



The Young Hemingway

Michael S. Reynolds

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Michael Reynolds recreates the milieu that forged one of America's greatest and most influential writers. He reveals the fraught foundations of Hemingway's persona: his father's self-destructive battle with depression and his mother's fierce independence and spiritualism. He brings Hemingway through World War I, where he was frustrated by being too far away from the action and glory, despite his being wounded and nursed to health by Agnes Von Kurowsky—the older woman with whom he fell terribly in love.

The Young Hemingway Details

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From Reader Review The Young Hemingway for online ebook

Richard Anderson says

Informative, down to earth.

Chrissie says

Oh man, the audiobook narration by Allen O'Reilly is NOT to my liking. He is reading it at such a clip I can barely keep up. After listening to a mere half hour, I am completely out of breath. I need a gulp of fresh air. Keeping up with this speed is murder.

There is nothing wrong with the author's lines.

I will try to continue with interspersed pauses.

I continued to the end, and in fact I cannot stop now, I have to immediately pick up the next book in the series: Hemingway: The Paris Years! You are left hanging. Ernest and his new wife Hadley are off to Paris; they are on the boat. Just tell me how can I stop now?! I not only want to know about his experiences in the "City of Light" but also more about Gertrude Stein and the authors and painters of the Lost Generation.

This book covers his life through his first 22 years, i.e. his life before Paris.

I grew used to the narrator's fast reading. He continues; he narrates the next in the series. This doesn't deter me, though I cannot say I enjoy the speed.

What about the book's content? It doesn't blow me over either. I feel I understand Hemingway. I know now what he lived through. I know of his youth in Oak Park (a suburb of Chicago), Illinois, which is essential to his writing. He in fact never wrote about Oak Park, but the values imbibed certainly made him who he was. His WW1 experiences as a Red Cross ambulance driver in Italy are also covered. His relationships with his parents and siblings too. BUT, I never felt I got into his brain. I saw through his actions and decisions his personality traits.

In a nutshell - he invented himself. Don't believe what he says. Truth is bent. All the values of his youth were forever altered by the war, even if he was only on the front line for barely three weeks. He listened to others stories and could absorb them too. He took his own experiences and that of other and reinvented them in his fiction. In fact he had trouble separating fact from his invented fiction....

The writing style is similar to Hemingway's. Similar, but not the same and not as good. Short, abrupt sentences. Repetition of words, of phrases, for emphasis.

There is an immense amount of references to how this real event appears later in this form in this novel, a fictionalizing of his own experiences. I didn't like this, but many others may. Hemingway was clearly influenced by other writers. How he was influenced by these writers is thoroughly explained. What he read

year by year is covered. Authors must learn from each other; they even copy a particular style. So this is all an explanation of how he came to be the author he became. I wanted to know more of what HE thought HE had to write. I learned an awful lot about what he copied..... Do you see what I mean when I say I didn't get into his head? Sometimes the author would interpret a given action or quote and tell us what it had to mean, and I didn't always agree.

No, I don't love the book, but I need to continue anyhow. IF I could get get my hands on Hemingway's Boat: Everything He Loved in Life, and Lost, 1934-1961 or Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story I would choose them.

Lynnette Woolery says

I read this book previously but got so much more out of it this time. Michael Reynolds has clearly studied Hemingway and presents his young years in a thoroughly analyzed fashion. Reynolds's writing is well researched and his conclusions are plausible although perhaps a little too simplistic.

This book, though, along with reading Hemingway's letters and his work, provides insight into the great writer Hemingway.

Tyrone says

The early years of Hemingway's writing career are covered well. The author also imitates Hem's minimalist writing style in certain places, which I actually liked. I'm looking forward to the next in the series, when Hem goes to Paris.

Abby says

I love this book and the approach it takes to Hemingway - it focuses on the inner demons that would sculpt for better or worse the Hemingway that is known today.

Lauren Albert says

A good portrait of the young Hemingway which shows the basis for his later actions without trying to be a foreshadowing. He allows you to imagine how Hemingway's life could have gone differently while still convincingly showing how Hemingway's development made sense--was grounded in his early life. He also tries to see things from other people's perspectives--especially that of Hemingway's first wife Hadley. I will definitely read the other volumes.

Michael says

Excellent study of Hemingway's early years, ending with his marriage to Hadley Richardson and their departure for Paris. The book is very well-researched and examines Hemingway's relationships with family members, his upbringing in Oak Park, and his experiences in Italy during the First World War. Though Hemingway did not publish any novels or stories during the period covered by the book, the author does an excellent job of analyzing his early stories and he points out how later works were influenced by the early part of his life. The book is very readable and is always interesting. I highly recommend it.

Mary Jo says

Great insights into how Hemingway's writing was shaped. Not sure I would have made it through the first 50 pages if I was not committed to learning more about Hemingway.

Brian Willis says

To many people, Ernest Hemingway is equally as enigmatic as his books. Much like Michelangelo's theory of the marble block (the sculpture is already there, the sculptor just removes the excess marble), Hemingway removed all excess verbiage to reveal a journalistic style of narrative that described all and revealed little. "Big Two-Hearted River" seems to be a longer short story about fishing, when in fact it is a cleverly crafted examination of the causes and effects of World War I. Nothing is explicit; readers must infer and draw meaning themselves through close reading.

Hemingway's life is much the same itself. Blustering, macho, and conspicuously masculine, Hemingway became the image of global manhood, almost to the degree of becoming a caricature, such as The Most Interesting Man in the World commercials. I have a pet theory that Hemingway's lifestyle was a facade to hide deep hurt and sensitivity, perhaps even conflicted sexuality (see the life of his son, who spectacularly and flamboyantly transgressed gender lines). That evidence is here, as his mother was described as "androgynous" by Ernest himself, with his father playing a stern but subsidiary role in his life. Ernest was a rebel, and he fought his parents and his Oak Park upbringing at every turn, transgressing boundaries at every turn as described in this book.

Reynolds's first volume begins with Hemingway returning from the war, and becomes a series of examinations of areas of the author's life and upbringing in Oak Park. Reynolds breaks the traditional narrative here by jumping around in Ernest's past and describing what he would understand as the mores and local gossip of his Chicago suburban childhood. Reynolds frames that life as before and after World War I, and we follow Ernest as he examines his Oak Park life through the transformative experience of World War I. Much has changed in Ernest; little has changed about Oak Park. It's a brilliant frame and it examines aspects of Hemingway's personality that would remain hidden under a more traditional linear narrative. A slight quibble that Reynolds would remain standoffish about speculating about Hemingway's sex life, when clearly he reveals that Hemingway was reading about and fascinated by sexual relationships and gender roles. An eyebrow raising detail revealed is that Hemingway seems to have been involved with no fewer than three women at the time he decided to marry Hadley Richardson, a pattern that appears to have reoccurred throughout his life. Nonetheless, a fascinating read, one that reveals that Hemingway enjoyed fictionalizing his own life as much as the lives of others in his own fiction. Absolutely moving on to the next volume, "The

Paris Years".

Joan Colby says

An in-depth look at Hemingway's early years, with emphasis on the time between his wounding in Italy and his marriage to Hadley. The author skips back and forth in time which is often distracting, however, largely the book is readable if not memorable.

Josh says

Good info on Hemingway's early years. Lots of typos and it seemed (to me, anyway) to be all over the place, at least for the first half. The second half was a page-turner!

Courtney says

Learned a lot about Hemingway. I have a love/hate relationship with him but I absolutely love his books. This is a great introduction to Papa's life.

Grillo says

In general, I find myself bored with most biographies. They are either overly tedious or inane in their detail, too dry or too glossy in their treatment of the subject. Michael Reynolds' work here is a powerful exception. The Young Hemingway captivated me as thoroughly as a novel, and rather than finding myself skipping sections and slogging through chapters, I found myself unable to pry my eyes from the pages. Reynolds does an excellent job distilling new primary sources and a lifetime of scholarship into both an extremely readable and valuable work. I feel the essence of Hemingway in this time period is more clearly evoked than in any other biographical sketch I've read. The author is also fair in his treatment of the subject. There are no axes to grind, nor are there halos around young Hemingway; he is as real on Reynolds' page as anyone we might know, and that is one of the Reynolds' major achievements here: by the end of this work, one actually feels as if they understand some real aspects of the fabled author, the myth is stripped away, and we see something very human. This is the first book in a five part series. I'm going straight out to get the next volume.

Gale says

Enjoyed this first books.

Sam Norton says

Thoroughly entertaining. Unlike many biographies it managed to not fall flat in any but a few areas. Soooo many typos that it actually became somewhat difficult to keep up with everything at some points. I just wonder how a respected publisher like W.W. Norton would allow that. Nevertheless, very insightful, and holds no punches when it comes to Hemingway. Can't wait to read "The Paris Years."
