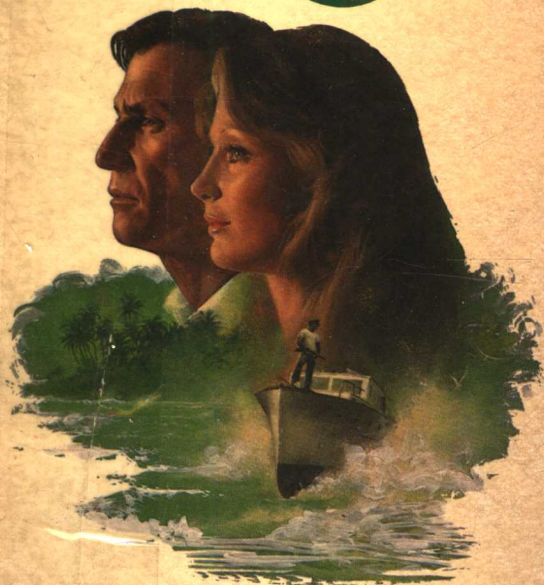


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ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

• A NOVEL BY •

ERNEST HEMINGWAY



ISLANDS
IN THE
STREAM

ERNEST HEMINGWAY.



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NOTE

Charles Scribner, Jr. and I worked together preparing this book for publication from Ernest's original manuscript. Beyond the routine chores of correcting spelling and punctuation, we made some cuts in the manuscript, I feeling that Ernest would surely have made them himself. The book is all Ernest's. We have added nothing to it.

MARY HEMINGWAY

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Part I

BIMINI

BIMINI

I

THE house was built on the highest part of the narrow tongue of land between the harbor and the open sea. It had lasted through three hurricanes and it was built solid as a ship. It was shaded by tall coconut palms that were bent by the trade wind and on the ocean side you could walk out of the door and down the bluff across the white sand and into the Gulf Stream. The water of the Stream was usually a dark blue when you looked out at it when there was no wind. But when you walked out into it there was just the green light of the water over that floury white sand and you could see the shadow of any big fish a long time before he could ever come in close to the beach.

It was a safe and fine place to bathe in the day but it was no place to swim at night. At night the sharks came in close to the beach, hunting in the edge of the Stream and from the upper porch of the house on quiet nights you could hear the splashing of the fish they hunted and if you went down to the beach you could see the phosphorescent wakes they made in the water. At night the sharks had no fear and everything else feared them. But in the day they stayed out away from the clear white sand and if they did come in you could see their shadows a long way away.

A man named Thomas Hudson, who was a good

painter, lived there in that house and worked there and on the island the greater part of the year. After one has lived in those latitudes long enough the changes of the seasons become as important there as anywhere else and Thomas Hudson, who loved the island, did not want to miss any spring, nor summer, nor any fall or winter.

Sometimes the summers were too hot when the wind dropped in August or when the trade winds sometimes failed in June and July. Hurricanes, too, might come in September and October and even in early November and there could be freak tropical storms any time from June on. But the true hurricane months have fine weather when there are no storms.

Thomas Hudson had studied tropical storms for many years and he could tell from the sky when there was a tropical disturbance long before his barometer showed its presence. He knew how to plot storms and the precautions that should be taken against them. He knew too what it was to live through a hurricane with the other people of the island and the bond that the hurricane made between all people who had been through it. He also knew that hurricanes could be so bad that nothing could live through them. He always thought, though, that if there was ever one that bad he would like to be there for it and go with the house if she went.

The house felt almost as much like a ship as a house. Placed there to ride out storms, it was built into the island as though it were a part of it; but you saw the sea from all the windows and there was good cross ventilation so that you slept cool on the hottest nights. The house was painted white to be cool in the summer and it could be seen from a long way out in the Gulf Stream. It was the highest thing on the island except for the long planting of tall casuarina trees that were the first thing you saw as you raised the island out of the sea. Soon after you saw the dark blur of casuarina trees above the line of the sea, you would see the white bulk of the house. Then, as you came closer, you raised the whole length of the island with the coconut palms, the clapboarded houses, the white line of the beach, and the green of the South Island

stretching beyond it. Thomas Hudson never saw the house, there on that island, but that the sight of her made him happy. He always thought of the house as *her* exactly as he would have thought of a ship. In the winter, when the northers blew and it was really cold, the house was warm and comfortable because it had the only fireplace on the island. It was a big open fireplace and Thomas Hudson burned driftwood in it.

He had a big pile of driftwood stacked against the south wall of the house. It was whitened by the sun and sand-scoured by the wind and he would become fond of different pieces so that he would hate to burn them. But there was always more driftwood along the beach after the big storms and he found it was fun to burn even the pieces he was fond of. He knew the sea would sculpt more, and on a cold night he would sit in the big chair in front of the fire, reading by the lamp that stood on the heavy plank table and look up while he was reading to hear the northwester blowing outside and the crashing of the surf and watch the great, bleached pieces of driftwood burning.

Sometimes he would put the lamp out and lie on the rug on the floor and watch the edges of color that the sea salt and the sand in the wood made in the flame as they burned. On the floor his eyes were even with the line of the burning wood and he could see the line of the flame when it left the wood and it made him both sad and happy. All wood that burned affected him in this way. But burning driftwood did something to him that he could not define. He thought that it was probably wrong to burn it when he was so fond of it; but he felt no guilt about it.

As he lay on the floor he felt under the wind although, really, the wind whipped at the lower corners of the house and at the lowest grass on the island and into the roots of the sea grass and the cockleburs and into the sand itself. On the floor he could feel the pounding of the surf the way he remembered feeling the firing of heavy guns when he had lain on the earth close by some battery a long time ago when he had been a boy.

The fireplace was a great thing in winter and through all the other months he looked at it with affection and thought how it would be when winter came again. Winter was the best of all seasons on the island and he looked forward to it through all the rest of the year.

II

WINTER was over and spring was nearly gone when Thomas Hudson's boys came to the island that year. It had been arranged for the three of them to meet in New York to come down together on the train and then fly over from the Mainland. There had been the usual difficulties with the mother of two of the boys. She had planned a European trip saying nothing, of course, to the boys' father when she planned it, and she wanted the boys for the summer. He could have them for the Christmas holidays; after Christmas of course. Christmas itself would be spent with her.

Thomas Hudson was familiar with the pattern by now and finally there was the usual compromise. The two younger boys would come to the island to visit their father for five weeks and then leave to sail from New York, student class, on a French Line boat to join their mother in Paris where she would have bought a few necessary clothes. They would be in the charge of their older brother, young Tom, on the trip. Young Tom would then join *his* mother, who was making a picture in the south of France.

Young Tom's mother had not asked for him and would have liked him to be at the island with his father. But she would love to see him and it was a fair compromise with the unmalleable decision of the other boys' mother. She was a delightful and charming woman who had never altered a plan that she had made in her life. Her

plans were always made in secret, like those of a good general, and they were as rigidly enforced. A compromise might be effected. But never a basic change in a plan whether that plan was conceived in a sleepless night or on an angry morning or on a gin-aided evening.

A plan was a plan and a decision was truly a decision and knowing all this and having been well educated in the usages of divorce, Thomas Hudson was happy that a compromise had been made and that the children were coming for five weeks. If five weeks is what we get, he thought, that is what we draw. Five weeks is a good long time to be with people that you love and would wish to be with always. But why did I ever leave Tom's mother in the first place? You'd better not think about that, he told himself. That is one thing you had better not think about. And these are fine children that you got from the other one. Very strange and very complicated and you know how many of their good qualities come from her. She is a fine woman and you never should have left her either. Then he said to himself, Yes. I had to.

But he did not worry much about any of it. He had long ago ceased to worry and he had exorcised guilt with work insofar as he could, and all he cared about now was that the boys were coming over and that they should have a good summer. Then he would go back to work.

He had been able to replace almost everything except the children with work and the steady normal working life he had built on the island. He believed he had made something there that would last and that would hold him. Now when he was lonesome for Paris he would remember Paris instead of going there. He did the same thing with all of Europe and much of Asia and of Africa.

He remembered what Renoir had said when they told him that Gauguin had gone to Tahiti to paint. "Why does he have to spend so much money to go so far away to paint when one paints so well here at the Batignolles?" It was better in French, "quand on peint si bien aux Batignolles," and Thomas Hudson thought of the island as his *quartier* and he was settled in it and knew his

neighbors and worked as hard as he had ever worked in Paris when young Tom had been a baby.

Sometimes he would leave the island to fish off Cuba or to go to the mountains in the fall. But he had rented the ranch that he owned in Montana because the best time out there was the summer and the fall and now the boys always had to go to school in the fall.

He had to go to New York occasionally to see his dealer. But more often now his dealer came down to see him and took canvases north with him. He was well established as a painter and he was respected both in Europe and in his own country. He had a regular income from oil leases on land his grandfather had owned. It had been grazing land and when it was sold the mineral rights had been retained. About half of this income went into alimony and the balance provided him with security so that he could paint exactly as he wanted to with no commercial pressure. It also enabled him to live where he wished and to travel when he cared to.

He had been successful in almost every way except in his married life, although he had never cared, truly, about success. What he cared about was painting and his children and he was still in love with the first woman he had been in love with. He had loved many women since and sometimes someone would come to stay on the island. He needed to see women and they were welcome for a while. He liked having them there, sometimes for quite a long time. But in the end he was always glad when they were gone, even when he was very fond of them. He had trained himself not to quarrel with women anymore and he had learned how not to get married. These two things had been nearly as difficult to learn as how to settle down and paint in a steady and well-ordered way. But he had learned them and he hoped that he had learned them permanently. He had known how to paint for a long time and he believed he learned more every year. But learning how to settle down and how to paint with discipline had been hard for him because there had been a time in his life when he had not been disciplined. He had never been truly irresponsible; but he

had been undisciplined, selfish, and ruthless. He knew this now, not only because many women had told it to him; but because he had finally discovered it for himself. Then he had resolved that he would be selfish only for his painting, ruthless only for his work, and that he would discipline himself and accept the discipline.

He was going to enjoy life within the limits of the discipline that he imposed and work hard. And today he was very happy because his children were coming in the morning.

"Mr. Tom, don't you want nothing?" Joseph the house-boy asked him. "You knocked off for the day, ain't you?"

Joseph was tall with a very long, very black face and big hands and big feet. He wore a white jacket and trousers and was barefooted.

"Thank you, Joseph. I don't think I want anything."

"Little gin and tonic?"

"No. I think I'll go down and have one at Mr. Bobby's."

"Drink one here. It's cheaper. Mr. Bobby was in an evil mood when I went by. Too many mixed drinks he says. Somebody off a yacht asked him for something called a White Lady and he served her a bottle of that American mineral water with a lady in white kinda mosquito netting dress sitting by a spring."

"I better be getting down there."

"Let me mix you one first. You got some mails on the pilot boat. You can read your mails and drink the drink and then go down to Mr. Bobby's."

"All right."

"Good thing," said Joseph. "Because I already mixed it. Mails don't look to amount to anything, Mr. Tom."

"Where are they?"

"Down in the kitchen. I'll bring them up. Couple with women's writing on them. One from New York. One from Palm Beach. Pretty writing. One from that gentleman sells your pictures in New York. Couple more unknown to me."

"You want to answer them for me?"

"Yes sir. If that's what you want. I'm educated way beyond my means."

"Better bring them up."

"Yes sir, Mr. Tom. There's a paper too."

"Save it for breakfast, please, Joseph."

Thomas Hudson sat and read his mail and sipped at the cool drink. He read one letter over again and then put them all in a drawer of his desk.

"Joseph," he called. "Have you everything ready for the boys?"

"Yes sir, Mr. Tom. And two extra cases of Coca-Cola. Young Tom, he must be bigger than me, ain't he?"

"Not yet."

"Think he can lick me now?"

"I don't think so."

"I fought that boy so many times in private life," Joseph said. "Sure is funny to call him mister. Mr. Tom, Mr. David, and Mr. Andrew. Three of the finest goddam boys I know. And the meanest is Andy."

"He started out mean," Thomas Hudson said.

"And boy, did he continue," Joseph said admiringly.

"You set them a good example this summer."

"Mr. Tom, you don't want me to set those boys no good example this summer. Maybe three four years back when I was innocent. Me, I'm going to pattern myself on Tom. He's been to an expensive school and he's got good expensive manners. I can't look like him exactly. But I can act like him. Free and easy but polite. Then I'm going to be smart like Dave. That's the hardest part. Then I'm going to learn the secret of how Andy gets that mean."

"Don't you get mean around here?"

"No, Mr. Tom, you mistook what I meant. That meanness isn't for in the house. I want that for my private life."

"It will be nice to have them, won't it?"

"Mr. Tom, there won't be nothing like it since they had the big fire. I rank it right along with the Second Coming. Is it nice? you ask me. Yes sir, it's nice."

"We'll have to figure out plenty of things for them to do to have fun."

"No, Mr. Tom," Joseph said. "We ought to figure out

how to save them from their own fearsome projects. Eddy can help us. He knows them better than me. I'm their friend and that makes it difficult."

"How's Eddy?"

"He's been drinking a little in anticipation of the Queen's birthday. He's in tip-top shape."

"I better get down to Mr. Bobby's while he's still in that evil mood."

"He asked for you, Mr. Tom. Mr. Bobby's a gentleman if there ever was a gentleman and sometimes that trash comes in on yachts gets him worn down. He was wore down almighty thin when I left."

"What were you doing there?"

"I went for Coca-Cola and I stayed to keep my hand in shooting a stick of pool."

"How's the table?"

"Worse."

"I'll go down," said Thomas Hudson. "I want to take a shower and change."

"I've got them laying out for you on the bed," Joseph told him. "You want another gin and tonic?"

"No thanks."

"Mr. Roger's in on the boat."

"Good. I'll get hold of him."

"Will he be staying here?"

"Maybe."

"I'll make up a bed for him anyway."

"Good."

III

THOMAS HUDSON took a shower, scrubbing his head with soap and then rinsing under the prickling drive of the sharp, jetted shower. He was a big man and he looked bigger stripped than he did in his clothes. He was very

tanned and his hair was faded and streaked from the sun. He carried no extra weight and on the scales he saw that he weighed 192 pounds.

I should have gone swimming before I took the shower, he thought. But I had a long swim this morning before I started work and I'm tired now. There will be plenty of swimming when the boys come. And Roger's here too. That's good.

He put on a clean pair of shorts and an old Basque shirt and moccasins and went out the door and down the slope and through the gate in the picket fence onto the white glare of the sun-bleached coral of the King's Highway.

Ahead a very erect-walking old Negro in a black alpaca coat and pressed dark trousers came out of one of the unpainted board shacks along the road that was shaded by two tall coconut palms and turned into the highway ahead of him. Thomas Hudson saw his fine black face as he turned.

From behind the shack a child's voice came in an old English tune singing mockingly,

“Uncle Edward came from Nassau
Some candy for to sell
I buy some and P.H. buy some
And the candy give us hell—”

Uncle Edward turned his fine face, looking as sad as it was angry, in the bright afternoon light.

“I know you,” he said. “I can't see you but I know who you are. I'll report you to Constable.”

The child's voice went on, rising clear and gay,

“Oh Edward
Oh Edward
Buff, rough, tough Uncle Edward
Your candy rotten.”

“Constable going to hear about this,” Uncle Edward said. “Constable know what steps to take.”

“Any rotten candy today, Uncle Edward?” the child's voice called. He was careful to keep out of sight.

“Man is persecuted,” Uncle Edward said aloud as he