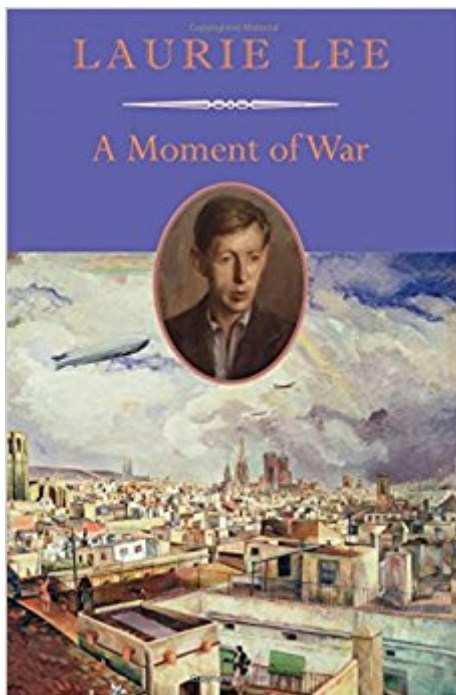


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# A Moment Of War



## Synopsis

One of *The New York Times Book Review's* Ten Best Books of the Year. In December 1937, young Laurie Lee crossed the Pyrenees into Spain as a wartime volunteer from England, and in so doing walked straight into a loyalist prison and the bitter conflict of the Spanish Civil War. In this gripping memoir, he returns to the scene of his wartime coming of age and portrays the death of a young man's idealism with sincerity and a total lack of pretense. This is the third volume in Laurie Lee's trilogy of his youth, which began with *Cider With Rosie* (which has sold more than six million copies worldwide) and continued with *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*. For anyone who wants to understand what war is actually like, when it is not being dramatized, hyped, heroized, or propagandized, this is the book. For those who still cherish the beauty and the flexibility of the English language this book . . . [is] a treasure. *Los Angeles Times Book Review* This enormously sophisticated work, a testament to the morality and weakness of humanity, has the plainness of Orwell but the metaphorical soaring of a poem . . . An extraordinary book. *New York Times Book Review* One of the great classics of young-men-at-war in the English language. Because of Lee's extraordinary spare, concrete poetry, his precision in truthfully rendering what he saw, and his psychological understanding of it, this small gem of a book is one of the greatest gifts to readers I've seen in years. Barbara Probst Solomon

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a young, idealistic Englishman, Lee journeyed to Spain in 1937 to help the International Brigade

during the Spanish Civil War. Now, more than 50 years later, this master of both prose and poetry (e.g., *Selected Poems*, Trafalgar Square, 1984) provides a stunning coming-of-age account that should attract a wide range of listeners, both young and old. Lee's descriptions of the harsh, frozen surroundings that he and his fellow soldiers contended with are conveyed with typical British understatement by reader Stephen Thorne. Thorne manages to handle Lee's beautifully restrained, lyrical prose with remarkable poise. Highly recommended for most biography collections.- Mark Annichiarico, "Library Journal" Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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A sequel to "As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning" the book picks up with Laurie climbing over the French Pyrenees to join the the Spanish Republican army and fight in the Spanish civil war. He runs into trouble from the start and in a series of events is jailed several times and almost shot as a spy. The book is a vivid look at life in civil war Spain. Not a pleasant place! Folks are killed by starvation, mistake, accident, on purpose, and bad luck. The brutality on both sides is stunning. An honest telling of the war and one you won't get from history books on the civil war.

Having read everything that went before, this book was a disappointment. Does Lee write fiction or fact? I was never quite sure when it came to the Civil War in Spain. I have always appreciated his descriptive qualities in everything he has written, but the final contribution to his trilogy seemed short and perhaps delivered at the demand of his publisher. His beautiful legacy is assured, the war diaries were lost, and perhaps memory jaded, to be reconstructed slightly faded, and at great personal cost. I love him, and value the personal sacrifice of all those who dared to commit themselves to a cause. An early sacrifice against the absolute weirdness of fascism.

Having an interest in the Spanish Civil War and learning more about this important struggle, I found this novel or memoir to be a page turner, but without actually describing the conflict or putting in its historical context. If the intent was to describe a hopeless and depressing experience, it accomplished that in a nutshell without shedding light on the participants, why they volunteered and what issues they were fighting for.

A Moment of War by Laurie Lee relates his time in the Spanish Civil War. Lee begins his journey as

an idealistic young man "I was in that flush of youth that never doubts self-survival, that idiot belief in luck and a uniquely charmed life, without which illusion few wars would be possible" and ends it a shattering moment when he sees the terrible consequences of his actions. An honest book, finely crafted writing; the third in Lee's stunning memoir-trilogy (with *Cider With Rosie* and *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*).

I do not know much else about the author, Larie Lee, but in "A Moment of War" he certainly led a charmed life. Those who have studied the Spanish Civil War know that the level of hatred, distrust, brutality, and revenge was excessive in this conflict. Indeed, they mirrored that of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia which, not coincidentally, exemplify the two main factions in this civil war. Right from the beginning the author steps into the middle of this tension. He is held in suspicion by the very side he has come to fight for. The "in and out of favor" status that he holds gives this book an even greater flavor of the conflict he writes of. The book is brief, in part because the author's tenure in Spain was brief. However, through his experiences and observations, we are able to understand much about this microcosm of Twentieth Century European politics. It is a memoir written with a poetic style which allows the author to say so much in so few pages. As an account of the Spanish Civil War, it ranks up there with Orwell's "Homage to Catalonia".

A must read for any student. In the top 100 list of best books ever written. Excellent value for money. Fast shipping and wonderful customer service. Thank you!

perfect

Another great read and description of the times and people living them. Tough just doesn't cover it.

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