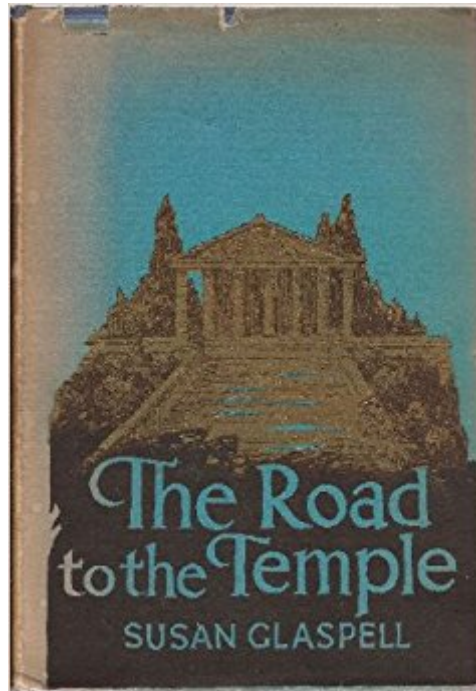




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The Road To The Temple



Synopsis

A great biography of George Cram Cook.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A great biography of George Cram Cook.

Susan Glaspell and Jig Cram Cook were part of the Bohemian center of the progressive era or early modernist era in America. Good friends with Floyd Dell, Hutchins Hapgood, Max Eastman, Eugene O'Neill, John Reed, and more, all the leading players in that era which was a lyrical combination of both radical and innocence in pre-WWI America. In the summers they would all converge in Provincetown. Largely at Jig Cook's leadership, this group of artists and journalists began to write and perform their own plays, founding the Provincetown Players 1915, an influential Little Theatre group. This is Glaspell's biography of her husband Jig Cram Cook, a man who couldn't match his early intellectual promise, a big ego who grasped onto the Provincetown Players as his last chance to achieve something - or so it seemed. I have to admit my image was turned around in this moving biography. Cook was a classic artistic personality, seeped in tragedy but in his case lacking an artistic talent equal to the depth of his emotions and intelligence. And then the Provincetown Players emerged and seemed to provide him with the forum to fit his imagined destiny. In the 1920s and 30s there were a few of the avant garde who ended up dying in some strange land, for some strange reason, before their time. Cook joins that group, with John Reed the only American buried in the Kremlin with full honors and Big Bill Haywood banished from America to Russia had the sad irony of dying there disillusioned with the system (and also buried at the Kremlin) and Jig Cram Cook joins that list, moving to Greece, his utopia (he was a classics scholar and so altho he's fluent in Greek, it

wasn't the modern form), after losing O'Neill to Broadway and betrayed by the Provincetown Players, to live life not as an ex-pat but in the hills in tents and sheds amongst the shepherds, heartbroken, betrayed and forgotten ("Why, with so much beautiful power, was I nothing?" he writes his wife) and dying early after only a few years. From the modest background of a well-off family in Davenport Iowa to the Bohemia of early New York Greenwich Village to his sad and unexpected death in the hills of Greece amongst the peasants at age 51, showing the strange twists one life can take. In the end, I think he would be very pleased to know the vast scholarship focused on him, that in this unexpected way, he did achieve the place in history he so longed for.

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