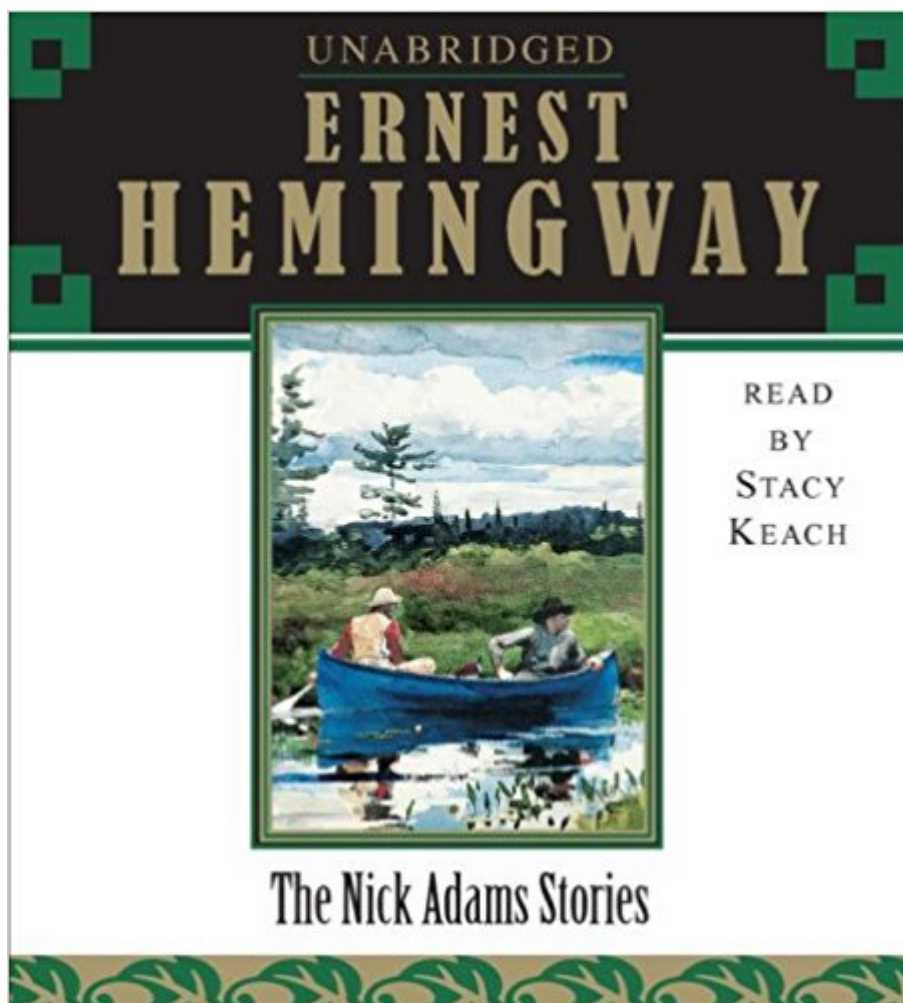


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# The Nick Adams Stories



## Synopsis

The Classic Stories Featuring One of Hemingway's Most Famous Characters "Of the place where he had been a boy he had written well enough. As well as he could then." So thought a dying writer in an early version of The Snows of Kilimanjaro. The writer of course was Ernest Hemingway. The place was the Michigan of his boyhood summers, where he remembered himself as Nick Adams. The now-famous "Nick Adams" stories show a memorable character growing from child to adolescent to soldier, veteran, writer, and parent -- a sequence closely paralleling the events of Hemingway's life. In this arrangement Nick Adams emerges clearly as the first in a long line of Hemingway's fictional selves. Later versions were all to have behind them part of Nick's history and, correspondingly, part of Hemingway's. This is a must-have for fans of the iconic author.

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## Customer Reviews

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. Stacy Keach a star of stage, film, and television, won a Golden Globe Award and an Emmy Nomination for his acclaimed portrayal of Hemingway in the definitive television epic. His films include *American History X*, *Escape from LA*, *Keep Your Distance*, and *Birds of Passage*. Other television features include *Prison Break*, and *Titus*. Mr. Keach read all three volumes of *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* for Simon & Schuster Audio.

Preface"Of the place where he had been a boy he had written well enough. As well as he could then." So thought a dying writer in an early version of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." The writer of course was Hemingway. The place was the Michigan of his boyhood summers, where he remembered himself as Nick Adams. As well as he could write then was very well indeed. Until now, however, the stories involving Nick have always appeared so many to a book, in jumbled sequence. As a result the coherence of his adventures has been obscured, and their impact fragmented. In *Men Without Women*, Hemingway's second collection of stories, Nick appears first as a soldier in Italy, next as an adolescent in Summit, Illinois, then in turn as a younger boy in Michigan, a married man in Austria, and a soldier back in Italy. Or consider the trouble with "Big Two-Hearted River," one of the best-known Hemingway stories. Placed where it was -- at the end of *In Our Time*, the first collection -- it puzzled a good many readers. Put where it goes chronologically, following the stories of World War I, its submerged tensions -- the impression that Nick is exorcising some nameless anxiety -- become perfectly understandable. But "A Way You'll Never Be," which precedes "Big Two-Hearted River" in time and explains it, was published eight years and several books after it. Arranged in chronological sequence, the events of Nick's life make up a meaningful narrative in which a memorable character grows from child to adolescent to soldier, veteran, writer, and parent -- a sequence closely paralleling the events of Hemingway's own life. In this arrangement Nick Adams, who for a long time was not widely recognized as a consistent character at all, emerges clearly as the first in a long line of Hemingway's fictional selves. Later versions, from Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry to Richard Cantwell and Thomas Hudson, were all to have behind them part of Nick's history and, correspondingly, part of Hemingway's. As is true for many writers of fiction, the relationship between Hemingway's work and the events of his own life is an immediate and intricate one. In some stories he appears to report details of actual experience as faithfully as he might have entered them in a diary. In others the play of his imagination has transformed experience into a new and different reality. Exploring the connections between actuality and fiction in Hemingway can be an absorbing activity, and readers who wish to pursue it are referred to the biographical studies listed at the end of this preface. But Hemingway naturally intended his stories to be understood and enjoyed without regard for such considerations -- as they have been for a long time. The first Nick Adams fiction appeared almost a half-century ago, the last in 1933, and over the years a great deal has been written about it. Among the unpublished manuscripts Hemingway left behind him, however, eight new contributions to the over-all narrative were discovered. Presented here for the first time, inserted in the places in time where the events fall, they are varied in length and apparent

purpose. Three accounts -- of how the Indians left the country of Nick's boyhood, of his first sight of the Mississippi, and of what happened just before and after his wedding -- are quite brief. If the author had larger plans for any of them, such are unknown; they might be read simply as sketches in an artist's notebook. In two other cases his plans are self-evident, for here we have the beginnings of works that were never completed. Nick on board the Chicago, bound for France during World War I, was the start of a novel called *Along with Youth* that was abandoned long ago. Similarly, though much later, the plot of "The Last Good Country" was left in mid-air, and many pages would have been required to resolve it. Two other pieces are known to have originated in Nick stories already published. "Three Shots" tells how the young boy became frightened while on a camping trip. It once preceded the story called "Indian Camp." And Nick's "stream of consciousness" reflections on his writing career once (anachronistically) concluded "Big Two-Hearted River." Of these new works only "Summer People," very likely the first fiction Hemingway wrote about Nick Adams, can be regarded as a full-length, completed story. To distinguish them from previously published works, all the new materials in this book have been printed in a special "oblique" type. If the decision to publish them at all is questioned, justification is available. For one thing, the plan for rearranging the Nick Adams stories coherently benefits from material that fills substantial gaps in the narrative. Further, all this new fiction relates in one way or another to events in the author's life, in which his readers continue to be interested. Last and most important is the fact that these pieces throw new light on the work and personality of one of our foremost writers and genuinely increase our understanding of him. The typography suggests an oblique introduction, but a warm reception is expected.-- PHILIP YOUNG

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That's Nick Adams, in conversation with his friend George, in *Cross Country Snow*, one of the 24 short stories assembled for this collection of Hemingway's shorter work. Written in the early part of the 20th century, these stories are pervaded by a wistful and romantic vintage feel. Only 16 of the stories were published in Hemingway's lifetime; the remaining eight were released posthumously and combined with their predecessors to make up a complete volume following the life of the Nick Adams character. The stories chronicle a series of rites of passage, initiation, and comings of age. Nick's character clearly incorporates many autobiographical elements, and provides insight into the inner life of the author. The stories are grouped into sections: The Northern Woods, On His Own, War, A Soldier Home, and Company of Two. The actual stories present vignettes from early life in

northern Michigan, adolescence and early independence, wartime injury, peacetime recovery, and the uncertain resolution of family. My favorites are Indian Camp, The Last Good Country, and Big Two-Hearted River. In Indian Camp, Nick accompanies his father, a doctor, who delivers a baby by caesarian section in primitive conditions. The Last Good Country has him on the run from the law, and contrasts the corruption of civilization with the innocence and purity of the wild. Big Two-Hearted River is about recovery, healing, and cleansing, in the context of a solitary post war fishing trip. This is the first of Hemmingway's fiction that I have read since the mandatory exposure of high school English, and I'm eager to go back after all these years.

This edition presents the Nick Adams stories in the order of his apparent age in each story. It also has a brief editorial preface explaining this and the inclusion of unpublished material. It would have been helpful for me if information about the publishing dates had also been provided to better understand the development of the character. The character of Nick and the tenor of the other characters in the unpublished "The Last Good Country" reflects a juvenile machismo that I just do not see in further stories. The older Nick character and the others in "Now I Lay Me" presents a much more rounded and mature masculinity. Was this a reflection of a development in Hemingway himself? It would have been nice to see the chronological order of the writing of these stories to understand developments such as this.

We get a look at young Hemingway through the eyes of Nick Adams. These early writings seem so innocent and fresh. But that was before the wars, before Paris, The bullfights, and all that followed in the remarkable life and writing of one outstanding American writer and adventurer. This is a simple appetizer for the 'Moveable Feast' to follow.

Thoroughly enjoyed this collection of stories from one of America's best authors. It arrived in a package that didn't seem wasteful, and still protected from the elements. If you're after an insight to the evolution of Hemmingway's prose the Nick Adams stories cannot be recommended more highly. Wear is from my haphazard reading habits.

Among the best short stories in the English language. Everyone should read "Big Two Hearted River," which is as meaningful today as the day it was written.

Read these stories many decades ago...these short stories are Hemingway's best type of art.

Loved the Nick Adams stories on CD's! And would absolutely recommend to anyone!

I grew in Michigan and spent many summers not far from where a lot of these stories took place. Reading it now takes me back there in a way that only Hemingway really could. If you can get past the few incomplete stories and the few stories that seem to borrow parts from others (you will read several passages a few times over a few of the stories) then you should be fine.

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