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Ernest Hemingway's Mistresses and Wives:
Exploring Their Impact on His Female Characters

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

“Conflicted” succinctly describes Ernest Hemingway. He had a strong desire to make his parents proud of him but this was in constant conflict with his need to tell a story, warts and all. Of particular importance is his relationship with his mother and the crippling effect it has on his relationships with women. Hemingway’s life becomes a series of dysfunctional relationships that fail to meet his needs, leaving him perpetually searching for the right woman. Kert posits that Hemingway’s contempt for women is related to his inability to make the transition from lover to husband, fueled by Hemingway’s belief that his father surrendered his manhood to Grace Hemingway. Ernest, haunted by his parents’ relationship continues to associate negative connotations with the term “husband,” leaving Hemingway in constant fear of becoming his father, poisoning his marriages, and coloring the relationships Hemingway depicts in his short stories.

Evident across the arc of Hemingway’s short stories is an evolution in his skill as a writer, but also in the development of his female characters. Over his career, Hemingway develops a female voice that rings true, and he skillfully uses it to portray female characters who are evolving into strong self-reliant women. In these stories, there is a gradual shift in the dynamics of the relationships as Hemingway’s fictional women struggle to climb from under their man’s domination. Yet, these strong self-reliant

women are not fully accepted by Hemingway's male characters, leaving a palpable tension between Hemingway's fictional men and women. This tension can be attributed to Hemingway's ongoing love/hate relationship between himself and the self-reliant women in his life.

Hemingway never recovers from the emotional damage inflicted by his mother, evident in his personal life and in the dysfunctional relationships in his short stories. He remains vigilant and is concerned that he will end up like his father and be controlled by a domineering bitch. However, Hemingway exerts so much control in his relationships and becomes a version of his mother as he dominates his significant others. In his life, he transitions from an angry resentful child-man to a young husband, a reluctant parent, a ladies' man, and an adventurer. Likewise, his perception and portrayal of women in his short stories keeps pace with his personal experiences. These female characters sometimes reflect the women in his life and sometimes reflect Hemingway's insecurities as a man, and often a seamless melding of both.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Conflicted is a word that succinctly describes Ernest Hemingway. He had a strong desire to make his parents proud of him but this hope was in constant conflict with his need to tell a story, warts and all. He constantly pushed the envelope of what was considered publishable material as he chronicled aspects of life which many, including his parents, believed went too far. His refusal to conform even led to the copies of the Paris edition of *in our time* sent to his parents to be returned unread. His parents' rejection of his work led to Hemingway attempting to explain his writing style to his father in a letter dated 20 March 1925:

You see I'm trying in all my stories to get the feeling of the actual life across—not to just depict life—or criticize it—but to actually make it alive. So that when you have read something by me you actually experience the thing. You can't do this without putting in the bad and ugly as well as what is beautiful. Because if it is all beautiful you can't believe in it. Things aren't that way. It is only by showing both sides—3 dimensions and if possible 4 that you write the way I want to. (Selected Letters 153)

His pain and yearning for his parents' approval could not overcome the rift between him and them. He sounds almost childlike in a letter to his father, dated 14

September 1927, as he asks for the acceptance that all children crave from their parents, writing:

You could if you wanted be proud of me sometimes—not for what I do for I have not had much success in doing good—but for my work. My work is much more important to me than anything in the world except the happiness of three people and you cannot know how it makes me feel for Mother to be ashamed of what I know as sure as you know that there is a God in heaven is *not to be ashamed* of. . . . I'll write often if we can lay off of literary criticism and personalities. (259-60)

While he wanted his parent's approval, he refused to compromise his style of writing, which prominently featured the ugliness he had experienced prior to his twenty-first birthday. Of importance here is his relationship with his mother and the crippling blow it has on his future relationships with women. Retired Major General Charles Lanham once wrote about Hemingway that "he always referred to his mother as 'that bitch' . . . he must of told me a thousand times how much he hated her and in how many ways" (qtd in Kert 21). Kert further suggests that "Ernest's lifelong assertion of masculine power grew out of his emotional need to exorcise the painful memory of his mother asserting her superiority over his father, that his personal difficulties with women, even his submissive heroines, originated with his determination never to knuckle under, as his father had done" (21). As if the relationship with his mother was not negative enough, the blow dealt to his heart and soul by Agnes von Kurowsky, the nurse who became his first true love, must also be considered. Their's was a passionate relationship, as young love tends to be. When it ended, it ended hard, leaving Hemingway's heart battered and bruised and

his feelings bitter. In a letter to fellow ambulance driver Howell Jenkins, dated 16 June 1919, Hemingway professes that he is indeed over Agnes, writing, "I loved her once and then she gypped me. And I don't blame her. But I set out to cauterize out her memory and I burnt it out with a course of booze and other women and now it's gone" (Selected Letters 25). Despite claiming he eliminated the memory of her, Agnes lived on, with her specter appearing several times in Hemingway's texts. Combine the apparent hatred Hemingway felt for his mother, the heartbreak he experienced with Agnes, and the severe injuries he suffered during the war, and psychological and physical pain becomes the base upon which Hemingway begins his writing career and his portrayal of female characters.

Hemingway was a self-proclaimed chronicler of life and he built his career, like most writers, writing about things and events he was familiar with. Throughout his writing career, many of his characters would reflect friends and acquaintances in spite of the conflict this would cause between his private life and his professional life. At times, the veil between Hemingway's reality and his fiction was so thin that his texts were scrutinized prior to publication to determine if passages must be changed to protect against legal action. Hemingway found this process bothersome, as reflected in a letter to his publisher, dated 26 August 1926, writing, "I believe we are all fixed up. We've eliminated Belloc, changed Hergesheimer's name made Henry James Henry, made Roger Prescott into Roger Prentiss and unfitted the bulls for a reproductive function. . . . It is a great mistake to put real people in a book and one I'll never make, I hope, again" (215). In some instances, like "Summer People," the completed text was not originally published because Hemingway did not wish to hurt those included in the stories. This

connection between Hemingway's works and his life provides an additional point of attack for investigating the texts. While biographical information cannot match the importance of the contents of a text, it certainly provides context and enriches the reader's understanding.

Hemingway's letters provide additional insights, helping the reader to see the man behind the legend. What the letters reveal is a man who never recovers from a dysfunctional childhood and the disappointments of his early adult life. For the most part, his letters lack an emotional element, even when writing to parents, wives, children, and friends. A notable exception, especially following the breakup of his first marriage, can be found in letters to F. Scott Fitzgerald, one of Hemingway's few true friends during the Paris years. It is as if Hemingway failed to mature emotionally, leaving him unable to foster healthy adult relationships. This lack of emotional development is also evident in the dysfunctional relationships experienced by his characters. This excerpt from a letter written by Gregory Hemingway to his father Ernest in 1952 shows just how dysfunctional the Hemingway family relationships had become:

I suppose you wonder what has happened to all my filial respect for you. Well, it's gone, Ernestine, dear, it's gone! It's gone with the hundred thousand cruelties you have inflicted on people for the last ten years and with the thousand righteous drunks of that period. You kept me under thumb very subtly, broke my spirit, and while I stood by in wondrous amazement at my tutor, [he] proceeded to get drunker and drunker, making a mockery of good fellowship and decency and all the while praising yourself—telling the boys how you needed cases of champagne in

order to produce the wonderful books that everybody loved—that every body sat around breathlessly waiting for. (qtd in *Strange Tribe* 119)

With family relationships like this, it is no surprise that Hemingway seems incapable of portraying characters who establish rich and traditionally healthy relationships. Instead, Hemingway provides characters who are flawed, relationships that are strained and terse dialogue that lacks compassion or emotion. These same characteristics are also evident in many of Hemingway's letters. In a letter Ernest sent to his son Greg on February 22, 1951, four days after learning of Charles Scribner's death, he writes:

This type of letter probably bores the shit out of you, but it certainly bores the shit out of me to have to write it. Charlie Scribner died a week ago Monday and so it will be rather difficult for me to borrow money from him against my loan account paying 2% to send you a monthly check until you attain the age of 21 years. However, I will continue to send you this check unless I hear from you that you do not need it for your support. I will not go into a discussion of any economic difficulties but would like you to write promptly to communications about money matters.

Best love to you and your family. (Hemingway, John 110)

The image produced by this letter is not of a warm cuddly man. Instead, Hemingway appears to be annoyed at the negative impact on his own finances which his associate's inconvenient death will impose. No sadness. No sharing of a warm memory. It contains nothing which would indicate a close relationship with Charlie Scribner or Greg. Hemingway had worked with Scribner since the mid 1920s, yet his death elicits no

emotion, only the strange observation and irritation that it is more difficult to borrow money now.

Emotionally crippled by his early years, Hemingway's life becomes a series of dysfunctional relationships that fail to meet his needs, leaving him in a perpetual search for the right woman. As Hemingway aged, the open hostility and humiliation directed toward current and past wives increased. Kert reports that following Pete Lanham's visit to the Finca in 1945, she believed that "Ernest hated all women except the one who was currently a good sex partner" (Kert 425). While Lanham's belief does have merit, Kert suggests that the opposite is closer to the reality of Hemingway's life. Kert posits that Hemingway's apparent hatred of women is related to his inability to make the transition from lover to husband, an inability fueled by Hemingway's belief that his father had capitulated to his mother, in essence surrendering his manhood to Grace Hemingway. Ernest is haunted by his parents' relationship and continues to associate negative connotations with the term "husband," connotations that leave Hemingway in constant fear of becoming his father, poisoning his marriages, and coloring the relationships Hemingway depicts in his short stories.

Trapped in his dysfunctional world, Hemingway found solace in nature, which became the mistress he could never tame. Wild and unpredictable she becomes his lifelong companion and their relationship plays out in Hemingway's texts. With her lakes, streams, forests, and animals she provides stability to his life by providing an escape mechanism from his reality. In a strange form of *ménage à trois*, Hemingway judges the other women in his life are by how they interact with nature. For example, Kert suggests that "Jane [Mason] was a perfect fishing partner. She was beautiful to look

at, she was amusing, she handled the rod expertly. She never got seasick and could help with the cooking. It was an ideal setup and Ernest relished it” (Kert 243). However, Kert does not mention that Jane is a sequel to Marjorie, a character from Hemingway’s 1925 short story “The End of Something.” Hemingway describes Marjorie as “intent on the rod all the time they trolled, even when she talked. She loved to fish. She loved to fish with Nick. . . Marjorie chased with her hands in the bucket, finally caught a perch, cut its head off and skinned it” (*The Short Stories* 105). As “Marjorie rowed the boat out over the channel-bank, holding the line in her teeth, and looking toward Nick, who stood on the shore holding the rod and letting the line run out from the reel,” she seems perfect (106). Eventually, Jane and Marjorie suffer the same fate when they are summarily dumped. However, this example illustrates the strong connection between reality and fiction for a chronicler like Hemingway, and shows that it is possible to extrapolate in both directions when making comparisons between Hemingway’s fact and fiction.

When Hemingway began his writing career he was well versed in the ways of Mother Nature but rather naïve in the ways of women. This led to stories rich in narrative descriptions concerning nature but lacking in development of his female characters. Over the course of his career, Hemingway’s interaction with women strengthens his understanding of them and this can be detected as changes, not just in his female characters, but also in the relationship dynamics between men and women. His female characters change from meek creatures dominated by men to strong characters, able to hold their own, no longer living under the thumb of a man. Examining Hemingway’s ideas concerning character development, the evolution of his female characters makes sense. Hemingway describes the process of character development as

writing about people and not trying to construct characters. He further states that “these people will be projected from the writer’s assimilated experience, from his knowledge, from his head, from his heart, and from all there is of him” (qtd in Miller 6).

Hemingway’s lack of character development, especially of female characters, has resulted in them being viewed with a diminished importance and a tendency to clump them into stereotypes. While volumes have been written on the women inhabiting his novels, the women of Hemingway’s short stories are often ignored. This text will explore short stories published by Hemingway that include relationships between men and women. The focus of this text is not merely to investigate differences in Hemingway’s treatment of male and female characters but rather, to explore the intersection of Hemingway’s real-life relationships and his maturation as a writer with regard to the evolutionary development of his female characters and to move beyond categorizing them as Edmund Wilson did “as either goddesses or bitches” (Miller 9). Adopting such a shallow view is to ignore the importance Hemingway’s female characters play in his texts and what lies hidden beneath the surface of the literary water.

CHAPTER 2

MICHIGAN: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Every journey has a beginning and Hemingway's literary career begins in 1921 with "Up in Michigan," a short story not published in the United States until 1938 because of its controversial nature. Like many of the stories that would follow, "Up in Michigan" is based on actual events that Hemingway mentions in a letter to his publisher dated 12 August 1930: "It clearly refers to two people in a given town, both of them still alive, still living there, and easily identified. If I take the town away it loses veracity. But I can leave out enough of the first part to eliminate libel" (Selected Letters 326). Hemingway intended for "Up in Michigan" to be included within *In Our Time*. However, Horace Liveright, his publisher, refused to include it, prompting Hemingway to write in a letter dated 22 April 1925, "There is nothing to bother anybody. Not a dam [*sic*] thing. They made me take out the Up in Michigan story because the girl got yenced" (157). This story relates directly to Hemingway's philosophy of writing about the good, bad, ugly, and beautiful aspects of life.

With his first story, Hemingway provides a brilliant narrative capturing the beautiful and ugly aspects of both Mother Nature and human nature. However unsettling, human relationships are portrayed as gritty, somewhat anonymous, and doomed as the goodness of Liz is subjected to the ugliness of Jim's actions. Nature provides the only beauty to be found in "Up in Michigan." This is not to imply that Hemingway equated nature to a field of wildflowers. On the contrary, Hemingway's nature is at times a harsh,

barren and dangerous place filled with swamps where death may lurk just around the bend. In “Up in Michigan” Hemingway provides the first of a series of dysfunctional relationships playing out against a backdrop of nature.

Time after time in Hemingway’s literary career, his words become a brush he uses to paint a canvas so detailed and colorful and filled with sensations that it brings nature to life. This example from “Up in Michigan,” shows that this technique was being used by Hemingway from the beginning of his published career:

A steep sandy road ran down the hill to the bay through the timber. From Smith’s back door you could look out across the woods that ran down to the lake and across the bay. It was very beautiful in the spring and summer, the bay blue and bright and usually whitecaps on the lake out beyond the point from the breeze blowing from Charlevoix and Lake Michigan. From Smith’s back door Liz could see ore barges way out in the lake going toward Boyne City. When she looked at them they didn’t seem to be moving at all but if she went in and dried some more dishes and then came out again they would be out of sight beyond the point. (84)

The narrator’s generic description of Liz is certainly scant, saying only that she “had good legs and always wore clean gingham aprons and Jim noticed that her hair was always neat behind. He liked her face because it was jolly but he never thought about her” (*The Short Stories* 83). Hemingway’s treatment of Liz gives her all the importance of a generic piece of “meat.” This pallid description of Liz stands in stark contrast to the detailed images he paints of her surroundings. As Liz walks with Jim toward the site of her eventual violation, Hemingway again provides the reader a detailed visual, “[t]here

was no moon and they walked ankle-deep in the sandy road through the trees down to the dock and the warehouse on the bay. The water was lapping in the piles and the point was dark across the bay. It was cold but Liz was hot all over from being with Jim” (86).

Here Hemingway’s description, rather than describing the beauty of nature, is dark and foreboding, providing a sense of what is to come. The reader feels the sand sucking at their feet as Liz and Jim walk toward the source of the gentle sound of the lapping of the water against the pilings. This scene seems to be right out of a horror movie, the reader can sense the tension of the moonless night, but rather than a creature jumping from the woods, Jim will be the one to perpetrate a violent act against Liz.

In addition to his meager descriptions of the characters, Hemingway’s sparse use of dialogue is also already evident in “Up in Michigan.” His paucity of language would become a hallmark of Hemingway’s minimalist approach and is the topic of a letter to his publisher, Horace Liveright, dated 31 March 1925:

As the contract only mentions excisions it is understood of course that no alterations of words shall be made without my approval. This protects you as much as it does me as the stories are written so tight and so hard that the alteration of a word can throw an entire story out of key. (*The Selected Letters* 154)

In keeping with his minimalist style, Hemingway provides almost no dialogue between Liz and Jim, and what little there is, is so terse that it is possible to relay it in its entirety in a few short printed inches:

Hello, Liz

Did you shoot it, Jim.

Yeah. Ain't it a beauty?

Come on for a walk.

Don't Jim . . . You mustn't Jim. You mustn't. . . . You mustn't do it Jim.

You mustn't

I got to. I'm going to. You know we got to.

No we haven't, Jim, We ain't got to. Oh, it isn't right. Oh, it's so big and it hurts so. You can't. Oh, Jim. Jim. Oh.

Jim, Jim. Please, Jim. (*The Short Stories* 85-7)

With only seventy-two words of dialogue attributed to the main characters, Hemingway is able to relate a powerful story, leaving the reader with little doubt about the action that takes place. Hemingway describes the events in a letter dated 12 January 1936, as a seduction (Selected Letters 431), a view that conflicts with how most people would view the interaction between Liz and Jim. Looking at Jim's twenty-three words of dialogue, devoid of human qualities, love, and caring as a seduction, seems a bit of a reach. The narrator never gives any indication that Jim has feelings for Liz or a desire to seduce her. Instead the narrator specifically tells the reader that Jim "never thought about her" (83); forcing the typical reader to conclude that Jim's actions are driven by his drunken condition and that Jim harbors no genuine feelings for Liz. Some read this as an example of nature's influence on man and the animalistic brutality of our sexual instincts. However, humans are held to a higher standard than animals and "Mother Nature made me do it" is not a viable defense for rape. By presenting the story as Jim getting drunk, raping Liz and passing out on top of her, Hemingway relegates Jim to be nothing more than a shallow male character who generations of women will refer to as a disgusting pig.

Hemingway attempts to tell “Up in Michigan” from Liz’s perspective.

Hemingway’s purpose here is not to show Liz as a strong character, she is in fact a very timid character, but rather to make a case for her seduction. Throughout the story the reader is aware of her thoughts and actions as she pines away for Jim. The narrator makes it clear with these statements, “something clicked inside of her and the feeling was warmer and softer . . . she wanted it now . . . she wanted it. She had to have it,” that Liz not only harbors feelings for Jim but also has sexual desires toward him (*The Short Stories* 86-7). The text implies that Liz has long been frustrated by Jim’s lack of attention and perhaps she misinterprets Jim’s drunken advances in the kitchen, but maybe not. With Jim’s hands on her breasts, she does not push him away or run to her room, instead she thinks, “He’s come to me finally. He’s really come” (86). At this point Liz, even if she is naive, knows exactly what Jim has on his mind as, “She felt Jim right through the back of the chair,” and Jim’s drunken desire becomes an opportunity, an opportunity to have the relationship she had always wanted, “and she wanted it now” (86). However, afterward Liz is clearly disappointed at the reality of having a drunk passed out on top of her, the experience did not compare with how she imagined losing her virginity would be. Hemingway describes Liz’s experience in a letter to Ivan Kashkeen writing, “She is a virgin and it hurts her very much but she knows it is wonderful just the same and by the time she has gotten over some of the pain and would like a little tenderness or something he is asleep” (*Selected Letters* 431).

“Up in Michigan” was written during Hemingway’s transition into married life and, according to Kert, the story is a fictionalized account of an encounter in 1919 between Hemingway and a “somewhat older waitress [that] took an interest in him. One

chilly night she walked with him down to the dock. In the shadows of the Potato House, where the harvest was stored, he had sex with her. She got a sliver in her buttock from the splintery planks” (Kert 74). Whether Kert is correct about the basis of the story is not as important as the time period during which the story develops. Hemingway’s life experience as a married man would have been limited in 1921, forcing him to rely on his final years as a single man, dedicated to erasing Agnes from his memory, for his creative spark. Wishing to have Jim seduce Liz, not rape her, Hemingway opts to write the story from Liz’s point of view, allowing him to fill the text with her emotions and desires. However, Hemingway’s attempt fails when Liz’s personae morphs from a shy naïve young woman into someone “who has to have it and wants it now.” The change in Liz’s personality does not ring true and seems to reflect what a young man might hope to hear instead of what would be expected from someone with Liz’s background. Although Hemingway develops a naïve, shy, trustworthy, hardworking character in Liz, in the end his attempt at using a female voice fails and Jim rapes her. Somehow Hemingway loses sight of the fact that no means no. When Liz says, “Don’t Jim . . . You mustn’t Jim. . . . No we haven’t, Jim, We ain’t got to” and Jim ignores her, he is no longer seducing Liz but raping her.

Hemingway’s failure to provide Liz with a believable female voice results in “Up in Michigan” becoming the first paving stone in the path leading to Hemingway’s reputation as a sexist pig and being virtually ignored by female critics during his lifetime. While the number of women producing Hemingway scholarship has dramatically increased since his death, in the decade following his death only seventeen women were writing about Ernest Hemingway and only one discussed his female characters (Broer ix).

Miller suggests that “Hemingway’s macho label continues to prohibit a totally unbiased reading of his art” (Miller 6)

CHAPTER 3

MARRIAGE, ADULTRY, SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Marriage, adultery, separation and divorce are words that define a cycle Hemingway would repeat throughout his life. Unable to recover from the dysfunctional relationship that existed between himself and his mother, Hemingway faced a constant struggle not only with his mother, but also every woman he formed a relationship with. Terrified of ending up like his father, Hemingway was always protecting his manhood from being stripped away by the women in his life. His fear of emasculation made it impossible for Hemingway to establish a healthy man/woman relationship and by extension, to portray healthy relationships in his stories.

Written in 1923, prior to the birth of Hemingway's first child, "Cat in the Rain" can be viewed as a relationship in which the woman's biological clock is ticking. The American wife needs someone to nurture and the cat is a thinly veiled substitute for the baby she desires. Hemingway's letter dated 24 December 1925 makes it clear that F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda believed the "Cat in the Rain" was autobiographical in nature, prompting Hemingway to write:

Cat in the Rain wasn't about Hadley. I know that you and Zelda always thought it was. When I wrote that we were at Rapallo but Hadley was 4 months pregnant with Bumby . . . Hadley never made a speech in her life about wanting a baby because she had been told various things by her doctor and I'd—no use going into that. (*Selected Letters* 180)

Kert suggests that Ernest was less than happy with Hadley's pregnancy and, based on his letter, Fitzgerald was certainly aware that Ernest and Hadley did not agree on the prospects of parenthood. Just because Fitzgerald did not know Hadley was pregnant does not mean he was not correct in his assumption that the story is about Ernest and Hadley. "Out of Season" was acknowledged by Hemingway as autobiographical and some critics believe it is related to discussions concerning abortion. In his article "Hemingway's "Out of Season": The Importance of Close Reading" Charles J. Nolan writes:

Relying on Freud's comments about mistakes and pointing to Tiny's mishearing of Peduzzi's *tochter* (daughter) as "doctor," Kenneth Johnson was the first to argue that in this piece "the quarrel clearly appears to center on the question of abortion." Though Meyers will speculate only that the couple's argument is "probably related to Hadley's first pregnancy" and that "the title may be an oblique allusion to the unwanted baby," Sheldon Grebstein points to a number of "parallels and correlatives for the discord" that suggests abortion as the subject." (49)

Viewing "Cat in the Rain" through a similar lens, it can be seen as a sequel to "Out of Season." In "Cat in the Rain," the American wife getting the cat she has longed to care for is an euphemism for Hadley being able to keep the baby. While Hadley may be able to continue her pregnancy, in this story Hemingway marginalizes his unnamed female character, referred to as the American wife, giving credence to the concept that the woman simply disappears upon marriage and is absorbed into the husband. Some critics believe that by not providing a name for the character, Hemingway's story seems to relegate women to second class citizen status. In her essay "Women and Men in

Conversation,” Lisa Tyler posits that because the husband has a name he is given “an identity and a social legitimacy that are never granted to the female character” (74). However, Tyler’s comments on the conclusion of the story are in error. Tyler suggests that “instead of bringing in the female kitty that the Signora identifies with and seeks to aid, the maid hauls in a ‘big’ (and presumably male) ‘tortoise-shell cat’—one more false reflection of the woman for her to confront” (74). However, cats with a tortoise-shell pattern require two X chromosomes and therefore are overwhelmingly female. Tortoise-shell cats with a penis do occur but they are not really male but rather a genetic mutation that results in an androgynous blend with an extra X chromosome and they are always sterile. This is an example of a critic looking for something they can use that really does not exist. It is evident when exploring Hemingway’s short stories that lacking a name does not always equate to being weak. Depending on the circumstances, it can be viewed as more natural not to use a name when depicting conversations between a couple involved in a relationship. To do otherwise would read stilted and unnatural.

In “Cat in the Rain,” Hemingway again uses brilliant narrative description to introduce the story. Hemingway’s description captures the natural beauty beyond the hotel room while simultaneously expressing the gloom found within the room when he writes:

Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. It also faced the public garden and the war monument. There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. . . . Italians came from a long way off to look up at the war monument. It was made of bronze and glistened in the rain. It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools

on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain.

(158)

In “Cat in the Rain,” Hemingway’s description of the American wife is almost nonexistent. The only description of the American wife occurs when the narrator mentions that her hair “is clipped close like a boy’s” (*The Short Stories* 160). She is treated like a child rather than an adult, not only by her husband, but also the hotel staff as they constantly remind her that she must not get wet. Eventually, she begins to tell her husband George, who unlike her does have a name, exactly what she wants to do:

“I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel,” she said. “I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her.”

“Yeah?” George said from the bed.

“And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.”

“Oh, shut up and get something to read,” George said. He was reading again.

His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.

“Anyway, I want a cat,” she said, “I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can’t have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.”

George was not listening. He was reading his book. (160-1)

This passage represents a huge step forward in the development of Hemingway's female voice and the evolution of his female characters. The American wife has found her voice and she is not afraid to use it. However, it is also clear that the dynamics of Hemingway's relationships have not changed yet. The husband, George, exerts tremendous control over his wife. He controls her appearance, what she is allowed to do, and where she lives. When he is tired of hearing her speak, he tells her to shut up. The relationship Hemingway portrays between George and his wife is predicated on Hemingway's own fear that men must constantly guard against emasculation by their wives.

The mid 1920s were a busy time, both personally and professionally, for Hemingway. Professionally, this period would be the most productive in his career with *In Our Time*, *Torrents of Spring*, *The Sun Also Rises*, and *Men Without Women* being published between 1925 and 1927. During this time period, Hemingway's marriage to Hadley Richardson begins to unravel and ends in divorce when she learns of his adulterous relationship with Pauline Pfeiffer. As a condition of granting the divorce, Hadley insists that Ernest not see Pauline, making him, for the moment, a man without a woman. Hemingway's letters from this time period not only show he was lonely but, in a letter to Pauline Pfeiffer dated 12 November 1926, he mentions suicide:

Last fall I said perfectly calmly and not bluffingly and during one of the good times that if this wasn't cleared up by Christmas I would kill myself—because that would mean it wasn't going to clear up . . . later I promised that I wouldn't do it or think about it under any circumstances until you came back. But now it is getting all out of control again. . . I'm

not a saint, nor built like one, and I'd rather die now while there is still something left of the world than to go on and have every part of it flattened out and destroyed and made hollow before I die. (*Selected Letters* 222)

This letter establishes Hemingway's on-going internal conflict in that he both fears the power of women yet is unable to live without them. During this period of emotional turmoil, Hemingway completes most of the short stories contained in *Men Without Women*. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins, dated 14 February 1927, Hemingway describes the stories he intended to include in the collection: "In all of these, almost, the softening feminine influence through training, discipline, death or other causes, being absent" (245). After being reunited with Pauline, Hemingway adds "A Canary for One" and "Hills Like White Elephants," short stories that do have a feminine influence, to the collection. What is important to note is that with the change in wives comes a change in the portrayal of women in Hemingway's short stories. Following his breakup with Hadley, Hemingway's female characters become stronger and there is a feeling that they are willing to stand up for what they believe and desire.

"A Canary for One," written by Hemingway following his separation from Hadley, symbolically portrays this transitional period in Hemingway's life. Hemingway's desire to protect his privacy or delay the revelation of his failure as husband and father undoubtedly played a significant role in keeping this text from being published until after their divorce had been finalized in January 1927. In fact, Hemingway also delays disappointing his parents by not telling them of the separation until 5 February 1927, writing:

As for Hadley, Bumby and myself—altho Hadley and I have not been living in the same house for some time (we have lived apart since last Sept. and by now Hadley may have divorced me) we are the very best of friends. She and Bumby are both well, healthy and happy . . . Dad has been very loyal and while you, mother, have not been loyal at all I absolutely understand that it is because you believed you owed it to yourself to correct me in a path which seemed to you disastrous. So maybe we can drop that all. I am sure that, in the course of my life, you will find much cause to feel that I have disgraced you if you believe everything you hear. On the other hand with a little shot of loyalty as anaesthetic you may be able to get through all my obvious disreputability and find, in the end, that I have not disgraced you at all. Anyhow, best love to you both. (*Selected Letters* 244)

As Hemingway enters into the next phase of his personal and professional life, in many ways he is carrying even more emotional baggage. Not only does Hemingway's relationship with his parents, especially his mother, remain strained, but he has failed as a husband and his success as a father is questionable. Reflecting on Hadley's pregnancy, Kert suggests that "Ernest, who thought that they had been taking the necessary precautions, was upset, fearing that the baby would inhibit his freedom of movement and ability to work. . . . [making it] the first serious challenge to the unity of the marriage" (Kert 132). This suggestion by Kert makes Hemingway's inclusion of "Hills Like White Elephants," a story dealing with abortion, in *Men Without Women* even more interesting.

In “A Canary for One” Hemingway again uses three generic characters, two women and a man referred to as the American lady, wife, and husband. He relates that they are American, and the lady, in addition to “looking very wholesome and middle-aged,” was also deaf (*The Short Stories* 311). No physical description is provided for the husband and wife beyond that they are American. None of the characters even merit names, first or last ones. With the husband functioning as the narrator, the story consists of rich descriptive passages sharing the page with dialogue that is, in the Hemingway tradition, short and to the point as the lady repeats again and again variations on the theme that “American men make the best husbands” (312). This story not only continues Hemingway’s development of his female voice but also his development as a multi-dimensional writer. Hemingway’s use of descriptive narrative and dialogue are not only more balanced, but actually provides a second story nested within the story. The dialogue is dominated by the lady and the wife as they discuss the merits of American men, children, love, and honeymoons. Having the dialogue dominated by the women is a departure from Hemingway’s typical approach when dealing with couples. In previous stories Hemingway’s men are in charge, but in this story, there is a shift in the relational dynamics and the women, with their new found voices, are able to converse freely while the seemingly powerless husband functions as the audience.

Placing this story within the context of Hemingway’s life and exploring the story’s narrative description, it becomes possible to tease out what he has placed beneath the surface. Throughout “A Canary for One,” Hemingway skillfully uses symbolism that relates to his pending divorce. The narrator describes the scene as “the train passed a farmhouse burning in a field. Motor-cars were stopped along the road and bedding and

things from inside the farmhouse were spread in the field. Many people were watching the house burn” (311). Hemingway’s use of nature and surroundings in this story transcends merely painting a picture or setting a mood. Hemingway successfully tells the tale of his divorce as a series of images passing by the train’s windows, providing a story within the story.

It is easy to visualize the farmhouse representing his marriage with the pieces of their lives scattered about in the field, while their friends stand around in curiosity, watching the marriage fall apart. When the train reaches Paris, the narrator states that “The fortifications were leveled but the grass had not grown” (313). The reference to fortifications brings battle to mind but, rather than World War I, Hemingway could be referring to the relationship between himself and his mother. The absence of grass points out that the wounds had yet to heal. In fact these wounds would never heal and Hemingway would remain emotionally conflicted his entire life. The return to Paris symbolizes Hemingway’s return to being single and his return to a life he had not known for years, showing his uncertainty in the line, “if that were the way it were still done” (313). When they disembark in Paris, the baggage is piled on the truck brought by the porter. Hemingway’s word choice suggests there are many pieces of baggage to deal with upon arrival in Paris. Hemingway’s reference to baggage can be read as emotional baggage within the context of viewing their arrival in Paris as the end of his marriage.

Within the story, the number three figures prominently. There are three characters, three cars involved in the wreck, and three men from Cook’s. Hemingway’s use of numerical repetition fits with the concept of a love triangle that had resulted in the failure of his marriage. However, there are two distinct ways to view the love triangle.

In the first view, the triangle consists of Ernest, Hadley, and Pauline. During this time period, there are descriptions of Hadley where she is described as appearing middle-aged, suggesting that there could be a connection between Hadley and the American lady. Additionally, Hemingway's letter to Hadley, dated 18 November 1926, reflects that Hadley did not wish to discuss what was going on when he writes:

I am terribly sorry that I did not get your letter until after I had seen you—and because I did not know what decisions you had made nor what was in your mind—hurt you again and again by talking about something that you had so wisely concluded we should not discuss but only write about.

(Selected Letters 226)

Hadley's difficulty in communicating with Ernest is represented by the American lady's hearing problems. It is not difficult to imagine Hadley staying awake at night, like the American lady, waiting for the train wreck she knew was coming as Ernest drifted away from her and into the arms of Pauline. However, the triangle can also be viewed as consisting of Ernest, Hadley and his mother. For that matter, the triangle could be a permanent structure consisting of Ernest, his mother, and his current woman whomever she might be. The middle-aged description would fit his mother and there certainly was a significant communication problem between them. This is an excellent example of a story which appears straightforward on the surface, but has multiple currents swirling beneath the surface.

Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" features a couple who he introduces as "The American and the girl" (*The Short Stories* 251). For Hemingway, at this point in his career, it would seem that being an American living in Europe is description enough

since he uses the same approach in other stories. Hemingway does not clarify the relationship between the couple; some critics refer to her as a wife while others believe she is a mistress. Hemingway obviously did not see this as an important distinction. What is important is that “Hills Like White Elephants” is comprised almost entirely of dialogue that showcases Hemingway’s continuing development of a feminine voice and a more self-reliant female character. Jig, the female character, faces a monumental life-changing decision that is the basis for the conversation. Jig uses her voice to question her male counterpart and stress her point of view, actions missing from Hemingway’s earlier stories.

The way the man abruptly changes the topic of conversation from drinks to abortion shows this is not the first time they have had this discussion:

“Should we have another drink?”

“All right.”

The warm wind blew the bead curtain against the table.

“The beer’s nice and cool,” the man said.

“It’s lovely,” the girl said.

“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said, “It’s not really an operation at all.”

The girl looked at the ground the table legs rested on.

“I know you wouldn’t mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.” (252-3)

Hemingway’s dialogue is insightful, showing the American to be self-centered and clueless as the story progresses. The American shows no sensitivity to the emotional and

psychological trauma associated with an operation that is not really an operation at all. In “Forget the Legend and Read the Work: Teaching Two Stories by Ernest Hemingway” Margaret D. Bauer suggests that “the woman perceives the seriousness of the “choice” the man wishes her to make, while the man is either oblivious to its magnitude or willing to pretend it is simple for his own peace of mind” (Bauer 130). When the girl asks, “what will we do afterward?” He responds, “We’ll be fine afterward. Just like we were before. . . . That’s the only thing that bothers us. It’s the only thing that’s made us unhappy” (253). Jig stands her ground, at times countering the American’s ridiculous suggestions with sarcasm that is imbedded into the dialogue. As in other texts, Hemingway provides no stage direction to accompany the dialogue. It is up to the reader to decide if a line is whispered, yelled, or said sarcastically. This exchange between the American and the girl is an excellent example:

“And you think then we’ll be all right and be happy.”

“I know we will. You don’t have to be afraid. I’ve known lots of people that have done it.”

“So have I,” said the girl. “And afterward they were all so happy.”

“Well,” the man said, “if you don’t want to you don’t have to. I wouldn’t have you do it if you didn’t want to.” (253)

In this example, the feelings of the characters come through clearly. The sarcastic twist the girl uses to deliver the “so happy” is obvious as is the exasperation in the boy’s voice as he delivers the “Well.” In “On Defiling Eden: The Search for Eve in the Garden of Sorrows” Ann Putnam suggests that “Hills Like White Elephants” demonstrates Hemingway’s understanding of the intricacies of the female language (Putnam 123), but

there is more to it than just understanding the intricacies of language. Hemingway understands the female psyche and this is evident in the psychological manipulations attempted by Jig in “Hills Like White Elephants.” This story is an example of Hemingway’s use of dialogue at its absolute best. Not only critics have praised this story. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins, dated 16 November 1933, Hemingway holds himself in high regard, writing:

Because you can’t write any better stories than those—and nobody else can. But every once in a long while I can write one as good—and *all the time* I can write better stories than anybody else writing. But they want *better* ones and as good as *anyone ever wrote*. God damn it there can’t be better ones. The one they pick out as “classic” Hills Like White Elephants not one damn critic thought *anything* of when it came out. I always knew how good it was. (*Selected Letters* 401)

In both these stories, “A Canary for One” and “Hills Like White Elephants,” Hemingway’s use of dialogue exhibits a sophistication lacking in earlier works and reflects a better understanding of the female voice and the human psyche in general. Armed with their newly developed voices, Hemingway’s female characters are now able to speak their mind and openly disagree with their male counterparts, something Liz, who never finds her voice, is unable to do.

CHAPTER 4

AFRICA

Between 1927 and 1936 Hemingway continued to remain busy, both personally and professionally. In his personal life, his marriage to Pauline was punctuated by periods of separation and he also had a relationship with Jane Mason. According to Kert, “Jane was already a recognized beauty . . . [and] passionately devoted to sports fishing and one of the few women in Cuban society who participated in pigeon-shooting at the Club de Cazadores” (235). Like many of the women who passed through Hemingway’s life, Jane would impact his portrayal of women in his short stories. In “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” many of Margot Macomber’s attributes are evident in Jane Mason.

Hemingway’s next collection of short stories, *Winner Take Nothing*, was published in 1933 to negative reviews. T.S. Matthews, the book editor for *Time*, referred to themes contained in the collection such as castration, lesbianism, and prostitution, as “abnormalities that fascinate adolescents but really have nothing to do with the price of bread” (qtd in Kert 251). Hemingway had anticipated the reaction *Winner Take Nothing* would garner in a letter to Pauline’s mother, dated 16 October 1933, writing:

I don’t expect anybody to like the present book of stories and don’t think you have to make an effort to—or even be polite about them. I am trying to make, before I get through, a picture of the whole world—or as much of it as I have seen. Boiling it down always, rather than spreading it out thin.

These stories are mostly about things and people that people won't care about—or will actively dislike. All right. Sooner or later as the wheel keeps turning I will have ones that they *will* like. (*Selected Letters* 397)

Never one to take criticism well, Hemingway could not have been happy with the reviews his latest effort had received. However, not even a bad review could dampen Hemingway's excitement as he prepared for what would become a life changing experience.

Pauline's uncle, Gus Pfeiffer, offered to finance an extended vacation that was a combination of a European holiday and an African Safari. The \$25,000 price tag for the trip is equivalent to well over \$400,000 in 2010 dollars and transcends generosity. With Hemingway preparing for the trip, Kert suggests, "he was poised to explore the part of East Africa that was the playground of the rich, an exotic enclave organized for the pleasure of white Europeans. He was in the process of constructing a new persona, that of rugged international sportsman" (253). Kert's suggestion overlooks that Hemingway already was an international sportsman, and it would be more appropriate to think of this trip as adding "big game hunter" to his already impressive resume as an international sportsman. For Hemingway, East Africa was more than a beautiful spot, it was unknown and unconquered, harsh, desolate and dangerous. Africa would always remain important for Ernest, prompting John Hemingway to refer to Africa as the "family obsession" (*Strange Tribe* 127). Remaining true to form, Hemingway chronicled his African adventure in both short stories and novels. This chapter explores his East Africa based short stories "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."

By 1936 Ernest and Pauline were spending significant amounts of time separated and he was once again experiencing the mood swings between euphoria and depression that he had experienced earlier in his life (Kert 273). During the spring of 1936, Jane Mason joined Ernest for a fishing trip that seemed to dissipate his depressed state and shortly after that trip she became the model on which Mrs. Macomber is based. Here again, as in earlier short stories, Hemingway's veil between fact and fiction is very thin. Hemingway's short story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" can be viewed as the story of Grant and Jane Mason's relationship comingled with Ernest and Pauline's African trip with a touch of Ernest and Jane's affair tossed in for good measure. The confluence of these events produces Mrs. Macomber, a female character who is more outspoken and self-reliant than the female characters found in Hemingway's previous short stories, and a character that would be the subject of Literary Critics for decades.

In "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," published in 1936, Hemingway exhibits continued growth in his dialogue between the sexes while maintaining the balance between dialogue and nature he established in "Hills Like White Elephants." Unlike earlier stories where the female character has no identity, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" gives us a female character referred to as Mrs. Macomber, Margot, Margaret, Memsahib, Macomber's wife, American female, and bitch. Hemingway's description of Mrs. Macomber provides significantly more detail when compared to female characters in earlier short stories. However, the most telling description of her is through the eyes of Wilson, saying that she looks "refreshed and cheerful and quite lovely. She had a very perfect oval face, so perfect that you expected her to be stupid. But she wasn't stupid, Wilson thought, no, not stupid" (16). This

description implies that unlike earlier female characters, she is a force to be reckoned with.

While previous female characters discussed in this text have been of a quieter nature, Mrs. Macomber is different. With her, Hemingway displays his ability to develop female characters with a strong voice and personality to match. Wilson describes her as “being enameled in that American female cruelty. They are the damnedest women. Really the damnedest. . . . She’s damn cruel but they’re all cruel. They govern, of course, and to govern one has to be cruel sometimes. Still, I’ve seen enough of their damn terrorism” (16-7). However, Wilson is more than happy to help Margaret use sex as a weapon, and the dialogue between Francis and Margaret shows that her indiscretion is far from an isolated incident:

“That’s a new name for it. You *are* a bitch.”

“Well, you’re a coward.”

“All right,” he said. “What of it?”

“Nothing as far as I’m concerned. But please let’s not talk, darling, because I’m very sleepy.”

“You think that I’ll take anything.”

“I know you will, sweet.”

“Well, I won’t.”

“Please, darling, let’s not talk. I’m so very sleepy.”

“There wasn’t going to be any of that. You promised there wouldn’t be.”

“Well, there is now,” she said sweetly.

“You said if we made this trip that there would be none of that. You promised.”

“Yes, darling. That’s the way I meant it to be. But the trip was spoiled yesterday. We don’t have to talk about it, do we?”

“You don’t wait long when you have an advantage, do you?” (29)

In this conversation between Francis and Margaret, Hemingway skillfully captures the emotion of the moment as they verbally go toe to toe as equals. They fight for a momentary victory in an apparent loveless marriage, even though the narrator refers to them “as a comparatively happily married couple,” from which neither believes they can successfully extricate themselves. Francis believes that Margaret is “not a great enough beauty any more at home to be able to leave him and better herself and she knew it and he knew it” (28). Margaret believes that Francis lacks the confidence to replace her or the courage to stand up to her. During the course of the story, Francis finds his courage and Margaret remarks on the changes. “You’ve gotten awfully brave, awfully suddenly,” his wife said contemptuously, but her contempt was not secure. She was very afraid of something. Did this fear, as Wilson suspects, result in murder or was her fear related to the safety of Francis, making the shooting an accident? This question has been debated by critics for decades. In Warren Beck’s article “The Shorter Happy Life of Mrs. Macomber” he makes the case that the shooting is accidental writing:

It is Ernest Hemingway who writes that she “shot at the buffalo.”

Hemingway is, of course, a highly implicative artist, but he is not notably given to double-talk or passing the buck. Either his statement that she shot at the buffalo must be accepted or else the whistle must be blown and that

narrative play discredited as being technically offside. It is indeed surprising that such a painful doubt about so scrupulous a writer has not moved more of Hemingway's admirers to question whether, after all, we can take Wilson's word for what happened. (Beck 36)

Beck's reading of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is refuted by Mark Spilka in his article "The Necessary Stylist: A New Critical Revision" suggesting:

The story hinges on [the] distribution of time and guilt. It opens with Macomber's failure, and closes with his wife's discovery that she wants no change. So too their troubles had begun with his default; but they continue, under Margot's rule, because her deepest feelings have rigidified: she now cherishes her power and wants to keep it. . . . [Beck's] idea of renewal is appealing. . . . But there is no sign in her of deep renewal, and no support for it from Hemingway. (Spilka 293)

Either way, the result is tragic for Francis who is robbed of his moment of truth. However, Mrs. Macomber represents tremendous growth in Hemingway's female characters. No longer are the females found in Hemingway's short stories relegated to existence under the thumb of the men. Not only has Mrs. Macomber freed herself, she has turned the tables so that Hemingway's men are starting to feel the weight of her thumb, especially when it is pressed against a 6.5 Mannlicher.

In Hemingway's short story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," published in 1936, nature has extracted the ultimate price. Scratched by a thorn, Harry is waiting to die as his body is ravaged by gangrene. Yet it is not Harry that is being ravaged by gangrene but rather the relationship between Ernest and Pauline. Painted against the backdrop of

scenes from their African Safari, Hemingway takes the reader on a journey exposing both past and present memories representing the good times as well as the bad. Kert suggests that “the scapegoat for [Harry’s] failures is his current wife Helen, whose money has been the corrupting force in his life. . . . But there are disquieting messages for Pauline in much of Harry’s bitter reverie” (Kert 278). Kert specifically focuses on the imbalance created by the vast amounts of money Pauline’s family had, writing “Pauline, who was his “kindly caretaker” in much the same way the fictional Helen was, left him no excuse for failure. . . . but as Ernest’s anxiety over his work deepened and he believed himself to be stagnating, he lashed out angrily” (278). Ernest makes his resentment of Pauline clear in a letter to Maxwell Perkins, dated 26 August 1940, writing: “My advice would be to marry as little as possible but never to marry a rich bitch” (*Selected Letters* 515-6).

Like Pauline’s relationship with Ernest, Harry’s wife Helen is at his side trying desperately to ease his pain and suffering and hoping against hope for his recovery. Yet, despite the obvious feelings Helen has for Harry, there is a feeling of hopelessness as the dialogue between the husband and wife represents the juxtaposition of love and hate. Harry’s dialogue is filled with self-loathing and contempt toward his wife as Hemingway exposes the ugly underbelly of Harry’s relationship with Helen:

“Don’t.”

“All right. I’ll stop that. I don’t want to hurt you.”

“It’s a little bit late now.”

“All right then. I’ll go on hurting you. It’s more amusing. The only thing I ever really liked to do with you I can’t do now. . . . I was all right when we started talking. I didn’t mean to start this, and now I’m crazy as a coot

and being as cruel to you as I can be. Don't pay any attention, darling, to what I say. I love you, really. You know I love you. I've never loved any one else the way I love you."

He slipped into the familiar lie he made his bread and butter by. (*The Short Stories* 61)

With the help of the narrator, Hemingway fills in the back-story of the characters. The narrator describes Harry as a failed writer turned gigolo who successfully lives off a series of women as a companion. This would seem to apply to Hemingway at this juncture since Hadley's income enabled him to get his career started, and Pauline's family provided significant monetary gifts to Ernest and Pauline, gifts that were used to fund not only his African safari but also improvements to the *Pilar*, Hemingway's boat.

Some might believe that Harry's wife is portrayed as a tragic figure, since being widowed at a relatively young age, she develops a drinking problem and a penchant for lovers. "But the lovers bored her. She had been married to a man who had never bored her and these people bored her all the time" (64). After one of her children is killed in a plane crash "she had been frightened of being alone" (64), giving Harry the opportunity he needed to move up the financial ladder. However, rather than being tragic, Helen succeeds in finding happiness, she is able to work through the problems that life deals her, and in Harry she finds the interesting partner she has been missing. In Helen, Hemingway presents a character similar to Mrs. Macomber, who is not naïve and is experienced in relationships with the opposite sex. This experience makes it difficult to consider the notion that Helen was oblivious to what Harry was doing, and more likely that she approved of an arrangement which provided what she needed.

For a parent, losing a child is the most horrific event imaginable. Yet Hemingway writes a story where a man attempts to exploit a woman who has suffered the sudden and unexpected loss of her child. It is clear, as Hemingway explains the logic of Harry's decision process, just how despicable a character he actually is:

He traded away what remained of his old life. He had traded it for security, for comfort too, there was no denying that, and for what else? He did not know. She would have bought him anything he wanted. He knew that. She was a damned nice woman too. He would as soon be in bed with her as any one; rather with her, because she was richer, because she was very pleasant and appreciative and because she never made scenes. (64)

With the line "because she was richer" Harry takes Hemingway's men to a new low level.

Contrary to Harry's portrayal, his wife is described as loving, nurturing, and capable. She stands tall under adversity, is able to use her rifle to put food on the table, make sure the makeshift airstrip is ready for the plane's arrival, nurse Harry in an attempt to keep him alive until help arrives, and gently admonishes Harry for being so cruel to her:

"You won't talk to me like that again, will you? Promise me?"

"No," he said. "I don't remember what I said."

"You don't have to destroy me. Do you? I'm only a middle-aged woman who loves you and wants to do what you want to do. I've been destroyed

two or three times already. You wouldn't want to destroy me again, would you?" (65)

The wives in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" make significant gains in the evolutionary process that Hemingway's female characters experience. With Mrs. Macomber, Hemingway refines his female voice and presents a character who is able to go toe-to-toe with her male counterpart. Additionally, with Mrs. Macomber we see Hemingway's female characters emerging from domination by the men and pushing aside that thumb that held them in check for so long, a trend that is continued with Helen who, by virtue of her wealth, holds the dominant position in the relationship. Even though Helen does not gloat over the dynamics of the relationship, and from all appearances goes out of her way to make Harry an equal partner, Harry, like Hemingway, chafes under the imbalance caused by his partner's financial situation and feels a need to strike back and do whatever he can to tear Helen down and bring the relationship into balance.

CHAPTER 5

THE WAR YEARS AND BEYOND

The years between the start of the Spanish Civil War and the end of World War II were turbulent for Hemingway. He continued his penchant for adulterous relationships resulting in divorce from Pauline, marriage to and divorce from Martha Gellhorn, and marriage to Mary Welsh. Also during this period, Hemingway's impressive flow of published short stories begins to dwindle, with the number of short stories published after 1939 paling in comparison to his earlier work. However, even with the reduction in published short stories, the convergence between the women in Hemingway's personal life and the women portrayed in his short stories continues. This chapter will explore two Hemingway short stories: "Nobody Ever Dies" published in 1939 and "Get Yourself a Seeing-Eyed Dog" published in 1956.

When the Spanish Civil War erupted in July 1936, Hemingway was busy working on *To Have and Have Not*, but writing to Maxwell Perkins in a letter dated 26 September 1936, he makes it clear that he cannot wait to get to Spain, writing, "I hate to have missed this Spanish thing worse than anything in the world but have to have this book finished first" (*Selected Letters* 454-5). Upon completion of *To Have and Have Not*, Hemingway quickly found a way to get to the front to cover the war. By February 1937, Hemingway not only had reached the area of conflict, but was also involved in an intimate relationship with Martha Gellhorn who would become his third wife in November 1940. Kert reports that Hemingway "began to say that she was the bravest woman he had ever

met, braver than most men, including himself. . . . courage had become the yardstick by which Ernest judged people, Martha's possession of this quality dramatically enhanced his admiration of her" (299). However, Martha's insistence on continuing her career was an ongoing source of agitation for Ernest who believed that his wife should stay home and tend to his needs. Kert suggests that Hemingway's need to build a wall around his wife stems from his relationship with his mother, a woman that Hemingway believed had wronged him by "divid[ing] her love among her other children" (389). Whatever his reasons were, Hemingway was slowly destroying his relationship with Martha, prompting her to refer to him "as her darling, housebroken cobra" (375). The cobra would eventually strike when Ernest betrayed Martha in 1944 by taking her war correspondent position at *Collier's*, a position she had held since 1937. Additionally, shortly after his arrival in London to cover World War II, Hemingway began an adulterous relationship with Mary Welsh who would become Hemingway's fourth wife. Despite the animosity that existed between Ernest and Martha, she would have an impact on Ernest's portrayal of female characters in his short stories. Prior to his relationship with Martha Gellhorn, bravery is not a quality evident in the female characters in Hemingway's short stories. However, this would change with Maria, the female character in Hemingway's 1939 short story about the Cuban Revolution, "Nobody Ever Dies."

With Maria, Hemingway portrays a female character who is brave, perhaps braver than her lover Enrique, who seems unable to accept her as an equal. Enrique's feelings are evident in his reaction to Maria's offer to stay behind and protect him. Rather than appreciating her gesture and showing respect for her bravery, Enrique slaps her face and says "Come on. Don't be a silly girl. *Come on!*" (*The Short Stories* 477). Here again the

line between Hemingway's life and his fiction blurs. Hemingway admired Martha's bravery but, like Enrique, he is unable to accept a woman as his equal, and Martha was not about to let Ernest forget that she was his equal. In a note to Ernest during World War II, Martha proclaims her commitment to her career and questions Hemingway's courage, writing "I came to see the war, not live at the Dorchester" (qtd in Kert 406). Following D-Day, Hemingway was infuriated by the news that Martha had reached the beaches at Normandy before he did. To soothe his ego, Hemingway convinced himself that it never happened. However, in "Rivalry, Romance and War Reporters," Sandra Whipple Spanier reports that Martha's original cablegrams indicate that she was there but *Collier's* edited her submissions to make it appear that she was not the first *Collier's* correspondent to reach the beach at Normandy (270-1).

"Nobody Ever Dies" does not rise to the level of Hemingway's earlier short stories and appears rough and unpolished when compared to his earlier gems. Linda Wagner-Martin (formerly Linda Welshimer Wagner) suggests in "The Marinating of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*" that "its roughness stems both from Hemingway's strong convictions about its theme and the wide range of material within the story" (540). However, besides being a vehicle for developing *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, "Nobody Ever Dies" takes Hemingway's short story female characters to new heights introducing bravery, responsibility and a sense of duty. These qualities are not evident in female characters in Hemingway's earlier short stories. These qualities can also be observed in Martha who placed herself in harm's way to fulfill her duties as a war correspondent. According to Kert on December 5, 1939:

A young military chauffeur drove Martha to the southern frontier in freezing darkness over unmarked icy roads and heavily mined bridges.

Hidden in the unending forests were the armies. Gun flashes illuminated the sky. She was in the middle of the first big night operation of the war and the Russians were less than three-quarters of a kilometer ahead. (333)

Molded in the image of Martha, Maria is far from a silly girl and when she is trapped, she does not cower waiting to be found. Maria understands the consequences of being taken alive and instead she leaps to her feet and charges toward the searchlight, unafraid to die. Following her capture, as Maria sits in the back seat of the car, she does not shrink with fear. Instead she exudes a confidence that makes all of the policemen uncomfortable. Hemingway compares Maria's confidence as she faces an unknown future to the confidence of Jeanne d'Arc as she headed to the stake, a comparison that elevates bravery to a religious experience, highlighting the importance bravery held for Hemingway.

Maria's actions are elevated to a spiritual level, where she transcends the human condition and becomes an ideal to aspire to. However, Enrique's treatment of Maria continues to show a lack of respect and disregard for her feelings. For instance, Enrique shows no compassion when he tells Maria that her brother is dead:

“And Vincente?” she asked in a flat voice, her two hands folded on his thigh now.

“Dead. At the attack across the road at Celadas.”

“Vincente is my brother.” She sat stiff and alone now, her hands away from him.

“I know,” said Enrique. He went on eating. (474)

Maria reacts to Enrique's failure to demonstrate compassion by lashing out at him saying "“You talk like a book,” she told him. ‘Please do not touch me. You have a dry heart and I hate you’” (476). Maria's emotional outburst shows that Hemingway's female characters have reached a point in their development where domination by males will not be tolerated. Additionally, Maria is portrayed with qualities not evident in the female characters found in earlier short stories. Maria is not only brave, but she is also part of the movement to overthrow the government, a cause she is willing to risk her life for. Maria is a huge step forward when compared to Hemingway's earlier fictional women who spend their time worrying about personal dilemmas or being a spectator to the events around them. Instead, Maria is in the thick of things and is a great transitional character leading Hemingway to create Maria and Pilar, within the pages of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Hemingway married Mary in 1946. However, her life would be far from wedded bliss. Unlike Martha, Mary exchanges her career for the title and benefits associated with being Mrs. Hemingway and for the most part provides Ernest with the attentive wife he so desired. The longevity of Ernest and Mary's relationship can be attributed to her capitulation and his life-saving actions during Mary's ectopic pregnancy. In *How it Was*, Mary attributes her survival to Ernest Writing:

When I woke up in the next morning and looked out the little window of my oxygen tent, Ernest was sitting near the bed reading. I thanked the fates that he had been with me in my time of trouble. He alone had saved my life. If I didn't know it that first moment of consciousness, I soon

learned it from the pretty nurse who had been the anesthetist and from the doctors. (238-9)

Kert suggests that Ernest's actions following her medical emergency did more than save Mary's life, writing:

Mary's appreciation for Ernest seemed to swell into an everlasting and unshakeable trust. Nothing he could do to her, either inadvertently or with premeditation, would destroy that gratitude. She had seen him at his solid best—quick-thinking, modest, effective and it put into permanent perspective the occasional bullying, the vanity, the sudden gusts of cruelty. (428)

In spite of her appreciation, during the course of their relationship Mary would be abused, humiliated and embarrassed by Ernest. In *Hemingway the Final Years*, Michael Reynolds suggests that Hemingway's "first three wives knew the game was over when he began purposely embarrassing them in public" (Reynolds 224). However, Mary continued to absorb Ernest's punishment. In 1949, Ernest's infatuation with the teenage Adriana Ivancich was straining Ernest and Mary's relationship. When Ernest arrived late, with a prostitute, for a luncheon with Mary and her sister, Mary had had enough, writing Ernest:

As soon as it is possible for me to move out . . . I shall move . . . I have lost your interest in me, your devotion, and also your respect . . . Both privately and in public you have insulted me and my dignity as a human being and a woman devoted to you and have debased my pride in you in front of friends. (qtd in Reynolds 224)

However, Mary did not leave but rather began to accept her role as Ernest's caretaker. In *How It Was*, Mary documents this transition by including the following conversation:

“Your insults and insolences to me hurt me, as you surely know. But in spite of them I love you, and I love this place, and I love *Pilar* and our life as we have it here normally. So, try as you may to goad me to leave it and you, you're not going to succeed. Are you hearing me? Because I think it would be bad and disorienting for you as well as me.”

Ernest nodded. He was hearing me.

“Okay, that's it. No matter what you say or do—short of killing me, which would be messy—I'm going to stay here and run your house and your Finca until the day when you come here, sober, in the morning, and tell me truthfully and straight that you want me to leave.” (Mary Welsh Hemingway 354)

As Ernest's caretaker, Mary managed the household, planned social events, typed manuscripts, continued to absorb his abuse, and following the 1954 plane crashes, nursed a bedridden Ernest back to health. When Hemingway writes “Get A Seeing-Eyed Dog,” in 1956, Mary has been functioning as his caretaker/nurse during a two-year period of recuperation.

In “Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog,” Hemingway again draws directly from his real-life women to develop his fictional female character. The story's female character is not described or named but, like Mary, the character functions as a caretaker/nurse for her man, Philip, who suffered injuries while on safari. In *Ernest Hemingway A Life Story*, Carlos Baker provides a scathing overview: “Although all these stories of the war were

rough and unfinished, and often rambling and pointless, the worst of the summer's crop was "Get Yourself a Seeing-Eyed Dog"—a sentimental episode about an American gone blind in Venice" (Baker 534). While "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" lacks critical acclaim, it does continue the evolution of Hemingway's female characters. In the story, Philip's wife demonstrates loyalty, duty, dedication and the inner strength to cope with Philip's devastating injuries. However, rather than appreciating her, Philip is trying to push her away. Philip initially tries to convince himself that it would be better for her when he thinks, "I must figure out ways not to destroy her life and ruin her with it. She has been so good and she was not built to be good. I mean this sort of good. I mean good every day and dull good" (*Short Stories* 488). Philip's wife rejects the idea of going away for rest and relaxation, forcing Philip to reconsider his situation. Only then does the reader learn that Philip is uncomfortable with what their relationship has become as he thinks:

I must get her away and get her away as soon as I can without hurting her.
Because I am not doing too well at this. That I can promise you. But
what else can you do? Nothing, he thought. There's nothing you can do.
But maybe, as you go along, you will get good at it. (491)

Philip's injuries force him to become dependent on her, a position Hemingway's men are unaccustomed to.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

What is evident across the arc of Hemingway's short stories dealing with relationships between men and women is an evolution, not only in his skill as a writer, but also in the development of his female characters. Over the course of his career, Hemingway develops a female voice that rings true, and he skillfully uses it to portray female characters who are evolving into strong self-reliant women. In these stories, there is a gradual shift in the dynamics of the relationships as Hemingway's fictional women struggle to climb from under their man's domination. During this process, Hemingway's female characters begin to find their voice and are able to confront their male counterparts, rather than just smiling demurely and accepting what they are given. Yet, these strong self-reliant women are not fully accepted by Hemingway's male characters, leaving a palpable tension between Hemingway's fictional men and women. This tension can be attributed to Hemingway's ongoing love/hate relationship between himself and the self-reliant women in his life.

Hemingway never recovers from the emotional damage inflicted by his mother and this is evident not only in his personal life, but also in the dysfunctional relationships found in his short stories. He remains vigilant and is constantly concerned that he will end up like his perception of his father and be controlled by a domineering bitch. This results in Hemingway exerting too much control in his relationships and, in some ways, becomes his image of his mother as he dominates his significant others. This directly

relates to Hemingway's struggle to find a balance of power in relationships that he portrays in his short stories. As I attempt to show, this struggle shows up in "Up in Michigan" in the unhealthy relationship between Liz and Jim and continues throughout his career. As a chronicler of life, Hemingway initially has little to draw on besides his perception of his mother early in his career. Then, as his relationships with Hadley, Pauline, Jane, Martha, and Mary develop and die, Hemingway develops a better understanding of the female psyche and female voice. As Hemingway's career progresses, he populates his short stories with female characters not only drawn from his mother but also from his real-life relationship experiences. Comparing the timeline of personal events in Hemingway's life to the dates his short stories were written, there is an obvious correlation between changes in the female characters and his personal relationships.

Reviewing Hemingway's short story relationships between men and women, we find that in "Up in Michigan," Liz is powerless in her imaginary relationship with Jim, resulting in her pleas being ignored by Jim. In Hemingway's short story "Cat in the Rain," the American wife has no control of the relationship with her husband. She is not even allowed to decide what she should look like, as the husband dictates that her hair will be short. However, she is able to express herself, telling her husband that she wants longer hair, new clothes, to eat at a table with her own silver and candles, and a cat, only to be told by George to shut up and get something to read. When she continues complaining that she should at least be able to have a cat, Hemingway makes it clear that George is ignoring her.

In "Hills Like White Elephants" the man and the woman are discussing her having an abortion. This is the first time that there is significant dialogue between a man and woman, and the reader can sense that they disagree. The man seems oblivious to the psychological ramifications associated with something that just "lets the air in." He attempts to coerce her into the procedure by telling her that, by having the procedure, she can fix the only thing that is wrong with their relationship. In this story the dynamics of Hemingway's fictional relationships begins to shift away from total domination by the man. During their conversation, Jig uses sarcastic comments to make it clear that she not only does not agree with his opinion, but also believes he lacks an understanding of the ramifications of having an abortion. Their conversation shows that this is not the first time he has tried to coerce her into the procedure, showing that she has been able to resist his previous attempts, something earlier female characters would not have been able to do.

Hemingway's Mrs. Macomber provides a significant step in the evolutionary process. She is not just a sexual creature, but is also able to go toe-to-toe with her husband, refusing to live under his control and in fact, appears to be in control of their relationship. Hemingway allows Mrs. Macomber to break free of constraints imposed on female characters in earlier stories. However, rather than applauding the strength of her character, critics are quick to denigrate Mrs. Macomber as a stereotypical Hemingway bitch. Yet, her only sin is to exhibit some of the characteristics of Hemingway's men.

In "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," Harry's wife is compassionate, caring, capable and rich but she receives only hate, lies, and cruelty from Harry. Harry's treatment of his wife is linked to her position of power, resulting from her wealth, within the relationship.

She is not naïve and is fully aware of why Harry is with her, however, she feels that Harry provides what was missing from her life and she makes a conscious decision to be with him. Unlike Mrs. Macomber, Harry's wife does not need to fight to maintain her position within the relationship. Instead she can let her money do the talking, a position that earlier female characters could only hope to aspire to.

Through Maria, Hemingway brings bravery, loyalty, and sense of duty to the pages of "Nobody Ever Dies," attributes not present in the females from his earlier stories. Maria transcends the confines of a typical relationship and is elevated to a spiritual ideal. Finally, Philip's "seeing-eyed dog" provides a female character responsible for taking care of her male counterpart. Previous stories have provided the readers with female characters who take charge during emergent circumstances, but the long term requirement for Philip to be dependent provides a new area of growth for the female character.

There is a clear evolution taking place with Hemingway's female characters within these short stories. The difference between Liz, who is too afraid to ask Mrs. Smith if she can make something special for Jim, and Mrs. Macomber who is confident, and assertive, is significant. The differences between the strong but shallow and self-centered Mrs. Macomber and the selfless actions of Maria are also significant. Along the way, Hemingway's real-life relationships help him learn more about the female voice, and he becomes skilled in presenting a female perspective in his short stories.

He personally makes the transition from an angry resentful child-man to a young husband, a reluctant parent, a ladies' man, and an adventurer. Likewise, his perception of women and his portrayal of them in his short stories keep pace with his personal

experiences. The female characters sometimes reflect the women in his life and sometimes reflect Hemingway's own insecurities as a man and often a seamless melding of both at the same time. The short stories reflect the changes in the role and perception of women in society as well as in Hemingway's own life and his struggle to accept them.

CHAPTER 7

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