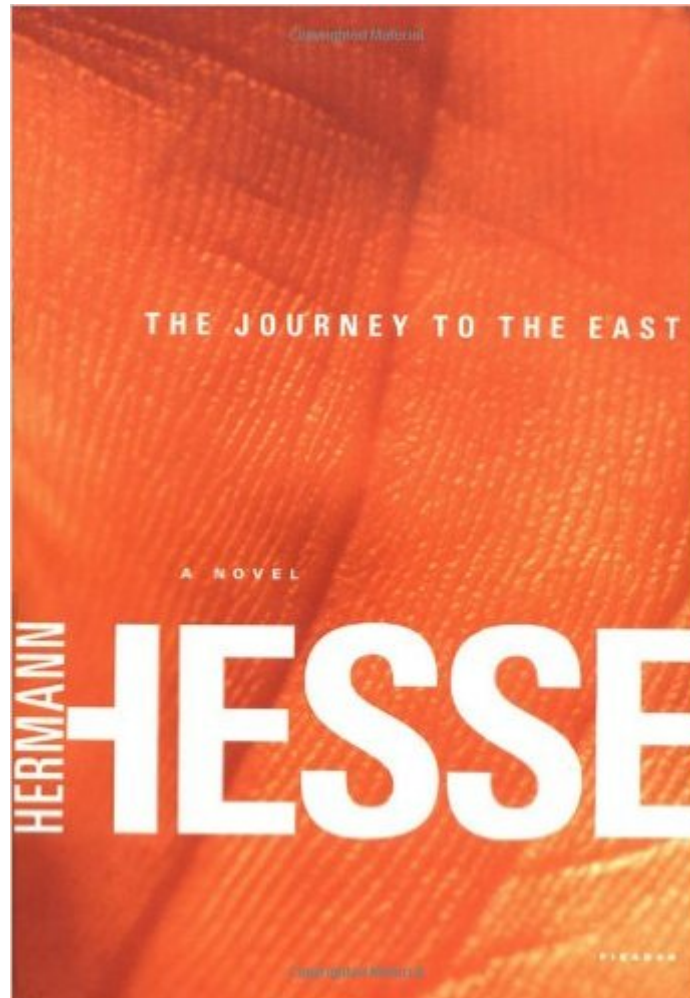


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# The Journey To The East



## Synopsis

In simple, mesmerizing prose, Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East* tells of a journey both geographic and spiritual. H.H., a German choirmaster, is invited on an expedition with the League, a secret society whose members include Paul Klee, Mozart, and Albertus Magnus. The participants traverse both space and time, encountering Noah's Ark in Zurich and Don Quixote at Bremgarten. The pilgrims' ultimate destination is the East, the "Home of the Light," where they expect to find spiritual renewal. Yet the harmony that ruled at the outset of the trip soon degenerates into open conflict. Each traveler finds the rest of the group intolerable and heads off in his own direction, with H.H. bitterly blaming the others for the failure of the journey. It is only long after the trip, while poring over records in the League archives, that H.H. discovers his own role in the dissolution of the group, and the ominous significance of the journey itself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This allegorical book is made up of equal parts poetry and prose. On the surface it tells a simple tale of a man who starts on a journey with like minded souls in search of a mystical woman named Fatima. Part way through the journey he loses faith in his fellow travelers and their cause. The rest of the book is about the protagonist's attempt to write about his experience, and to discover the true nature of the league in which he had lost faith. Almost from the beginning the reader is forced to conclude that neither the league itself, nor the attempt to write about it, can be taken literally. Clearly Hesse wants the league of travelers to the east to be seen in a symbolic light. But what is it meant to represent? Given that this is the author of *Siddhartha*, one might suppose that the league represents a group of individuals in search of eastern mysticism. Yet the book says little or nothing

about Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam. The league could also be taken as an allegory for the community of artists, and though there are numerous references in the book to support this point of view, it seems too shallow an interpretation to explain the entire text. For instance, there are clear and repeated references to religion, usually in a Christian context. These references belie a simple interpretation of the book as being about the life of an artist. The book also spends considerable time wrestling with the idea of whether or not it is appropriate to attempt to use a novel as means of exorcising one's personal demons, or whether such an undertaking is fundamentally selfish.

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