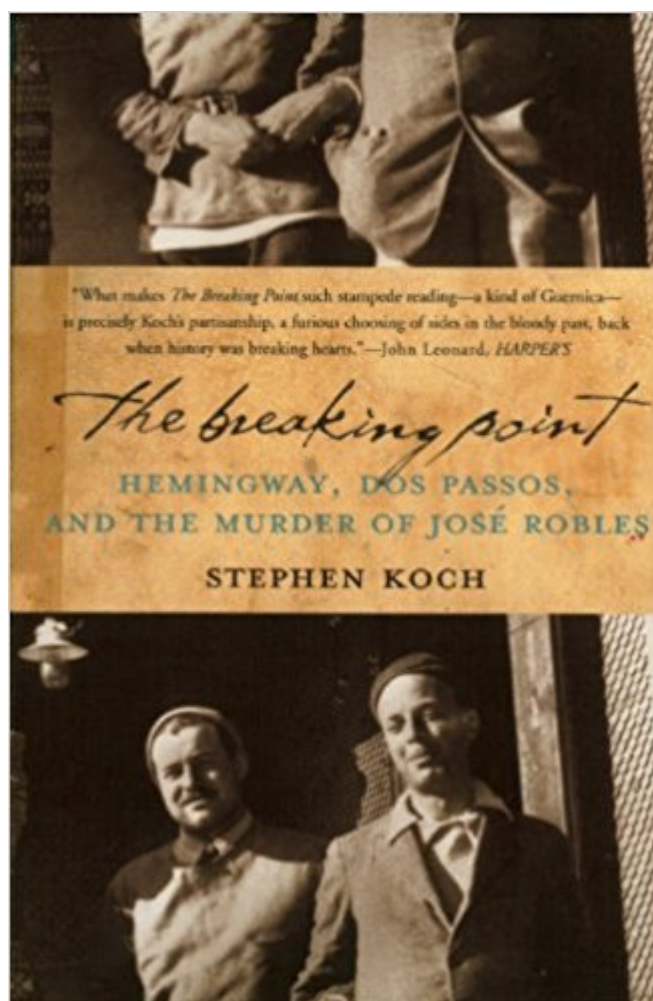


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The Breaking Point: Hemingway, Dos Passos, And The Murder Of Jose Robles



Synopsis

When American authors John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway went to Spain in 1937 to witness the Spanish Civil War firsthand, the devastation they encountered was far from impersonal: As Spain was unraveling thread by thread, so was the relationship between these two literary titans. They had arrived in Spain as comrades, leftist writers-in-arms. But a real-life literary mystery unfolded when Dos Passos's friend Jos  Robles, a Spanish-born Johns Hopkins professor, disappeared. Written from a novelist's eye for detail, *The Breaking Point* is the story of two lives at the intersection of friendship and murder, of love and death, and of literature and history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have rarely read a book like this in which an author has such scorn for nearly all the people he writes about. It is like he needs to demonstrate his superiority. Missing is the humane sympathy for the human weaknesses of a wiser and more confident author. Despite the basic interest of the events, this condescension and sourness becomes tiresome. This made it difficult to finish this book

I would say this is an essential book if you are interested in Hemingway in general, and the Spanish civil war.

This is an essential account for those curious about the Spanish Civil War, Ernest Hemingway,

Martha Gellhorn, or John Dos Passos. In particular, it charts how the Spanish Republican cause was gradually co-opted and then betrayed by the Stalinists (at its end the war was not about bad guys and good guys but about bad guys and worse guys). Its portrait of Hemingway only reinforces the image that is already out there, especially that of an overweening egotist willing to exploit international crises as stages for self-display (he was at the Hotel Florida in Madrid seeking a career boost). As for Gellhorn, Koch exposes the number of self-serving untruths she circulated, exposing her as the kind of woman that Hemingway probably deserved. Gellhorn definitely set out to subvert Hemingway's marriage to Pauline Pfeiffer and in the end reaped an appropriate reward. One great service Koch provides is to help rehabilitate the reputation of a much under-appreciated writer, John Dos Passos whose "U.S.A." trilogy remains one of the great achievements of American literature. And if you really like pictures, you can Google these people and ogle them all you want.

Fascinating insight into the dynamics of the Spanish civil war. I knew that the Soviets were involved, but I didn't realize to what extent Stalin was using Spain as a pawn in his chess match with Hitler. The portraits of Hemingway and Dos Passos are interesting: Dos Passos comes off as a sometimes naïf but well meaning guy trying to find out what happened to his friend Robles. Hemingway, though, comes off as an insecure, thoroughly unlikable macho jerk. The writing style is a bit pot-boiler-ish, but it suits the galloping pace of the events. Recommended.

I may return this without reading it. Hemingway, Dos Passos and the Spanish Civil War and no photos. Are you kidding me? Couldn't you afford to put a couple in? I am SOOOOOOOOOOOO disappointed.

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