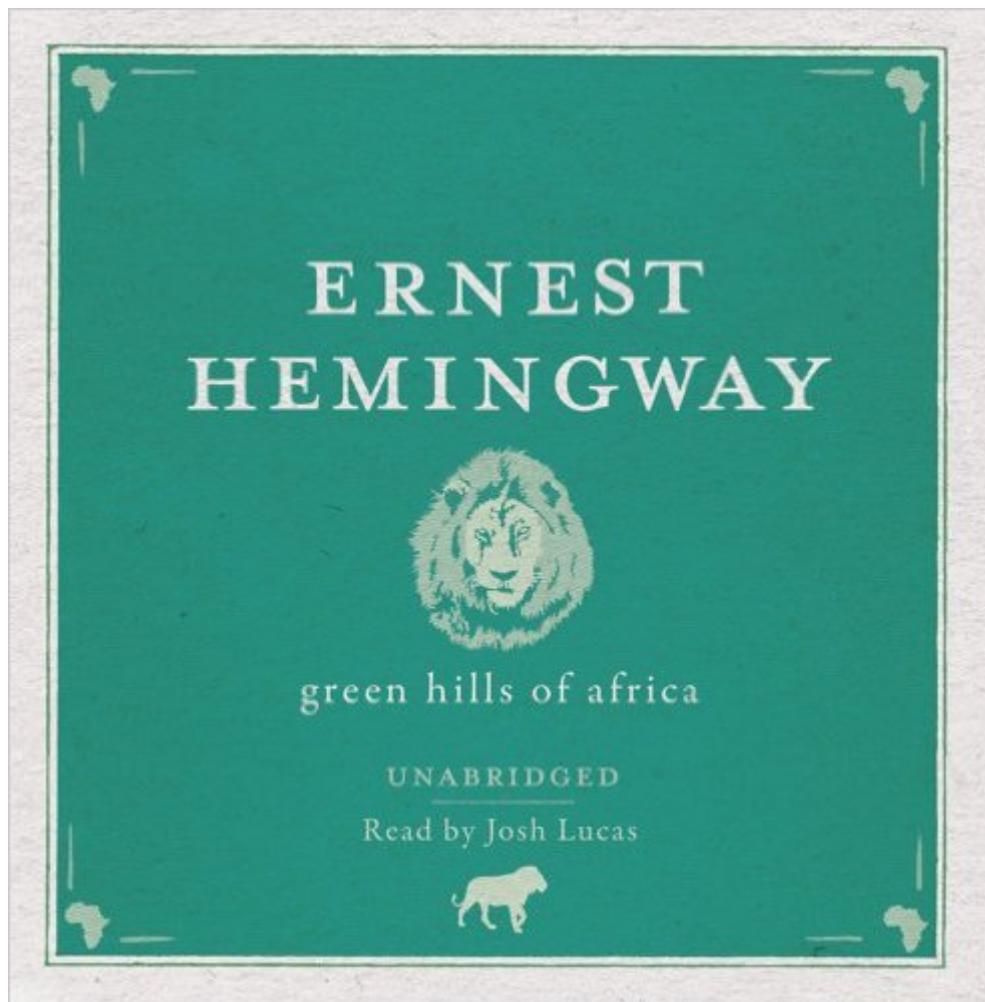


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# Green Hills Of Africa



## Synopsis

His second major venture into non fiction (after *Death in the Afternoon*, 1932), *Green Hills of Africa* is Ernest Hemingway's lyrical journal of a month on safari in the great game country of East Africa, where he and his wife Pauline journeyed in December of 1933. Hemingway's well-known interest in -- and fascination with -- big-game hunting is magnificently captured in this evocative account of his trip. In examining the poetic grace of the chase, and the ferocity of the kill, Hemingway also looks inward, seeking to explain the lure of the hunt and the primal undercurrent that comes alive on the plains of Africa. Yet *Green Hills of Africa* is also an impassioned portrait of the glory of the African landscape, and of the beauty of a wilderness that was, even then, being threatened by the incursions of man.

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## Customer Reviews

Hem is hunting both big game and big literature in "Green Hills." On this 1933-34 African safari, his jovial, Socratic drinking pal "Pop" is actually Phillip Percival the famous white hunter who conducted Theodore Roosevelt on his first African safari. As a young man, Hemingway owned a copy of TR's book "African Game Trails," and it is undoubtedly one of the reasons he went on this safari, which was financed to the tune of \$25,000 Depression dollars by his wife Pauline's uncle Gus, part owner of Richard Hudnut cosmetics. Further evidence of Hem's fascination with Africa can be seen in the way Jake Barnes teases Robert Cohn in "The Sun Also Rises." In chapter two, Jake says, " Did you ever think about going to British East Africa to shoot?" Cohn's lack of enthusiasm for an immediate

trek to Mombassa seals his fate as a jerk. "Green Hills" vindicates Hem's real aficion for hunting--filled with long descriptions of the arduous and sometimes futile tracking of game, not just celebratory "kills." Finally, the best preparation for reading "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" is to hike and sweat through these 300 pages of African "country." The long, crescent-horned sable which Hem was painstakingly stalking at the end of "Green Hills" never turned up. But instead, the experience of his African safari, was distilled into those two incredible stories--one about a coward who gets a chance to redeem himself and the other about a washed-up writer whose approaching death stimulates him to dream about--and the reader to enjoy--the fiction he never got to actually write. Unless you've got a rich uncle or wife, this is as close as you'll get to an East African safari, and it is very, very fine.

In this rare non-fiction work from Ernest Hemingway he brings to life a month long hunting expedition that he spent with his wife Pauline in Africa in nineteen-thirty-three, but he writes it in the true Hemingway tradition. Rather than having it read like a documentary he writes it in the form of a novel. Both entertaining and exciting it makes the reader hungry for the hunt. At times there is a bit of embellishment, such as making a clean kill on a Rhino at three-hundred yards with a Springfield rifle, (probably with open sights) in chapter four. Such probable exaggerations can be overlooked when we read his descriptions of the land and of the Masai and feel the remorse in his heart after wounding and losing a magnificent Sable Antelope to the jackals. It's my opinion that *Green Hills of Africa* is one of the finest hunting stories that has ever been written. Not for the sheer content of the story itself, but for the style, for Hemingway's style, ... and for the way that he recounts a true life adventure in the style of prose that has always proven so riveting in his fiction.

"*Green Hills of Africa*" was Hemingway's first non-fiction book, written after a 1933 trip to Eastern Africa (Kenya, Tanzania). It went a long way in establishing Hemingway's reputation as a hunter and adventurer. Though non-fiction it has the organization of a Hemingway novel and reads much like his other works. His descriptions of the landscape, local people, other hunters, and especially animals, hunting, and killing are superb. Hemingway also shares, mostly as dialogue, his thoughts on life, war, fate, and notably literature and the literary life. His often-quoted idea of all American literature being descended from one book by Mark Twain is presented here, as are his thoughts on how America destroys its writers. Some knowledge of Eastern Africa (such as a basic history, a guidebook, an encyclopedia article) might be useful as Hemingway often does provide much introductory material. With "*Green Hills of Africa*" Hemingway follows in the footsteps of Theodore

Roosevelt's "African Game Trails"; both did much to popularize among Americans the idea of recreational travel in Africa. Hemingway went on to write two fictional stories set in Africa: "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber". A good book, moreso for fans of Papa and those with an interest in Africa.

Much credit is given 'Papa' for his writings on Africa. I can only attribute this to the fact that he is a famous author and more people have read his Africa books/two short stories more than any others. Much like Roosevelt's game trails this book is a chronicle of Hemingway's two month safari. And like Teddys book comes across as just that. After all they only both went on one safari. If you are really interested in reading about African big game hunting there are two books that communicate the vibrancy and feel of hunting dangerous game in Africa better than Hemingway or Roosevelt. Death in the long grass by Peter Hathaway Capstick and Pondoro by John Taylor are my two favorites. Both are men who spent their lives living and hunting in Africa. Capstick as a professional hunter and game warden in the latter half of this century until 1975, and Taylor as an ivory poacher from the 1920-30's(?) to the late 40's. If you are anti-hunting forget it but if you are in-between and looking for something more on Africa then Please take a look. I am not saying that Hemingway is bad, it's just that in my opinion Taylor and Capstick bring African hunting alive in a way Hemingway can't touch in the best parts of Green Hills. Hemingway may be the master when it comes to other types of literature, but when it comes to describing hunting dangerous game in Africa Taylor and Capstick reign supreme.

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