Toronto Star was "Game Shooting in Europe," a matter-of-fact presentation of the fine big-game hunting and bird shooting that could be had in various parts of Europe. He describes the many Parisian hunters with their shotguns slung over their shoulders leaving Paris for a weekend in the country, something he himself did a number of times, notably to shoot pheasant outside the city with his friend Ben Gallagher.

Hemingway hunted in nearly every place he ever lived. When he returned to the United States early in 1928 to live in Key West, Florida, with his second wife, my grandmother Pauline Pfeiffer Hemingway, he managed to find good bird shooting on the remote Marquesas Keys, some twenty-five miles south of Key West, shooting plover, cranes, and curlews. After their son Patrick was born that July in Kansas City, Ernest and Pauline took a trip to Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Teton Mountains, a first taste of what the West could offer. Upon their return to Florida, they decided to stay on for quail-hunting season with Pauline's family in Piggot, Arkansas, where there was "swell shooting" in the woods and cornfields, something he looked forward to in the coming years. Around this time, Hemingway was nearly finished with his second novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, a love story loosely based on his early experiences in northern Italy during World War I. Its charming recollections of bird shooting in the chestnut woods of the Abruzzi, for birds whose meat was especially tasty because they fed on a particular variety of grapes, reveal the refined gastronomical rewards of the well-educated hunter.

In 1930 and again in 1932, soon after my father, Gregory Hemingway, was born, Ernest went West to hunt, fish, and write while staying at Lawrence Nordquist's L-Bar-T Ranch. The conditions at the Nordquist ranch, located some twelve miles outside Cooke City, Montana, and just inside the Wyoming state line, were ideal

for his writing—a quiet place surrounded by the great outdoors. The hunting was strenuous work, with a lot of riding on horseback in the high country, sometimes in heavy snow, and packing out all of the meat and trophies. Armed with his Springfield rifle, Hemingway had his first crack at grizzlies, just as Teddy Roosevelt had done in his western ranching days, as well as elk, deer, big horn sheep, coyotes, and eagles. He considered grizzly bears to be the only dangerous animal in North America, and the best training for Africa, where he decided he must hunt next.

An African safari in those days was no small undertaking. After a stopover in Europe, Ernest, Pauline, and their Key West friend Charles Thompson set sail from Marseilles on November 15, 1933, aboard the *General Metzinger*, bound for Mombasa with some twenty-one pieces of luggage in tow. The long sea voyage across the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal, down the Red Sea, and into the Indian Ocean along the east coast of Africa involved weeks of less than desirable living conditions while traveling through the rising heat. From Mombasa they took the Kenya and Uganda Railway to Nairobi, and then went by motor car into the interior. Philip Percival, the forty-nine-year-old legendary safari guide who was to be their professional hunter, came highly recommended, having taken Roosevelt on safari in 1909. Ernest later said that Percival was the finest man he knew; he was certainly the hunter that Hemingway admired most. Percival immediately saw in Hemingway a resemblance to Teddy Roosevelt, with his broad smile, strong shoulders, and poor eyesight.

The beauty and expanse of Africa, which surpassed that of Montana and Wyoming, amazed Hemingway. Shooting primarily with his customized Springfield, as well as a .30–06 Mauser and Pauline's 6.5 Mannlicher, Ernest had excellent hunting, bagging four of the "Big Five," cheetah, zebra, sixteen varieties of antelope, warhogs, jackals, spring hare, a serval cat, and thirty hyenas. Much of this game, besides the hyenas, for which he had a particular dislike, was used to feed the dozens of staff and clients in the camp over the course of the two-month safari. Only a bout with dysentery at the beginning of the trip and Ernest's intense competitive nature when his friend Charles Thompson continually shot bigger and better trophies got the better of him at times. Philip Percival found Hemingway to be excellent company and paid him the professional compliment of allowing him to shoot alone with his gun bearer, M'-Cola. Even as the safari ended, Hemingway began to think how and when he would be able to return to Africa. As he wrote in *Green Hills of Africa*: "All I wanted to do now was get back to Africa. We had not left it, yet, but when I would wake in the night I would lie, listening, homesick for it already."

My grandfather was a great teacher who loved to impart his knowledge of hunting to others. As his three sons grew older, he began to educate them in the ways of the sportsman, both by example and through explicit instruction. In 1939, Ernest began to go to Sun Valley, Idaho, especially for the fine bird shooting. The remote and well-watered country around Sun Valley was excellent for shooting duck and pheasant, as well as Hungarian partridge, snipe, and "prairie chickens," the native sage grouse. Hemingway hunted all of these with his boys, as well as with celebrities, such as Gary Cooper and Jane Russell, who came to Sun Valley in the late 1930s and 1940s. Cooper was a renowned rifle shot, and Hemingway prided himself on his wing shooting, favoring his over-and-under Browning 12-gauge shotgun. "General" Hemingway organized rabbit drives around the Freer Farm and, with up to twenty shooters and beaters, systematically swept across the big sage fields to kill in a single day thousands of rabbits that had been decimating the local farmer's crops. There were also hunts for antelope and mule deer. My father remembers well the difficult and long days on horseback during the antelope hunt of 1941 that Hemingway wrote about in the story "The Shot."

By the late 1930s, Hemingway had moved to Cuba, where he lived in a farmhouse called the Finca Vigía. From his house, he could walk into the country for hours with a gun and come upon snipe, guinea, doves, and quail. He joined a shooting club, the Club de Cazadores del Cerro, about five miles from the Finca, where one could do every kind of shooting: rifle, trap, skeet, and live pigeons. My dad remembers my

grandfather teaching him to shoot a shotgun there. “Don’t worry about shooting the pigeons, Gig, just concentrate on your form,” Papa would tell him. “If you fire enough shots you’ll start to get the leads down, that is, you’ll learn how far to fire in front of a bird flying at an angle to you. The shot doesn’t get there as soon as the gun goes off, you know. It seems like it does, but it takes half a second or so to reach the bird, depending on how fast he’s flying, how far away he is, the strength of the powder charge and a few other factors. But I’m only confusing you with all this explanation. Just concentrate on your form now. You’re right handed, so put the stock of the gun firmly against your right shoulder, make sure it feels comfortable, and that the stock is up against your shoulder. If the gun isn’t positioned correctly, a smaller percentage of your shoulder will receive its full recoil, and it will kick like hell. Then you’ll start to flinch, jerking the trigger in anticipation of the pain of the recoil, and that will move your gun off target before the shot leaves the barrel. That’s right, firm against the shoulder, keep your head down, weight on your left front foot, and close that left eye. I think you’re ready for a 20-gauge shotgun this year—at eleven you’re big enough for one. It will kick a little at first but if you hold it properly you won’t even notice it after a while. Honest,” he concluded, smiling. Only ten years old, my dad went on to tie for first place in the Cuban live pigeon shooting competition later that summer. Because my father was competing with a .410 shotgun and was by far the youngest competitor, this was a remarkable accomplishment and a very proud moment for him and my grandfather.

Even at sea, Hemingway’s quarry sometimes took on a hunter’s rather than a piscatorial air, one that was often steeped in bravado. He sometimes shot sharks with the Thompson sub-machine gun that he kept on board his ship, the *Pilar*. With his crew, whom he dubbed the “Crook Factory,” he hunted German submarines in the Gulf Stream during World War II. That summer of 1943 for target practice Patrick and Gregory shot flying fish from the bow of the ship with a .22 rifle as the fish skimmed the surface of the water. On another memorable outing on the *Pilar*, Hemingway attempted to spear a sperm whale with a harpoon propelled from a sawed-off shotgun specially jerry-rigged for the purpose.

In the summer of 1948, Hemingway traveled to Italy with his last wife, my godmother, Mary Welsh Hemingway. The vacation turned into a nine-month sojourn, with excellent duck shooting on the northern part of the Venetian lagoon at Baron Nanyuki Franchetti’s hunting preserve, and on the marshes around Torcello—the most remote of the islands near Venice where they had taken up residence. Widgeon, mallards, and pintails flocked to the lagoon, a hunter’s paradise, especially in the fall and winter months. By moonlight or in the early-morning predawn darkness, Hemingway loved being poled out on a skiff to blinds fashioned from large sunken barrels in the marshes, where his guide would put out decoys along with two or three live callers. It was these experiences that he would use to describe duck hunting so beautifully in *Across the River and Into the Trees*.

An old Arab proverb states, “He that has drunk of Africa’s fountains will drink again.” Hemingway had never forgotten his desire to return to Africa. With shacks spreading in the countryside around the Finca and crime on the rise, the Cuban landscape was changing and the bird shooting was no longer so good. In a letter of October 1952 to Philip Percival, Hemingway expressed his wish to return to Africa with an eye to even moving there “for keeps.” The time seemed right in 1953, when my uncle Patrick was now living in Tanganyika (modern Tanzania) and preparing to set up his own hunting-safari firm. A safari was arranged, and at age sixty-nine Philip Percival agreed to come out of retirement and act as Hemingway’s professional hunter again. Hoping that an enthusiastic article about hunting in Kenya by the famous author would help to improve tourism after the recent Mau Mau bloodshed, the Kenyan government opened to hunting, for the Hemingways’ safari alone, an area on the Salengai River, the Southern Game Reserve in the Kajiado District, forty miles south of Nairobi. Accompanying Ernest and Mary were their Cuban friend Mayito Menocal, the Look photographer Earl Thiesen, Patrick Hemingway for brief stints, and a local game ranger, Dennis Zaphiro. Hemingway did not shoot well and had few clean kills of big game, although he managed to

bag several fine trophies. He did have excellent wing shooting on great flocks of doves, sand grouse, and guineas. Both he and Mary were as enthralled with the natural beauty of the place and its abundant wildlife as with the hunting.

A belated Christmas gift to Mary—a game-viewing flight to Murchison Falls in Uganda—ended in disaster. The single-engine Cessna almost flew into a flock of ibis over the Nile River near the falls, and when the pilot attempted to avoid the birds he hit an old telegraph wire that nicked the propeller and damaged the tail assembly, resulting in a crash landing. A second plane crash before their return to Nairobi led to world news coverage reporting Hemingway dead, even running his obituary. Fortunately no one had died, although Hemingway sustained serious internal injuries, as well as a severe concussion. His health would never be quite the same again.

In the winter of 1955–56, Hemingway talked about going back to Africa, as Patrick was still living in Tanganyika and my dad was also there hunting. It was not meant to be, however, and the trip never materialized, primarily for health reasons. In fact, Hemingway never hunted big game in Africa or even in America again, although his love of wing shooting remained passionate. In 1958 Ernest and Mary began returning to Idaho especially for bird shooting. That fall, they rented a house in Ketchum, the Heiss House, which was even equipped with a room for hanging game. Hemingway went bird shooting on Silver Creek and in the fields around Sun Valley with old friends Lloyd Arnold, Taylor Williams, Bud Purdy, Dr. George Saviers, and others. Even with the evident decline in his health and the onset of depression, wing shooting and clay pigeon shooting in the off-season remained favorite activities right up until the very end of his life.

3

For many people, especially those of his generation, Hemingway's persona was indelibly linked to his writing. However, he often said that his personal life should be kept apart and that his writing stood for itself. As you will see in this collection, it does that and more. This book celebrates a great hunter, a father and a grandfather, and his love of the sport. Hemingway once wrote: "A writer's job is to tell the truth. His standard of fidelity to the truth should be so high that his invention, out of his experience, should produce a truer account than anything factual can be. For facts can be observed badly; but when a good writer is creating something, he has time and scope to make of it an absolute truth." In his fiction and his nonfiction writing on hunting, Hemingway is trying to get the feeling of the hunt, not just a depiction of it. This includes not only the process of hunting, the actions leading up to the kill, but as many different dimensions as possible: the country, the weather, the element of chance, the hunter's thoughts, and, if conceivable, the perspective of the hunted.

The selections that make up this book are divided into three parts. The first is devoted to writings of fiction and nonfiction that Hemingway completed during his lifetime. Excerpts from books are preceded by short stories, beginning with two Nick Adams tales. The first story, whose title echoes Ivan Turgenev's novel of rebellion, explores the bonds between fathers and sons, especially the importance of hunting as a shared activity with the memories and skills being passed from one generation to the next. In "The Three-Day Blow," you will find a marvelous portrayal of an impromptu hunt after shooting the breeze with friends at home—hunting appears second nature and just outside your door. The two African stories are among Hemingway's greatest works of fiction. In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," we see Macomber overcome fear and self-doubt through big-game hunting in Africa—a personal test of manly courage. Generations of scholars have debated whether his wife, realizing his newfound courage, shot and killed him intentionally.

Green Hills of Africa is a personal favorite, describing, as it does, my grandfather and grandmother's first

safari, tales from which also captivated my dad and my uncle Pat when they were young. It was a departure for my grandfather at the time, being his first nonfiction novel. In the foreword, Hemingway wrote: "The writer has attempted to write an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination." I have made a selection of my favorite passages, trying also to include a variety of hunting experiences. I wholeheartedly encourage the reader, if entertained by this selection, to turn to the entire novel, where there are many other fine passages on hunting.

The second section is given to journalistic pieces on hunting or pieces related to hunting. Hemingway always said that these writings should be considered apart from his literature; they were not written to last. However, they provide a wealth of additional information on various hunting topics and are of interest precisely because they reflect the hunting of their time through personal insights by the author. Included are lesser-known pieces, such as "My Pal the Gorilla Gargantua" and "Safari," that have never before been published in a Hemingway anthology.

The final section consists of posthumously published writings on hunting in Michigan, Montana, and Africa. These works, unfinished as they are, cannot be held to the same standard as the works completed in Hemingway's lifetime. Nonetheless, you will find that they include some remarkable writings on hunting and the great outdoors. A theme evident in these posthumous works is Hemingway's desire to return to the good country and, perhaps, the wish to relive the glory days of his youth. For it is not just the country that has changed; the hunter himself has grown older. Hemingway explored this idea by returning to his youthful character, Nick Adams, in the story "The Last Good Country," which contains some hauntingly beautiful descriptions of virgin forest in Michigan. Characteristically, he also physically sought out new experiences, returning to Africa, for example, where he knew there were still magnificent country and hunting to be had.

Ernest Hemingway was a writer who wrote about hunting, not a professional hunter who wrote. After the safari of 1933–34, Philip Percival went deep-sea fishing for the first time with Hemingway off the coast of East Africa. Percival kidded Ernest that he, Percival, could now write a story as an expert of big game fishing, alluding to Hemingway's own letters about their African safari that had been published in *Esquire*. The passage from *True at First Light* on the leopard hunt, which concludes this book, illustrates this human side of Hemingway the hunter through a less than perfect kill.

—Seán Hemingway

Brooklyn, New York

August 2001

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ellen Wirth:

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