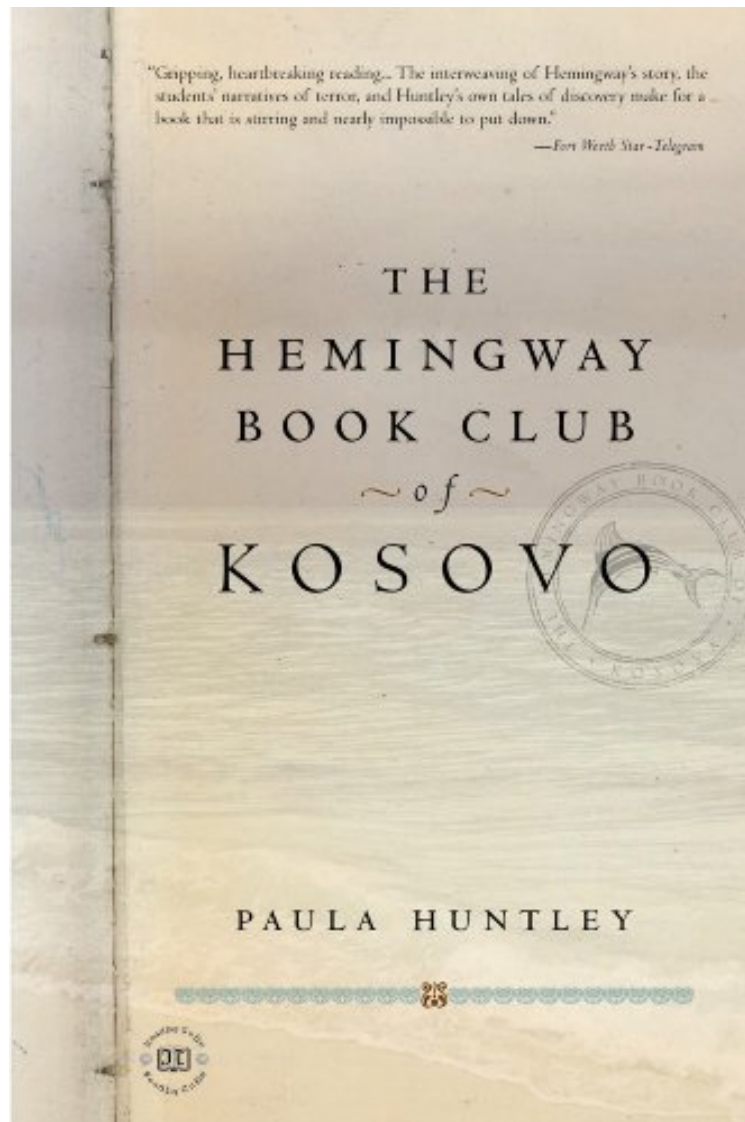


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The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo

Von Paula Huntley

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Von Paula Huntley : The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Well worth reading by anyone interested in Kosovo!Von E.J.CARTER LENGELERA very warm, personal and empathetic description of people and times just as Kosovo was emerging as an independent State.

Kurzbeschreibung A moving testimony to the power of literature to bring people together in even the most difficult of circumstances. In the spring of 1999, the world watched as more than 800,000 Kosovo Albanians poured over Kosovo's borders, bringing with them stories of torture, rape, and massacre. One year later, Paula Huntley's husband signed on with the American Bar Association to help build a modern legal system in this broken country, and she reluctantly agreed to accompany him. Deeply uncertain as to how she might be of any service in a country that had seen such violence and hatred, Huntley found a position teaching English as a Second Language to a group of Kosovo Albanians in Prishtina. A war story, a teacher's story, but most of all a story of hope, *The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo* is the journal Huntley kept in scattered notebooks or on her laptop over the eight months that she lived and worked in Kosovo. When Huntley asked her students if they would like to form an American-style "book club," they jumped at the idea. After stumbling upon a stray English-language copy of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, Huntley proposed it as the club's first selection. The simple fable touched all the students deeply, and the club rapidly became a forum in which they could discuss both the terrors of their past and their dreams for the future. *The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo* is a compelling tribute to the resilience of the human spirit.

From Publishers Weekly Huntley's husband volunteered for an American Bar Association project in Kosovo to help create a new legal system in the fall of 2000, the year after NATO bombing had ended. With trepidation, Huntley decided to go, too, enrolling first in a crash course on the teaching of English as a second language so she'd have something to offer. On arriving in Prishtina, she volunteered at a language school and started keeping this diary. Her (mostly Albanian) students became her personal connection to everyday life in Kosovo; this diary, where she recorded her impressions, became her way of sharing Kosovo with the world. There are the usual funny details of life in a foreign country, e.g., the laboriously translated menu that offered "chicken buttocks on screws." Before long, however, her students' stories take center stage: how they survived the Serb roundups, tortures and killings. As a taxi driver explained, "Some men are hard as stones." Teaching supplies are scarce, so it's serendipitous that the one American-language paperback that Huntley came across is a copy of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, which she photocopied for a reading club she started. Initially leery—"God knows this country doesn't need anymore [sic] macho"—she was pleased to find her students responding to the strength and endurance of Hemingway's protagonist. Huntley and her husband returned home in April 2001, but stayed in touch, largely via e-mail, with their Kosovar friends. Huntley's journal not only shares their stories, but reminds readers that by volunteering, people get back more than they give.

Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist In August 2002 Huntley made a decision to accompany her husband on an assignment to help build a legal system in war-ravaged Kosovo. In a move that would forever alter the core of her existence, Paula kept a journal of her experiences to memorialize and come to terms with the pain inspired by the tragic human stories she came across every day. The violence of the ethnic cleansing puppeteered by Milosevic in the late 1990s left the Yugoslavian province in shambles, but the indomitable spirit of the people stirred Paula to try and make a difference in her own way, and she volunteered to teach English to Albanian students anxious to grasp the language of freedom. By sharing with them Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*, Paula bridges the language barrier to form a touching bond with the students in her class. Although she never intended for her journal to be published, its beautiful, soul-searching passages deserve to be embraced by the world.

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