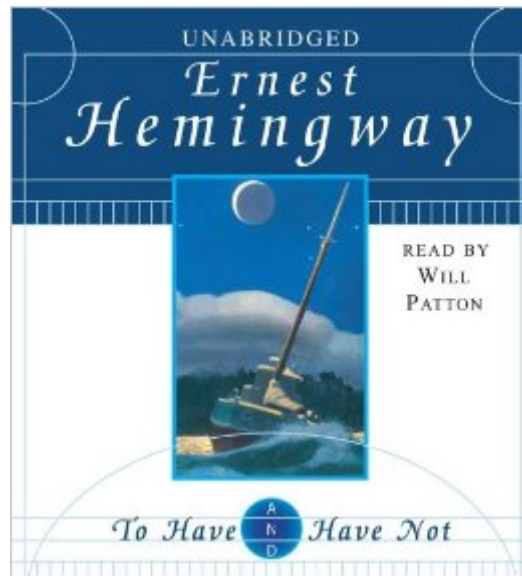


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# To Have And Have Not



## Synopsis

Hemingway's classic novel about contraband, intrigue, and love *To Have and Have Not* is the dramatic story of Harry Morgan, an honest man who is forced into running contraband between Cuba and Key West as a means of keeping his crumbling family financially afloat. His adventures lead him into the world of the wealthy and dissipated yachtsmen who throng the region, and involve him in a strange and unlikely love affair. Harshly realistic, yet with one of the most subtle and moving relationships in the Hemingway oeuvre, *To Have and Have Not* is literary high adventure at its finest.

## Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio; Unabridged edition (August 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743564421

ISBN-13: 978-0743564427

Product Dimensions: 5 x 1.1 x 5.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (210 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

*To Have And Have Not* is too fragmentary to be Hemingway's best novel. It's divided into three episodes, which I think were written at completely different times, so Hemingway's objectives might have changed halfway through. The first episode was meant to stand on its own merits as a short story, but Hemingway liked it so much he came back to it later and added two more. That said, it's certainly a fine novel - gripping, moving and very well-written at every step of the way. It revolves around Harry Morgan, an honest man turned into a smuggler by necessity. In the context of the whole novel, the first episode serves mainly to establish his person and show what sort of man he is - his reluctance to get into illegal activities, his strength, his survival instinct and the cruelty that it sometimes results in, and his human qualities. This reads like a self-contained short story with no real point other than an action-filled scenario. The second and shortest episode is the weakest part of the novel - it's a cross-section of a day in Morgan's life after he already takes up smuggling. It

certainly shows the risks he has to take, but doesn't serve to do much other than explain a certain point in the third episode. The third episode, where the real meat of the story is, is the best. It shows the further developments and the conclusion of Morgan's criminal career. It is also where the book's title comes in - here we see the contrast between those who have and those who have not. This comparison makes it easier to understand by contrast just how inevitably Morgan was driven to the life he now leads.

Rough. Hard. Dirty. Physical. Tough. And also lyrical, simple, emotional, indelible. All characteristics of Hemingway's writing, all present in this book. A simple story of Harry Morgan, sometime fisherman forced into smuggling and illegal immigration just to feed his family, a man who spirals down the slippery road of 'the end justifying the means' till there is nothing left but survive at any cost. The story is told as three separate time-segments in Harry's life, which forces a certain disjointedness to the tale. But it also allows Hemingway to illuminate Harry's story with different segments of the Cuban and Key West societies at different times with changing social conditions. There are many character vignettes, people captured sometimes in only a few paragraphs, people who are desperate, silly, egotistical, idealistic, cynical, worn-out, greedy, dissolute, resigned, driven, and just coping. Albert, a man doing relief work for less than subsistence wages, is one of the clearest and most poignant images, hiring on as mate to Henry even though he knows the voyage is supremely dangerous. Within this short portrait of this man, we see not only the extremes that desperation will drive a man to, but also Hemingway's commentary on social/political organizations and economic structures that give rise to such desperation. This was quite typical of Hemingway, as he never beat his reader's over the head with his political philosophy, but showed the underpinnings of his reasoning through the circumstances of his characters. Throughout this work, there is the sense that there is more here than what the words on the page delineate, a theme of people from all walks of life and all economic circumstances who are caught in the implacability of fate.

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