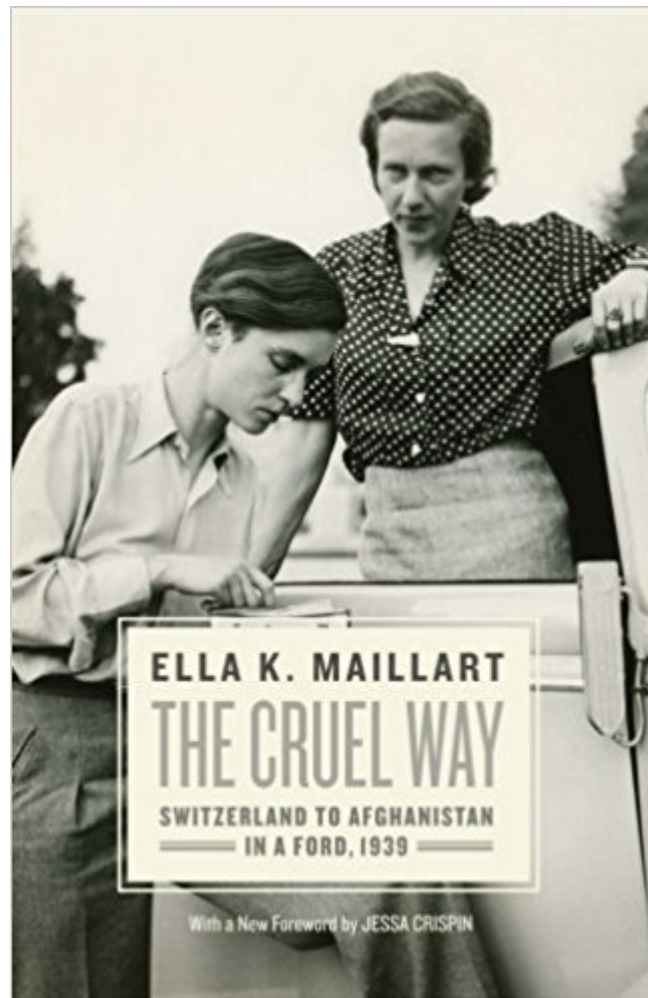




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The Cruel Way: Switzerland To Afghanistan In A Ford, 1939



Synopsis

In 1939 Swiss travel writer and journalist Ella K. Maillart set off on an epic journey from Geneva to Kabul with fellow writer Annemarie Schwarzenbach in a brand new Ford. As the first European women to travel alone on Afghanistan's Northern Road, Maillart and Schwarzenbach had a rare glimpse of life in Iran and Afghanistan at a time when their borders were rarely crossed by Westerners. As the two flash across Europe and the Near East in a streak of wit and daring, Maillart writes of comical mishaps, breathtaking landscapes, vitriolic religious clashes, and the ingenuity with which the women navigated what was often a dangerous journey. In beautiful, clear-eyed prose, *The Cruel Way* shows Maillart's great ability to explore and experience other cultures in writing both lyrical and deeply empathetic. While the core of the book is the journey itself and their interactions with people oppressed by political conflict and poverty, towards the end of the trip the women's increasingly troubled relationship takes center stage. By then the glamorous, androgynous Schwarzenbach, whose own account of the trip can be found in *All the Roads Are Open*, is fighting a losing battle with her own drug addiction, and Maillart's frustrated attempts to cure her show the profound depth of their relationship. Complete with thirteen of Maillart's own photographs from the journey, *The Cruel Way* is a classic of travel writing, and its protagonists are as gripping and fearless as any in literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Ella K. Maillart • it is she who matters, though her capital letters are few. The picture of herself is better than many superb photographs: a woman of the twentieth century,

with a nostalgia for the primitive; always hungry for new places and new people, but sufficient to herself." (Pacific Affairs) "We need [Maillart] to challenge what we think the story of two women traveling in the East can do. We need her to disrupt our detachment. . . . What she has found is a world of beauty and hope, a world worth going out into." (Jessa Crispin, editor-in-chief of Bookslut) "Her descriptions and observations shine with intelligence and beauty. . . . Her abilities to grasp a region in all its dimensions, and to involve the emerging national character in her own drama, are the marks of the best kind of travel writer." (Sara Neustadt Women's Review of Books) "I love The Cruel Way for its silences. They point towards other horizons and suggest other journeys. To quote Celine, 'they put your imagination to work.'" (Frédéric Vitoux)

Ella K. Maillart (1903–1997) was a Swiss journalist, photographer, and adventurer. She is the author of *Gypsy Afloat*, *The Forbidden Journey*, *Turkestan Solo*, and many other works published in English, French, and German.

I learned about this book from another travel book. It is curious to me and I want to know more about the two women who traveled in a car into deep Asia over 70 years ago, just before the WWII broke out. It turns out to be the best travel book I have ever read. Ella Maillart had a sensitive heart, her compassion for the people and their lands were deeply touching. It revealed a world before the 'globalization', a time that people had same struggles and soul-searching just as today. I wish more people know about Maillart and her books. I went ahead to buy more of her books.

All Roads are open; Part II by the other woman, Ella K. Maillart. Her side of the journey is very different. How could two people take the same journey and have an entirely different experience? You will want to read more by each author.

It did have lowpoints in it. It was a travel diary. It only grabs you at the beginning and end with the love and love of the humankind.

If you liked *Into Thin Air* or *The Perfect Storm*, search out all of Ella Maillart's books. She was a female adventurer back when women didn't even travel to civilized places, much less uncivilized ones. Her books are inspiring to read. I'm amazed at all the places she sought out around the globe. What a woman!

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