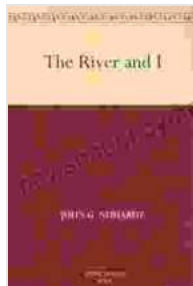


# The River and John Neihardt: A Timeless Masterpiece of American Literature



## The River and I by John G. Neihardt

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 381 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 354 pages

Lending : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported



John Neihardt's epic poem, *The River*, is a masterpiece of American literature. It tells the story of the Missouri River, from its source in the Rocky Mountains to its confluence with the Mississippi River. Neihardt's poem is a celebration of the American West and its people, and it is a powerful reminder of the importance of our natural heritage.

Neihardt was born in Illinois in 1881, and he grew up on the Great Plains. He was a gifted writer from a young age, and he published his first book of poetry in 1901. In 1912, he began work on *The River*, which he completed in 1915. The poem was an instant success, and it has been praised by critics ever since for its beauty, its power, and its historical accuracy.

*The River* is divided into six parts, each of which tells a different story about the Missouri River. The first part, "The Song of Hugh Glass," tells the story of a fur trapper who was mauled by a grizzly bear and left for dead. Glass

managed to survive and make his way back to civilization, and his story is a testament to the indomitable spirit of the American West.

The second part, "The Song of the Indian Wars," tells the story of the conflict between the Native Americans and the white settlers. Neihardt does not shy away from the violence and brutality of this conflict, but he also shows the courage and resilience of the Native Americans.

The third part, "The Song of the Pioneers," tells the story of the westward expansion of the United States. Neihardt celebrates the pioneers who settled the West, but he also acknowledges the hardships they faced.

The fourth part, "The Song of the River," tells the story of the Missouri River itself. Neihardt describes the river's beauty and power, and he also explores its role in American history.

The fifth part, "The Song of the Future," tells the story of the future of the Missouri River and the American West. Neihardt expresses his hope that the river will continue to be a source of inspiration and beauty for generations to come.

The sixth and final part, "The Song of the End," tells the story of Neihardt's own death. He died in 1973, at the age of 91. In this final part, Neihardt reflects on his life and his work, and he expresses his hope that his poetry will continue to be read and enjoyed by generations to come.

*The River* is a powerful and moving poem that celebrates the American West and its people. It is a must-read for anyone interested in American literature, history, or the natural world.

## **Analysis**

*The River* is a complex and multi-layered poem that can be read on many different levels. On one level, it is a celebration of the American West and its people. Neihardt captures the beauty and the power of the Missouri River, and he tells the stories of the Native Americans, the pioneers, and the settlers who have lived along its banks.

On another level, *The River* is a meditation on the nature of time and history. Neihardt shows how the river is a constant presence in the lives of the people who live along its banks. It is a source of life and sustenance, but it can also be a source of destruction. The river is a reminder that time passes and that all things must eventually come to an end.

Finally, *The River* is a personal poem in which Neihardt reflects on his own life and his own mortality. He sees the river as a symbol of his own life, and he expresses his hope that his poetry will continue to be read and enjoyed by generations to come.

*The River* is a timeless masterpiece of American literature. It is a poem that can be enjoyed on many different levels, and it is a poem that will continue to be read and appreciated for generations to come.

## **Themes**

Some of the main themes of *The River* include:

- The beauty and power of the natural world
- The indomitable spirit of the American West
- The importance of history and tradition

- The nature of time and mortality
- The power of poetry to capture the essence of life

## Legacy

*The River* has had a profound impact on American literature. It is considered to be one of the great epic poems of the 20th century, and it has been praised by critics for its beauty, its power, and its historical accuracy.

*The River* has also been an inspiration to other writers, including Willa Cather, Wallace Stegner, and Bernard DeVoto. These writers have all acknowledged the influence of *The River* on their own work, and they have helped to ensure that Neihardt's poem will continue to be read and appreciated for generations to come.

*The River* is a timeless masterpiece of American literature. It is a poem that celebrates the beauty and the power of the natural world, the indomitable spirit of the American West, and the importance of history and tradition. *The River* is a must-read for anyone interested in American literature, history, or the natural world.



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