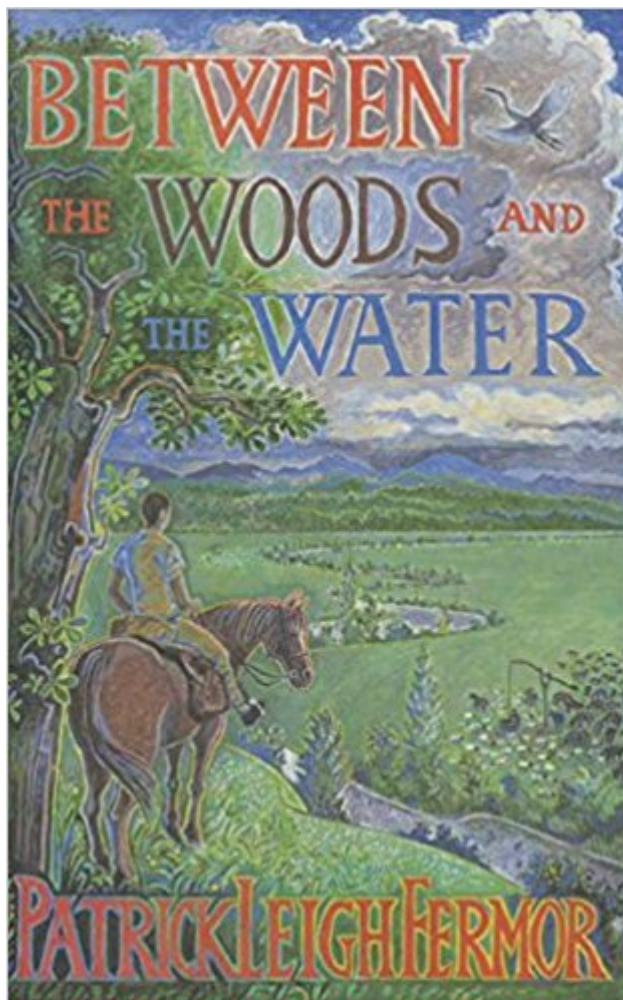


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Between The Woods And The Water



Synopsis

'Between the Woods and the Water' continues Patrick Leigh Fermor's celebrated epic account of his journey at the age of eighteen, in 1933, from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople. Here he travels down the Danube from Budapest, across the Great Hungarian Plain on horseback, and over the Rumanian border into Transylvania. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Half a century after the journey, a renowned British travel writer recaptures a five-month period in 1934 when, on a walking trip to Istanbul, he traversed 600 miles through Hungary and Transylvania, arriving finally at a point on the Danube where the Carpathians meet the Balkans. Sleeping at times in the open but often in the stately homes of families to whom he had letters of introduction, 19-year-old Fermor experienced regions untouched by the industrial revolution, where the rhythm of life had remained many decades behind the pace of the West. His "blessed and happy" stays in these quiet lands were as leisurely as they are in English and Russian novels of the 19th century. A worthy sequel to his 1977 book *A Time of Gifts*. Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The second volume of a projected trilogy, this book continues Fermor's account of a trip he made on foot across Europe in 1933-34. The book confirms the impression made by the first volume (*A Time of Gifts*): that Fermor is a very fine writer, whether he is discussing a brief liaison ("all unentwined moments seemed a waste"), a Hungarian castle, or haymaking. Like the first volume, this one too is full of superb vignettes that linger in the memory, combining to create an impression of Western

Europe between the wars of striking power and (given what happened soon afterwards) poignancy. If the amateur etymologizing is a little overdone here, the blemish is a minor one in a notable contribution to literature. Thomas M. Robinson, Philosophy Dept., Univ. of Toronto Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Fermor's walk across a vanished Europe is a lovely account of a lost world. He is a witness to the life and history that existed before the great erasure of World War II submerged it forever.

This is the best travel book I have ever read, and otherwise one of the best books I have read. Having read the first book of his walk across Europe. "A Time for Gifts", I hesitated to read this one because the land between Budapest and Istanbul is much less familiar to me. However, perhaps because of that reason I enjoyed it more..The book is mostly about Hungarians in Hungary, Transylvania, and Romania, and his account of moving from estate to estate is most interesting. He captures the time in history very well, and his writing is lyrical.

Between the Woods and the Water, along with Time of Gifts, must rank in the top 10 travel books of all time (including Colossus of Maroussi,etc.), for several reasons. First, Pat Fermor bridges two period legacies - the slow stately moving time of Old World nobility and comfort, from the Baron's oak, leather and velvet encased library to the yeoman's deer headed, giant stone fireplaced, stained glassed and snow surrounded pub, and the modern world (where not 5 years later, he was to parachute into Crete and lead a band of Cretan partisans against the Nazi occupation). One can tell from Patrick's descriptions that he feels what is coming, but prefers not to face it quite yet. Secondly, referring to my last remark, the time of history is epochal, right before the second World War, when the millenia-long midafternoon of finally settled European nations had become, after the First World War, an evening of nostalgic longing for a better time; all the appearances and architectural glories were still in place, but the deep diapasson of world change was already rumbling underground. Fermor catches all of this in his writing - does not make a point of it, but you can feel it in the air - therefore, the book is also a description of history on the move. Thirdly, Patrick is not even twenty years old yet, a very young man traveling on foot alone at a time when nobody in any country set out to do what he succeeded in doing. The welcomes he received and the myriad tales and experiences he encountered would be available only to one so young, treated as a younger son to whom gifts and assistance would invariably be given. Someone older, wealthier ,and traveling by vehicle would never have experienced what he did. Lastly, he is a spectacularly good descriptive

writer, with regard to his own encounters and thoughts, and the world around him. Since he bridged both the older and the modern epochs, his education far surpassed almost anyone of his age today, so his ability to link what he saw and the past the preceded it is fantastic. I recommend this book as highly as it possible so to do.

Budapest... the Hungarian Plains... Romania... Transylvania. Sound capital-R Romantic? It's that and more in the adept hands of Patrick Leigh Fermor. This continues the story of his 1934 travels through Europe as a 19-year-old. And if anything, the pastoral settings of Eastern Europe suit his descriptive hand even better than this book's predecessor, *A TIME OF GIFTS*. Here is a glimmer of Fermor's writing as he describes the Carpathian Uplands: "These great forest chambers, bounded by mingled stretches of hardwood and underbrush, slanted uphill and out of sight in a confusion of roots. Freshets channeled the penumbra, falling from rocky overhangs into pools that could be heard from afar, or welled up through husks and dead leaves and turned into streams. There had been two hoopoes in the lower woods and bee-eaters, with an eye to the hives perhaps, perched on twigs near the harvesters' clearing; golden orioles, given away by their black and yellow plumage and the insistent shrill curl of their song, darted among the branches. But every so often invisible flocks of wood-pigeons plunged everything under a spell so drowsy, it was hard, sitting down for a smoke, to keep awake; then a footfall would loose off a hundred flurried wings and set them circling in the speckled light of one of the forest ballrooms like Crystal Palace multitudes calling for Wellingtonian hawks." It resembles an idyll, the way his pen lends itself to descriptive passages of nature, and the wild beauties of this more mysterious corner of Europe comes to life because of it. Part III of this book has yet to be published, though they say Fermor completed most of it before his recent death in June of 2011. Until then, if you are a devotee of travel writing or nature writing, you owe yourself a look at Fermor's delightful tandem, *A TIME OF GIFTS* followed by *BETWEEN THE WOODS AND THE WATER*.

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