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PAPA HEMINGWAY

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A PERSONAL MEMOIR

A. E. HOTCHNER

"Remarkable . . . makes Hemingway live
for us as nothing else has done."

—*Wall Street Journal*

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PAPA

HEMINGWAY

a personal memoir

A. E. Hotchner

CARROLL & GRAF PUBLISHERS, INC. NEW YORK



Foreword

On July 2, 1961, a writer whom many critics call the greatest writer of this century, a man who had zest for life and adventure as big as his genius, a winner of the Nobel Prize and the Pulitzer Prize, a soldier of fortune with a home in Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains, where he hunted in the winter, an apartment in New York, a specially rigged yacht to fish the Gulf Stream, an available apartment at the Ritz in Paris and the Gritti in Venice, a solid marriage, no serious physical ills, good friends everywhere—on that July day, that man, the envy of other men, put a shotgun to his head and killed himself.

How did this come to pass?

Why?

I was his close friend for fourteen years, right up to the day he died. I knew about his life: the adventures, the conversations, the dreams and disillusiones, the triumphs and defeats of the complicated, unique, humorous, intense, fun-loving man who was Ernest Hemingway but I cannot tell you why. No one can.

But to tell about his life, I must inevitably tell of his death and the events which preceded it. I gave long and hard thought to that—whether it should be gone into at all, or parts of it suppressed, generalized and disguised. But in the end I was guided by what Ernest had told me when I wondered whether I should be as frank and open as he was about Scott Fitzgerald. "Every man's life ends the same way," Ernest had said, "and it is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguishes one man from another."

He said that for him there was only one way to account for things—to tell the whole truth about them, holding back nothing; tell the reader the way it truly happened, the ecstasy and sorrow, remorse, and how the weather was, and, with any luck, the reader will find his way to the heart of the thing itself.

That is what I have tried to do, holding back nothing, and it is as close as I can get to the Why.

A. E. HOTCHNER

Rome, 1965

**PAPA
HEMINGWAY**

Part One

I am glad we do not have to try to kill
the stars. Imagine if each day a man must
try to kill the moon. The moon runs away.
But imagine if a man each day should have
to try to kill the sun? We are born lucky.
Yes, we are born lucky.

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

Chapter One

Havana ♦ 1948

In the spring of 1948 I was dispatched to Cuba to make a horse's ass out of myself by asking Ernest Hemingway to write an article on "The Future of Literature." I was on the staff of the magazine *Cosmopolitan*, and the editor was planning an issue on The Future of Everything: Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture, Henry Ford II on Automobiles, Picasso on Art, and, as I said, Hemingway on Literature.

Of course, no writer knows the future of literature beyond what he'll write the next morning, and many can't see even that far ahead, but here was I checking into the Nacional Hotel for the express purpose of cornering Mr. Hemingway, introducing myself, and asking him to gaze into a literary crystal ball for good old *Cosmo*.

Horse's ass isn't strong enough. From the time I read my first Hemingway work, *The Sun Also Rises*, as a student at Soldan High School in St. Louis, I was struck with an affliction common to my generation: Hemingway Awe. In my schoolboy fantasies I had identified with Nick Adams (he was approximately my age and was the protagonist of many Hemingway short stories) as he made his way through a murky world of punch-drunk fighters, killers, suiciding Indians, dope addicts and whores and the rigors of war on the Italian front. During the Second World War, as an Air Force officer in France, I had been further awed by War Correspondent Hemingway's military exploits. He had entered the hostilities and affiliated himself in a nonjournalistic manner with Colonel Buck Lanham's Twenty-second Infantry Regiment, as it moved through Normandy, the grim action in Luxembourg, and the terror of Hiirt-gen Forest, where the Twenty-second suffered 2060 casualties out of 3200 men.

I had tried to evade this *Cosmopolitan* assignment, but had been summarily ordered to try to get the asinine article *or else*. The *or else* had quite a bite to it, as I was in my mid-twenties, only six months on the job, which was the first I had been able to find after dissipating my Air Force severance pay with a year in Paris. I had Hemingway's address in the little town of San Francisco de Paula, which was about twenty minutes outside Havana, but the more I considered going out there and knocking at his door and disturbing him face to face, which is what the editor had instructed me to do, the more my blood congealed. After two days of sitting by the Nacional pool in a semicomatose state induced by pure cowardice, I finally decided, the hell with it, there were other editorial jobs, I would not go banging on his door; and even had I had his unlisted telephone number, which I hadn't, I couldn't have managed to phone him.

So I took the coward's way out and wrote him a note saying that I had been sent down on this ridiculous mission but did not want to disturb him, and if he could simply send me a few words of refusal it would be enormously helpful to The Future of Hotchner.

Early the next morning the phone rang. "This Hotchner?"

"Yes."

"Dr. Hemingway here. Got your note. Can't let you abort your mission or you'll lose face with the Hearst organization, which is about like getting bounced from a leper colony. You want to have a drink around five? There's a bar called La Florida. Just tell the taxi."

At that time the Florida (that was its proper name but everyone called it Floridita) was a well-lit, old-fashioned bar-restaurant with ceiling fans, informal waiters and three musicians who wandered

around or sat at a table near the bar. The bar was of massive, burnished mahogany; the bar stools were high and comfortable, and the bartenders cheerful, skilled veterans who produced a variety of frozen daiquiris of rare quality. On the wall there were several framed photographs of the Hemingway drinking La Florida's most publicized product—the Hemingway daiquiri, or Papa Doble. Requested by most tourists, a Papa Doble was compounded of two and a half jiggers of Bacardi White Label Rum, the juice of two limes and half a grapefruit, and six drops of maraschino, all placed in an electric mixer over shaved ice, whirled vigorously and served foaming in large goblets. I sat on a stool at the Obispo Street end of the bar, in the corner under the framed photos, and ordered a Papa Doble.

Before leaving for Havana, I had searched for a Hemingway biography but could find none. All I knew about his life was that he was born in Oak Park, Illinois, outside Chicago, on July 21, 1899, the second of six children; he was devoted to his father, a doctor, who passed along his keen interest and skill in fishing and hunting to young Ernest. However, Ernest's inability to get along with his mother made his home life chaotic, and soon after graduation from Oak Park High School, he left home.

Not yet eighteen, he wangled a reporting job on the *Kansas City Star*, and the following year, having been rejected by the U.S. Army because of his defective eyesight, he managed to get accredited by the Red Cross as an ambulance driver on the Italian front. In July, 1918, at Fossalta di Piave, he was hit by an Austrian trench mortar and severely wounded.

After the war, with his mutilated leg patched up, he returned to the States and then got a job on the *Toronto Star*. In 1920 he married a St. Louis girl, Hadley Richardson, with whom he had a son. The marriage was dissolved in 1927, when he married Pauline Pfeiffer, a Paris writer for *Vogue*, who became the mother of his two other sons. In 1940 Pauline divorced him. The writer Martha Gellhorn became his third wife, and she was supplanted in 1946 by Mary Welsh, also a writer.

Early in the Twenties, married to Hadley, he lived in Paris, where he wrote *The Sun Also Rises*, a novel about his generation which brought him quick and enduring fame. He then enhanced his literary position with *A Farewell to Arms*, which he completed after returning to the United States to live in Key West. *To Have and Have Not* was a reflection of those Key-West years.

Between books he traveled far and wide, fished for marlin and tuna, hunted big game on safari, and followed the bulls in Spain. When civil war broke out in that country, he fought on the side of the Loyalists and later wrote about it in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the most widely read of all of his books. That's about all the data I had.

Hemingway arrived a little late. He was wearing khaki pants held up by a wide old leather belt with a huge buckle inscribed GOTT MIT UNS, a white linen sport shirt that hung loose, and brown leather loafers without socks. His hair was dark with gray highlights, flecked white at the temples, and he had a heavy mustache that ran past the corners of his mouth, but no beard. He was massive. Not in height for he was only an inch over six feet, nor in weight, but in impact. Most of his two hundred pounds was concentrated above his waist: he had square heavy shoulders, long hugely muscled arms (the left one jaggedly scarred and a bit misshapen at the elbow), a deep chest, a belly-rise but no hips or thighs. Something played off him—he was intense, electrokinetic, but in control, a race horse reined in. He stopped to talk to one of the musicians in fluent Spanish and something about him hit me—*enjoyment*. God, I thought, how he's *enjoying* himself! I had never seen anyone with such an aura of fun and well-being. He radiated it and everyone in the place responded. He had so much more in his face than I had.

expected to find from seeing his photographs.

As he came toward the bar, greeting the barmen, I noticed that on his forehead, well above his left eye, there was a large oblong welt that looked as if a patch of flesh-colored clay had been stuck there haphazardly.

"Hotchner," he said, shaking hands, "welcome to the Cub Room." His hands were thick and square, the fingers rather short, the nails squared off. The bartender placed two frozen daiquiris in front of us; they were in conical glasses twice the size of my previous drink. "Here we have the ultimate achievement of the daiquiri-maker's art," Hemingway said. "Made a run of sixteen here one night."

"This size?"

"House record," the barman, who had been listening, said.

Hemingway sampled his drink by taking a large mouthful, holding it a long moment, then swallowing it in several installments. He nodded approval. "Hotchner . . . that's a very suspicious name. Where you from?"

"St. Louis."

"What part, Chouteau Avenue? Did your grandfather fight Nut Sigel?"

"Do you know St. Louis?"

"First three wives from St. Louis." He shook his head sadly. "I know St. Louis. Only good person I know who didn't leave there was Martha Gellhorn's ma." The bartender placed on the bar in front of us a platter heaped with unshelled shrimp. "Couple of years ago," Hemingway said, picking up one of the shrimp, "I founded the Royal Order of Shrimp Eaters. Want to join?"

"Sure. What do I do?"

"Members of the order eat the heads and tails." He bit off a shrimp's head and crunched it happily.

I bit off a head and crunched it, but not happily.

"It grows on you," he said, picking up another. Two more vases of daiquiris arrived. The bartender handed Hemingway a letter; he looked at the return address, folded it and put it into his pocket. "Basque friend of mine is a prolific letter writer and each letter ends the same way: Send money." The trio, which consisted of a big, happy guitarist, a serious, unsmiling guitarist, and a thin, dark-skinned vocalist who also played the maracas, began to play and sing a spirited number.

"Pals of mine," Hemingway said. "They're singing a song I wrote for them. Wish Mary was here. She sings it best. One night we were in here, bar crowded, everyone having a good time, when in came three eager young gents to have a drink at the bar, and they have FBI written all over them. So I sent a word to these boys and at the stroke of midnight they break into 'Happy Birthday' in English, everyone joining in, and when we get to 'Happy birthday, dear FBI,' those three J. Edgars nearly caved in. The bar cleared out fast."

We chain-drunk daiquiris and discussed Havana as a place to live and work. "Character like me," Hemingway said, "the whole world to choose from, they naturally want to know why here. Usually I don't try to explain. Too complicated. The clear, cool mornings when you can work good with just the Black Dog awake and the fighting cocks sending out their first bulletins. Where else can you train the cocks and fight them and bet those you believe in and be legal? Some people put the arm on fighting cocks as cruel? But what the hell else does a fighting cock like to do?"

"Then there's the bird population—wonder birds, truly—resident and migratory, quail that drink from the swimming pool before the sun comes up. And lizards that hunt out of the arbors at the pool and the vines on the house. Am very fond of lizards.

"You want to go to town, you just slip on a pair of loafers; always a good town to get away from yourself; these Cuban girls, you look into their black eyes, they have hot sunlight in them. If you don't

want to get away from yourself, you can shut out everything by not going to town and jamming the phone.

"A half hour away from the *finca* you've got your boat set up so you're in the dark-blue water of the Gulf Stream with four lines out fifteen minutes after you board her. Or maybe you feel like shooting live pigeons at the shooting club just down the way from the *finca*. Matches for big money if that's the way you want it. That's the way we had it when Tommy Shevlin, Pichon Aguilera, Winston Guest and Thorwald Sanchez were around to make teams, and you can't ask for better shoots than when the Dodgers are training and we have match-ups with Hugh Casey, Billy Herman, Augie Galan, Cup Davis and some of the others who are all crack shots. The same people who crusade against fighting cocks also blast you for the pigeon shoot. Although it's barred in a lot of places it's legal here and it's the most exciting betting-sport I know—for the shooters. To watch it is a deadly bore."

"But doesn't it get monotonous to go through an entire year without changes of seasons?" I asked. "Don't you miss the spring and fall the way it is in New England?"

"We have changes in the seasons here too," he said. "They are subtle, not abrupt as in New England where our parents took off from because it was cropped out and the soil no damn good. But let me show you Red Lodge, Montana, or even Cody, Wyoming, or West Yellowstone, with Big Jim Savage dealing off the bottom of the deck so wonderful that only the boys can see it, or Billings on a Saturday night, or even, hell, Casper, which is an oil town where Miss Mary was hospitalized."

The daiquiris kept coming as we discussed Robert Flaherty's documentary films, which Hemingway greatly admired, Ted Williams, the Book-of-the-Month-Club, Lena Home, Proust, television, swordfish recipes, aphrodisiacs, and Indians, until eight o'clock, not threatening the Hemingway daiquiri-record but setting an all-time Hotchner high of seven. Hemingway took a drink with him for the road, sitting in the front seat of the station wagon next to his chauffeur, Juan; and I somehow managed to retain in the rum-mist of my head that he was going to pick me up the following morning to go out on his boat. I also managed—don't ask me how—to make some notes on our conversation for the benefit of the *Cosmopolitan* editor. This was the beginning of a practice I followed during the entire time I knew him. Later on I augmented these journals with conversations recorded on pocket-tape transistors that we carried when we traveled.

There were two Pilars in Hemingway's life: one, the lusty partisan of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; the other, a forty-foot black and green cabin cruiser—both named after the Spanish shrine. The seagoing *Pilar* was docked in the Havana harbor, ready to roll when we got there. It had a flying bridge with topside controls, outsized riggers that could handle ten-pound skipping bait, and the capacity to fish four rods. Ernest introduced me to her with old affection.

First, though, he introduced me to a lean Indian-skinned man who was Gregorio Fuentes, mate of the *Pilar* since 1938. "Went to sea when he was four," Ernest said, "out of Lanzarote in the Canaries. Met him at Dry Tortugas when we were stormbound there. Before Gregorio, had another wonderful mate, Carlos Gutierrez, but somebody lured him away with more dough while I was away in the Spanish Civil War. But Gregorio is a marvel: got *Pilar* through three hurricanes with his absolute seamanship, is a peerless fisherman, and cooks the best pom-pano you ever tasted."

The big engines turned over; Ernest climbed topside and steered her out of port, past Morro Castle and up the coast about seven miles, toward the fishing village of Cojimar, which was destined to be the village of *The Old Man and the Sea*. Gregorio set out four lines, two with feathers, two with me

bait. I was topside with Ernest.

He took out some tequila and we both had a sip to see if it was cold enough. "It's getting there," I said. "Wish you had been along on the last trip. The kids were down on ten days' vacation and I took them to Cay Sal and Double-Headed Shot Keys in the Bahamas. We caught around eighteen hundred pounds of game fish, turned three big turtles, got lots of crayfish and had wonderful swimming. The water is almost virgin fishing and the kids had a wonderful time."

He then began talking about the *Pilar* with extraordinary pride. "She sleeps seven but in the war she slept nine."

"She was in the war?"

"From 1942 to 1944 we turned her into a Q-boat and patrolled the waters off the north shore of Cuba. Antisub. Worked under Naval Intelligence. We posed as a commercial fishing boat but changed the *Pilaris* disguise several times so it didn't look like any one boat was fishing too much. Had thirty-five hundred dollars' worth of radio equipment in the head; the actual head was however you could maneuver over the side. We had machine guns, bazookas and high explosives, all disguised as something else, and the plan was to maneuver ourselves into a position where we were hailed and ordered alongside by a surfacing U-boat. A U-boat not on alert could have been taken by our plan of attack. Crew was Spanish, Cuban and American, very good at their jobs, all brave, and I think our capture attack would have worked."

"But you never got a chance to try it out?"

"No, but we were able to send in good information on U-boat locations and were credited by Naval Intelligence with locating several Nazi subs which were later bombed out by Navy depth charges and presumed sunk. Got decorated for that."

"Was Gregorio along?"

"Sure. I explained to the crew the dangers involved, since *Pilar* was no match for any U-boat that wanted to blast it, but Gregorio was very happy to go out because we were insured ten thousand dollars a man and Gregorio had never figured he was worth that much. Quarters very cramped but the crew got along fine. No fights. One tour we stayed out fifty-seven days."

"Feesh! Feesh, Papa, Feesh!" Gregorio was calling from the stern. We looked quickly starboard; saw brown flashing that turned to dark purple, pectoral fins that showed lavender, the symmetry of a submarine. "Marlin," Ernest said, "let's go." He took hold of the topside rail and swung himself down. Gregorio handed him the rod with the meat bait. "Ever boat one of these?" Ernest asked.

"Never been deep-sea fishing."

"Then cut your teeth on this," he said, handing me the rod. I felt a touch of panic. Here was one of the world's great fishermen, a lightning-fast marlin whose size I couldn't believe, a big, complicated rod and reel—and here was I, who had never caught anything larger than a ten-pound bass out of my friend Sam Epstein's rowboat off Southold, Long Island.

But I had not reckoned with a quality of Ernest's I was to observe and enjoy many times over the ensuing years: his superb skill at instruction and his infinite patience with his pupil. In a quiet, even voice Ernest guided me every step of the way, from when to pull up to set the big hook in his mouth to when to bring him in close to be taken. A half hour later we were looking down at the beauty of the bearded marlin; "We just might have a new *syndicat des pecheurs*—Hotchner and Hemingway, Marlin Purveyors," Ernest said. I realized that he had tentatively knighted me as a potential co-adventurer; for thirteen years it was to be an invigorating, entertaining, educational, exasperating, uplifting

exhausting, surprising partnership.

As we returned from the boat to the Nacional, Ernest made his first and only reference to the note I had sent him on The Future of Literature. I was going back to New York the following morning, and we were shaking hands on the sidewalk in front of the hotel. "The fact is I do not know a damn about the future of anything," he said.

I was startled by the abrupt reference. "Oh, sure, just forget . . ."

"What are they paying?"

"Fifteen thousand."

"Well, that's enough to perk up The Future of Literature in itself. Tell you what—send me ten sheets or manuscripts of what any of your other master minds have written so I get the pitch. Also a contract. If it still legally checks out that pieces contracted for by a bona-fide nonresident and written outside the States are tax-free so long as the nonresident stays out of country twelve consecutive months, then will write a good straight piece about what I think and will try to straighten up and think as good as I can."

Over the years, with the exception of 1956 and 1957, when I was living in Rome, I visited Ernest in Cuba at least once a year, often more, and daiquiris at the Floridita, pigeon shoots, excursions on the *Pilar*, and days at the *finca* became familiar. There was often a "business" reason behind these Havana trips and other trips to meet Ernest elsewhere in the world, but his approach to dealing with business matters was widely circuitous. He invariably allotted a minimum of two days to "cooling out"—I from the trip, he from working or if not working, then from some mysterious pressure he never clearly identified. We would cool out by indulging in the local distractions—if in Cuba, fishing, shooting pigeons, attending jai-alai matches and betting on them, matching Ernest's stable of fighting cocks and so on; if in Ketchum, Idaho, the cool-out was hunting the wild duck, goose, pheasant, elk, deer, dove, chukker, Hungarian partridge, and cooking and eating same; the Spanish cool-out was all aspects of bullfighting, the Prado, touring, eating, drinking and joining the *ambiance*. I said the minimum was two days.

The maximum? I went to Spain in June, 1959, to discuss a series of Hemingway-based special dramas that I was destined to write and produce for the Columbia Broadcasting System. I met Ernest in Alicante on June 28th, and on August 17th, as we were riding back from the bull ring, he said, "Been thinking about those television plays. Let's talk about them."

Six months after my first visit I returned to Havana. The fifteen thousand dollars had been advanced but the article on The Future of Literature had not been written. Instead, Ernest had an alternate idea that he wanted me to come down to discuss. The little town of San Francisco de Paula, where Ernest's Finca Vigla (Lookout Farm) was located, was itself a poverty-stricken shambles. But the Hemingway property was fence-enclosed and consisted of thirteen acres of flower and vegetable gardens, a cow pasture with a half-dozen cows, fruit trees, a defunct tennis court, a large swimming pool, and a lovely once-white limestone villa which was a bit crumbled but dignified. Eighteen kinds of mangoes grew on the long slope from the main gate up to the house that Ernest called his "charming ruin." Immediately in front of the house was a giant ceiba tree, sacred in voodoo rites, orchids growing from its grizzled trunk, its massive roots upheaving the tiled terrace and splitting the interior of the house itself. But Ernest's fondness for the tree was such that despite its havoc, he would not permit the roots to be touched. A short distance from the main house was a white frame guest house. Behind the main house, to one side, was a new white gleaming three-storied square tower with an outside winding staircase.

The walls of the dining room and the nearly fifty-foot living room of the main house were populated with splendidly horned animal heads, and there were several well-trod animal skins on the tiled floor. The furniture was old, comfortable and undistinguished. Inside the front door was an enormous magazine rack that held an unceasing deluge of American and foreign-language periodicals. A large library off the living room was crammed with books that lined the walls from the floor to the high ceiling. Ernest's bedroom, where he worked, was also walled with books; there were over five thousand volumes on the premises. On the wall over his bed was one of his favorite paintings, Juan Gris' "Guitar Player." Another Gris, Miro's "Farm," several Massons, a Klee, a Braque, and Wald Peirce's portrait of Ernest as a young man were among the paintings in the living room and Mary's room.

In Ernest's room there was a large desk covered with stacks of letters, newspapers and magazine clippings, a small sack of carnivores' teeth, two unwound clocks, shoehorns, an unfilled pen in an ornate holder, a wood-carved zebra, wart hog, rhino and lion in single file, and a wide assortment of souvenirs, mementos and good-luck charms. He never worked at the desk. Instead, he used a stand-up work place he had fashioned out of the top of a bookcase near his bed. His portable typewriter was snuggled in there and papers were spread along the top of the bookcase on either side of it. He used a reading board for longhand writing. There were some animal heads on the bedroom walls, too, and a worn, cracked skin of a lesser kudu decorated the tiled floor.

His bathroom was large and cluttered with medicines and medical paraphernalia which bulged out of the cabinet and onto all surfaces; the room was badly in need of paint but painting was impossible because the walls were covered with inked records, written in Ernest's careful hand, of dated blood pressure counts, and weights, prescription numbers and other medical and pharmaceutical intelligence.

The staff for the *finca* normally consisted of the houseboy Rene, the chauffeur Juan, a Chinese cook, three gardeners, a carpenter, two maids and the keeper of the fighting cocks. The white tower had been built by Mary in an effort to get the complement of thirty cats out of the house, and to provide Ernest with a place more becoming to work in than his makeshift quarters in his bedroom. It worked with the cats but not with Ernest. The ground floor of the tower was the cats' quarters, with special sleeping, eating and maternity accommodations, and they all lived there with the exception of a few favorites like Crazy Christian, Friendless' Brother and Ecstasy, who were allowed house privileges. The top floor of the tower, which had a sweeping view of palm tops and green hillocks clear to the sea, had been furnished with an imposing desk befitting an Author of High Status, bookcases, and comfortable reading chairs, but Ernest rarely wrote a line there—except when he occasionally corrected a set of galleys.

On this first visit to the *finca* my wife and I were to be quartered in the guest house, but Mary Hemingway, a golden vivacious woman, greeted us with apologies that it was not quite ready. "Jean Paul Sartre showed up unexpectedly yesterday with a lady friend," she said, "and the sheets haven't been changed yet."

On our way up to the main house Ernest confided: "You know what Sartre told me at dinner last night? That a newspaperman made up the word 'existentialism' and that he, Sartre, had nothing to do with it."

We went into the living room and Ernest looked up at the ceiling a moment. "The Duke and Duchess of Windsor were here last week but they only seemed fascinated by the falling plaster."

I noticed that Ernest had three long, deep scratches on his forearm and I asked about them.

"Cotsies," he said. "They had a circus pitched near here with two good five-year-old cats. Brothers. was wonderful to hear them roar in the morning. Made friends with the trainer. He let me work them and I worked them good with a rolled-up newspaper, but you have to be careful not to turn your back

"Have a wonderful number to do in public figured out. The trainer is going to announce me as a illustrious *domador del norte*, now retired from the profession, but who, through his *aficio* dedicates this rather special number to the Cuban public. The climax is when I lie down and both cotsies put their front feet on my chest. I started to practice this but got raked on the arm a couple times gentling them."

I said I thought lion-baiting was a rather dangerous pursuit for a writer who wanted to continue practicing his trade.

"Miss Mary agrees with you," Ernest said. "Promised her I wouldn't work cotsies any more until the big book is finished. She left when I started gentling them and got raked. I am her security and it's wicked, I guess, to lay it on the line just for fun. But know no other place as good to lay it as on the line."

That evening after dinner, Ernest showed me around the house. From a shelf in the library he took down first editions inscribed to him by James Joyce, Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, Robert Benchley, Ford Maddox Ford, Ezra Pound and many others. He went through a trunk of old photos and scrapbooks. In one vintage photograph album there was a picture of Ernest, age five or six. Written on the back, in his mother's hand, was the notation: "Ernest was taught to shoot by Pa when 2½ and when 4 could handle a pistol."

We also came across a photograph of a very young-looking Marlene Dietrich, inscribed To Ernest With Love. "You know how we met, the Kraut and me?" Ernest asked. "Back in my broke days I was crossing cabin on the *lie*, but a pal of mine who was traveling first loaned me his reserve tux and smuggled me in for meals. One night we're having dinner in the salon, my pal and I, when the Kraut appears at the top of the staircase this unbelievable spectacle in white. The Kraut, of course. A long, tight white-beaded gown over *that* body; in the area of what is known as the Dramatic Pause, she can give lessons to anybody. So she gives it that Dramatic Pause on the staircase, then slowly slides down the stairs and across the floor to where Jock Whitney, I think it was, was having a fawncy dinner party. Of course, nobody in that dining room has touched food to lips since her entrance. The Kraut gets to the table and all the men hop up and her chair is held at the ready, but she's counting. Twelve. Of course, she apologizes and backs off and says she's sorry but she is very superstitious about being thirteen at anything and with that she turns to go, but I have naturally risen to the occasion and grandly offer to save the party by being the fourteenth. That was how we met. Pretty romantic, eh? Maybe I ought to sell it to Darryl F. Panic."

On our way back to the living room, we passed a large inscribed photograph of Ingrid Bergman. I stopped to look at it. "Can post photo of any lady Miss Mary's not jealous of," Ernest said. "So far she's batting a thousand in the no-cause-for-jealousy league."

We settled down in the living room, Ernest sitting in Papa's Chair, a big overstuffed lopsided easy chair with a faded, well-worn slip cover; Black Dog curled up at his feet. Black Dog, who was mostly a springer spaniel, had wandered into Ernest's Sun Valley ski cabin one afternoon, cold, starved, fear-ridden and sub-dog in complex—a hunting dog who was scared stiff of gunfire. Ernest had brought him back to Cuba and patiently and lovingly built up his weight, confidence and affection to the point Ernest said, that Black Dog believed he was an accomplished author himself. "He needs ten hours sleep but is always exhausted because he faithfully follows my schedule. When I'm between books I

is happy, but when I'm working he takes it very hard. Although he's a boy who loves his sleep, I think he has to get up and stick with me from first light on. He keeps his eyes open loyally. But he doesn't like it."

The talk went from Black Dog, to the animal heads on the walls, to Africa. "Had an English friend Ernest related, "who wanted to shoot a lion with bow and arrow. One White Hunter after another turned him down until finally a Swede White Hunter agreed to take him. Englishman was the kind of Englishman who took a portable bar on safari. Swede, who was a very good hunter, warned against the bow and arrow as effectives, but his Lordship insisted so Swede briefed him on the lion— can run one hundred yards in four seconds, see only in silhouette, should be hit at fifty yards, all that. They finally stalk the lion, set it up, lion charges, Englishman pulls back bow, hits lion in the chest at fifty yards, lion bites off the arrow, keeps coming, eats the ass right off one of the native guides in one gulp in a tear before Swede can drop him. Englishman is shook up. Comes over to look at the bloody mess of a native guide and lion lying side by side. Swede says, 'Well, your Lordship, you may now put the bow and arrow away.' Englishman says, 'I think we might.'

"This was the same Englishman I had met in Nairobi with his wife. She was a young Irish beauty who had come unannounced to my room. The following evening the Englishman asked me to have a drink with him at the hotel bar. 'Ernest,' he said, 'you are a gentleman so you did nothing wrong, but my wife should not make a fool out of me.'"

Mary steered the conversation back to animals. Ernest told about a very big, cocky black bear of the West, who had made life miserable for everyone by standing in the middle of the road and refusing to budge when cars came along. It got so that no one could use the road. But Ernest heard about him and drove along the road to seek him out; suddenly, sure enough— there was the bear. A really *big* bear. He was on his hind legs and his upper lip was pulled back in a sneer. Ernest got out of the car and went over to him. "Do you realize that you're nothing but a miserable, common black bear?" Ernest said to him in a loud, firm voice. "Why, you sad son-of-a-bitch, how can you be so cocky and stand there and block cars when you're nothing but a *miserable* bear and a black bear at that—not even a polar or grizzly or anything worth-while."

Ernest said he really laid it on him and the poor black bear began to hang his head, then he lowered himself to all fours and pretty soon he walked off the road. Ernest had destroyed him. From that time on he used to run behind a tree and hide whenever he saw a car coming and shake with fear that Ernest might be inside, ready to dress him down.

Rene soon appeared with the movie projector and we settled down to a twin bill that was Ernest's favorite: a Tony Zale versus Rocky Graziano slugfest, plus *The Killers* with Burt Lancaster and Ava Gardner. The curtain raiser was the fight, which Ernest followed avidly and commented upon, but five minutes into *The Killers* he was sound asleep. "Never saw him last past the first reel," Mary said.

We had been at the *finca* for three days when Ernest got around to his substitute idea for The Future of Literature article: he would write two short stories instead. Some of his stories, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," for one, had been published in *Cosmo*, he said, and it would be better for him and the magazine if he did fiction, which was his forte, instead of a think piece, which was not. He pointed out, however, that one article did not equal two short stories in value; subsequently the editor increased the payment to twenty-five thousand dollars.

The dinner regulars during those days at the *finca* were Roberto Herrera, a bald, deaf, powerful

unprepossessing, gentle, devoted Spaniard, in his late thirties, who, according to Ernest, had had five years of medicine in Spain and who had come to Cuba after having been imprisoned for fighting on the republican side in the Civil War; Sinsky Dunabeitia, a salty, roaring, boozing, fun-loving Basque sea captain who manned a freighter run from the States to Cuba and was a constant at the *finca* whenever his ship was in port; Father Don Andres, called Black Priest, a Basque who had been in the Bilbao Cathedral when the Civil War broke out. Don Andres had climbed into the pulpit and exhorted all the parishioners to go get their guns and fill the streets and shoot what they could and the hell with spending their time in church. After that, he enrolled as a machine-gunner in the republican army. Of course, when the war ended he was kicked out of Spain. He sought refuge in Cuba, but the Church there took a dim view of his past behavior and assigned him the poorest parish in the worst section. Thus, the name Black Priest. Ernest had befriended him, as he befriended scores of Franco refugees, and Black Priest, wearing a brightly colored sport shirt, would come to the Hemingway *finca* on his days away from his parish and devote himself to eating, drinking, swimming in the pool, and exchanging reminiscences with Ernest and Roberto. There were other guests, too: a Spanish grandee Ernest had known in the Civil War, a gambler from the old days in Key West, an anti-Batista (sub rosa) Cuban politician and his wife, and a semiretired pelota player, once of great prominence. "Mondays to Thursdays I try to maintain quiet," Mary said. "But the week ends are always on the verge of uproar, and sometimes over the verge. Papa doesn't like to go to other people's houses because he says he can't trust the food and drink. The last time he accepted a dinner invitation was about a year ago. They served sweet champagne which he had to drink to be polite, and it took ten days for him to get it out of his system."

In early 1949, before he left for a trip to Venice, Ernest telephoned me in New York from the *finca*. He began by discussing the triumph of Mr. Truman over Mr. Dewey, but finally got to the point. "About the two stories, agreement is—deadline end of December and I deliver two stories or give back the dough, right? Wrote one story after you left but think it is too rough for *Cosmopolitan* so I better save it for the book."

"What book?"

"New book of short stories. Or book of new short stories— take your pick. Don't think I'll have time in Venice, but plan to get back to Cuba in early May, take the kids on a trip, then write two good stories for you. I may have to let them lay awhile and then go over them, but think if I have no better luck, I should surely have two before the deadline. The story I just finished is about forty-five hundred words and much better than that Waugh crap they just ran. But I can beat it for you."

All through the spring of 1949 I received letters from Ernest from the Gritti Palace hotel in Venice and from the Villa Aprile in Cortina d'Ampezzo, which is magnificent ski country to the north. He wrote about Mary breaking her leg in a ski accident and about a serious eye infection for which he was hospitalized, but did not mention the stories. It was during this period that Ernest instigated my first meeting with Charles Scribner, Sr.; and afterward he said, "Hope you liked Charlie. He liked you very much and he likes almost nobody. Hates authors." Scribner was a silver-haired, gentle-featured man of charm, wit and good humor, and he loved Ernest as a proud father loves a gloried son. Ernest once said of Scribner: "Now that Max Perkins is gone, Charlie is all I've got left to help keep the franchise."

The first time Mr. Scribner and I met, it was to discuss Ernest's medical statement which he had sent to Scribner from Italy for release to the press. Ernest suggested that this statement might take the pressure off. "Especially off me, here in the hospital, making my fight and under siege of news hawking

like Hector was be-Greeked at Troy."

The statement was: "~~It certainly is odd, though not particularly I suppose, for people to think you a~~ a phony. I would not let the photographers nor any reporters in because I was too tired and was making my fight and because face was incrustated like after a flash burn. Had streptococcus infection, straphilococcus (probably misspelled) infection plus erysipelas, thirteen and one half million units Penicillium, plus three and one half million when it started to relapse. The doctors in Cortina thought it might go into the brain and make a meningitis since the left eye was completely involved and closed completely tight so that every time I opened it with boric solution a big part of the eye-lash would pull out.

"It could have been from the dust on the secondary roads as well as from fragments from the wad. "Still can't shave. Have tried it twice and up come the welts and patches and then the skin peels like postage stamps. So run a clippers over face every week. That way it looks unshaven but not as though you were sporting a beard. All above is true and accurate and you can release it to anybody, including the press."

Ernest was back in Cuba by the summer of 1949, and in late July he telephoned to report that the *Cosmopolitan* two-story project had taken another turn and suggested I visit him in September. I said that this time I would take a cottage at the Kawama Club at Varadero Beach and not inconvenience them.

"No inconvenience," Ernest said, "but Varadero beauty place. When you come down I will knock off work for two or three days and bring the boat to Varadero and we can have some fun. Will work hard for balance of July and August so that will rate the vacation."

"Arthur wants to know," I said, referring to Cosmo's editor, Arthur Gordon, "if you want the additional ten thousand."

"No. Tell Arthur thanks very much, but am okay on dough. Our fighting chickens won thirty-eight out of forty-two fights. The joint is producing what we need to eat. The Deep-Freeze is full. I'm shooting hot on pigeons and should be able to pick up three to four G's. The kids are all suited, Italian moneyed, and leave on Tuesday. My oldest boy, Jack, is back as a captain of infantry in Berlin and self-supporting—so far. If Kid Gavilan wins over Robinson, am okay through Christmas. He probably lose, though, and am covering."

I asked if I could bring him anything. "Well, yes." he said. "If you can manage it, bring a tin of beluga caviar from Maison Glass and a Smith-Corona portable, pica type. About the stories, believe I have a pretty nice surprise for you. Have been hotter—working—than the grill they roasted Santa Lorenzo on."

The surprise was that Ernest had started one of the *Cosmopolitan-promised* stories, originally titled "A Short Story," when he was hospitalized in Italy; he said he had started it to pay for his imminent funeral expenses. As he improved, however, the story grew until now it gave every indication of becoming a novel. Ernest was calling it *Across the River and into the Trees*. "All of my books started as short stories," he said. "I never sat down to write a novel."

We were on the *Pilar* when he gave me the first chapters to read, sitting beside me, reading over my shoulder. (It was impossible with him breathing in my ear, and I was only vaguely aware of what I was reading. In years ahead I was to learn that all works-in-progress would be shown to me in this manner although it wasn't easy, I eventually learned to detach myself from the author at my shoulder.) Now however, Ernest completely distracted me with his reactions to the manuscript—laughing at places

commenting at others, as if it were someone else's book. He started to put it away (Ernest always treated the pages of a manuscript-in-progress as Crown Jewels), but I asked whether I could go through it a second time; and so later I succeeded in really reading it.

"Did Papa tell you," Mary asked, "that he's back at the cotsies again?"

"I thought you swore off," I said, surprised.

"Momentary relapse. This was a big cat, five years old. Worked him when the trainer quit on account of the cat was getting bad and I think I did okay. Takes your mind off things."

"Papa, I really think it's foolish to go in with cats when you're not training them and yourself every day," I said.

"You're right. For me to work cotsies is foolish, of course. I only do it to show off in front of some woman or for straight fun. The fun is to see how they react to discipline without provocation. But you can't work more than two at once because it is dangerous to let them get behind you. Same thing applies to some people I know."

Great black cumulus puffs were forming in the sky to the west, and the sea was getting choppy. The four lines trolled efficiently but there were no takers. The black sky began to infect the north and the water took on a luminous sheen.

"What month Gerry in?" Ernest asked.

"Fourth."

"Then not a good idea to risk hurricane or even all-out storm. If it weren't for being pregnant, we would head up into this and ride it out. Can be wonderful fun." He told Gregorio to turn the *Pilgrimage* around, and I suggested that we all have lunch at the Kawama Club. During the two hours it took us to get there we did not have a single strike.

Gregorio anchored the boat several hundred yards from the beach. The water was very turbulent now, but the Kawama Club had no launch facilities, so we had to swim ashore. Mary could borrow clothes from Geraldine, but Ernest looked me up and down with narrowed eyes and shook his head. "Hotchner, an exchange of pawnts is hopeless. I'll carry mine." I thought he meant he would put a pair in a watertight bag and tow it in—but that was the easy way.

The women dived off and started to swim. Ernest had taken a pair of shorts and a shirt, rolled them up tightly, with a bottle of good claret inside because he didn't trust the Kawama wine, and secured the roll with his GOTT MIT UNS leather belt. He descended the boat's ladder and lowered himself carefully into the water. He had the roll in his left hand, which he held straight up over his head to keep it dry, and began to swim powerfully against the tossing sea, keeping the upper part of his torso out of the water, using only his right arm and kick for locomotion. It was a remarkable exhibition of balance and strength; I swam alongside him and even with two arms found it arduous going.

I arrived on the beach a few moments in advance of Ernest, and as I stood and watched him negotiating the last few yards, his left arm relentlessly aloft, holding the dry pants-roll like a tubular pennant on the top of a muscled mast, he was an immortal sea god, not from Oak Park, Illinois, at all, but Poseidon, emerging from his aquatic kingdom. He came out of the sea dripping, smiling happily at his dry pants, not even short of breath.

Ernest phoned frequently about *Across the River*. "Been jamming hard," he said on one occasion. "Black Dog is tired too. He'll be glad when the book is over and so will I. But, by Christ, I'll miss it for a while. Just wrote a goddamn wonder chapter, the man says modestly. Got it all, to break your heart into two pages. Yesterday Roberto counted. He hates to count but counts accurately, and through the morning it is 43,745. This is so you know what you have as effectives. Think it should go sixty or ju

under.

"About the monies, please advise me. We ought to make a contract before it is finished. It is really the best book that I have written, I think, but I am prejudiced, of course. Have only two more innings to pitch and I plan to turn their caps around."

Cosmo's reply about the contract was that Ernest was such an old and valued friend of the Hearst organization that he was to name his own price; when I telegraphed him that remarkable information he phoned me about it. He wanted to know the most *Cosmopolitan* had ever paid for a serialized novel. I told him seventy-five thousand dollars. "Okay," he said, "I figure I ought to top that by ten percent. Please tell them I've been throwing in my armor worse than Georgie Patton ever did and there isn't a plane on the ground that can fly. Brooklyn Tolstoys, grab your laurels and get out of that slip stream. I'll even throw in the taking of Paris for free. Will probably never live to finish the long book anyway. So what the hell?" Irwin Shaw, Brooklyn-born—an enduring target for Ernest's shafts—had just published *The Young Lions*.

Although I did not know it at the time, since I had not known him for long, this rather frequent use of the telephone was highly unusual for Ernest. He later explained to me that there were only a few people he felt comfortable with on the telephone. Marlene Dietrich was one. Toots Shor was another. Ordinarily Ernest advanced upon a telephone with dark suspicion, virtually stalking it from behind. He picked it up gingerly and placed it to his ear as if to determine whether something inside was ticking. When he spoke into it his voice became constricted and the rhythm of his speech changed, the way an American's speech changes when he talks with a foreigner. Ernest would invariably come away from a telephone conversation physically exhausted, sweated, and driven to stiff drink. But he liked to phone Toots Shor from Paris or Malaga or Venice and throw a few lefts at him before placing a bet, through Toots' auspices, on an impending fight or a World Series. Ernest liked to phone Dietrich because, as he said, they had loved each other for a long time and they always told each other everything that happened and they never lied to each other except when very necessary, and then only on a temporary basis.

Later on, when I got to know Marlene quite well, she told me: "I never ask Ernest for advice as such, but he is always there to talk to, to get letters from, and in conversation and letters I find the things I can use for whatever problems I may have; he has often helped me without even knowing my problems. He says remarkable things that seem to automatically adjust to problems of all sizes.

"For example, I spoke to him on the telephone just a few weeks ago. Ernest was alone in the *finca* when he had finished writing for the day, and he wanted to talk. At one point he asked me what work plans I had—if any—and I told him that

I had just had a very lucrative offer from a Miami night club but I was undecided about whether to take it.

" 'Why the indecision?' he asked.

" 'Well,' I answered, 'I feel I should work. I should not waste my time. It's wrong. I think one appearance in London and one a year in Vegas is quite enough. However, I'm probably just pampering myself, so I've been trying to convince myself to take the offer.'

"There was silence for a moment and I could visualize Ernest's beautiful face poised in thought. He finally said, 'Don't do what you sincerely don't want to do. Never confuse movement with action.' Those five words he gave me a whole philosophy.

"That's the wonderful thing about him—he kneels himself into his friends' problems. He is like

huge rock, off somewhere, a constant and steady thing, that certain someone whom everybody should have and nobody has.

"I suppose the most remarkable thing about Ernest is that he has found time to do the things most men only dream about. He has had the courage, the initiative, the time, the enjoyment to travel, to digest it all, to write, to create it, in a sense. There is in him a sort of quiet rotation of seasons, with each of them passing overland and then going underground and re-emerging in a kind of rhythm, refreshed and full of renewed vigor.

"He is gentle, as all real men are gentle; without tenderness, a man is uninteresting."

"The thing about the Kraut and me," Ernest said after I told him what Marlene had said about him, "is that we have been in love since 1934, when we first met on the *lie de France*, but we've never been to bed. Amazing but true. Victims of un-synchronized passion. Those times when I was out of love, the Kraut was deep in some romantic tribulation, and on those occasions when Dietrich was on the surface and swimming about with those marvelously seeking eyes of hers, I was submerged. There was another crossing on the *lie*, years after that first one, when something could have happened, the only time, but I had too recently made love to that worthless M—, and the Kraut was still somewhat in love with the equally worthless R—. We were like two young cavalry officers who had lost all their money gambling and were determined to go straight."

Chapter Two

New York ♦ 1949

Ernest came up to New York at the end of October, 1949, with the manuscript of *Across the River and into the Trees*. New York City was just a way station for Ernest, a place to stay for a week or so on the move to or from some serious place. There was a small core of New York regulars whom he invariably contacted on arrival and a large peripheral group who contacted him. For years his favorite hotel was the Sherry-Netherland (he liked their "good protection"—no name on the register, phone calls all screened, newsmen and photographers thrown off the scent); but in 1959 he gave up the Sherry-Netherland for a three-room *pied a terre* at 1 East Sixty-Second, a once-fabulous town house which had been divided into not-especially-fabulous apartments.

Ernest was always uneasy in New York and liked being there less than in any other city he frequented. Mary loved it, and I suspect that he came as often as he did as a favor to her. He did not like theater, opera or ballet, and although he liked to listen to music he rarely, to my knowledge, attended a concert or any other musical presentation, longhair or jazz. He would only go to a prize fight that paired really good boys, and sometimes he made a special trip for a first-rate championship fight. Otherwise not. He avidly followed professional football on television when he was in the States (there was no

United States television in Cuba), but he did not go to the games. He loved baseball and would go to any game; and occasionally he came to New York just to see a World Series.

The only bars Ernest liked were Toots Shor's, the Old Seidel-burg, and Tim Costello's. I asked him about the story I had heard of the time that he got into a dispute with John O'Hara about the respective hardnesses of head, the dispute having been put to an abrupt end by Ernest's taking a shillelagh which Costello kept behind the bar, raising it up with an end in each hand, and cracking it neatly in two over his own head. I asked Ernest whether the story was apocryphal. He laughed. "God's story not to deny," he answered.

One of the few things about New York that Ernest unreservedly enjoyed was the visits of the Ringling Brothers Circus. He felt that circus animals were not like other animals, that they were more intelligent and, because of their constant working alliance with man, had much more highly developed personalities.

The first time I went to the circus with him, he was so eager to see the animals he went to Madison Square Garden an hour before the doors were scheduled to open. We went around to a side entrance on Fiftieth Street and Ernest banged on the door until an attendant appeared. He tried to turn us away but Ernest had a card signed by his old friend John Ringling North, which stated that the bearer was to be admitted to the circus any time, any place. We went below, as he always did before the circus began, and made a tour of the cages. Ernest became fascinated with the gorilla; although the keeper was nervous as hell and warned him not to stand too close, Ernest wanted to make friends with the animal. He stood close to the cage and talked to the gorilla in a staccato cadence and kept talking, and finally the gorilla, who appeared to be listening, was so moved he picked up his plate of carrots and dumped it on top of his head; then he started to whimper; sure signs, the keeper said, of his affection.

By now, all the keepers had assembled around Ernest, anxious that he try a few words with the charges, but he said that the only wild animal with whom he had any true talking rapport was the bear.

whereupon the bear keeper cleared a path for him.

Ernest stopped in front of the polar-bear cage and closely watched its occupant swing back and forth across the small area. "He's very nasty, Mr. Hemingway," the bear keeper said. "I think you're better off talking to this brown bear, who has a good sense of humor."

"I should get through to him," Ernest said, staying with the polar bear, "but I haven't talked bear talk for some time and I may be rusty." The keeper smiled. Ernest edged in close to the bars. He began to speak to the bear in a soft, musical voice totally unlike his gorilla language, and the bear stopped pacing. Ernest kept on talking, and the words, or I should say sounds, were unlike any I had ever heard. The bear backed up a little and grunted, and then it sat on its haunches and, looking straight at Ernest, it began to make a series of noises through its nose, which made it sound like an elderly gentleman with severe catarrh.

"I'll be goddamned!" the keeper said.

Ernest smiled at the bear and walked away, and the bear stared after him, bewildered. "It's Indian talk," Ernest said. "I'm part Indian. Bears like me. Always have."

Although Ernest liked to watch movies in his living room in Cuba, the only ones he went to see in New York were those based upon his books and stories, and then he went in a spirit of self-imposed duress. For days before taking the plunge, he would talk about his onerous duty of going to see such a movie and would circle the project as a hunter circles his quarry before moving in for the kill. He made his decision on *A Farewell to Arms* following lunch at Le Veau d'Or one day, after expostulating for three days on why he was going "to give it a miss." This was the David O. Selznick remake that starred Jennifer Jones and Rock Hudson. Ernest lasted thirty-five minutes. Afterward we walked along Forty-ninth Street and up Fifth Avenue in silence. Finally Ernest said, "You know, Hotch, you write a book like that that you're fond of over the years, then you see that happen to it, it's like pissing in your father's beer."

We saw *The Sun Also Rises* the day before the start of the 1957 World Series, for which Ernest had made a special trip. When Mary asked him how he liked it, he said, "Any picture in which Errol Flynn is the best actor is its own worst enemy."

The only movie that Ernest himself had anything to do with was *The Old Man and the Sea*. He edited the script and then spent weeks with a camera crew off the coast of Peru, catching large marlin that never got hooked at the right hour for the Technicolor cameras; so like all movie marlins, they wound up being sponge-rubber fish in a Culver City tank. Ernest sat through *all* of that movie, numbingly. "Spencer Tracy looked like a fat, very rich actor playing a fisherman," was his only comment.

When in New York, Ernest made a point of seeing the television plays I had dramatized from his stories or novels. I would arrange for them to be shown at CBS on a closed-circuit set. Of all the shows, the one that he liked best, and the one I always declared to win with, was called "The World of Nick Adams," an episodic drama that I had based upon seven of the Nick Adams stories. It was brilliantly directed by Robert Mulligan; and after Ernest had seen it and the viewing-room lights came up, he said, "Well, Hotch, you got it on the screen as good as I got it on paper." That was the best compliment I ever received about anything. It was my good fortune that he never wanted to see "The Gambler, the Nun and the Radio," which was a disaster from beginning to end. He liked most of the three-hour *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which I did for two successive Playhouse 90s with Jason Robards, Maria Schell, Eli Wallach and Maureen Stapleton playing the leads; he thought, however, it should have included more material favorable to the Nationalist cause. "But you got the spirit of the

people, with their tempers and their true unwashed smells, and that's what counts. You see the cinema version? The big love scene between Coops and Ingrid and he didn't take off his coat. That's one hell of a way for a guy to make love, with his coat on—in a sleeping bag. And Ingrid, in her tailored dress and all those pretty curls—she was strictly Elizabeth Arden out of Abercrombie and Fitch."

Ernest's attitude toward New York shopping was the same as his attitude toward movie-going; he circled for days and then finally made the distasteful plunge. In no area was his innate shyness more pronounced than in a store. The mere sight of sales counters and salespeople caused him to break out in a sweat, and he either bought the first thing they showed him or bolted before they got the merchandise off the racks. The one exception to this shopping syndrome was Abercrombie & Fitch, especially its gun department and shoe department. But even at Abercrombie's a salesman in the clothing department would have been well advised to hold Ernest by the sleeve while turning his back to get a trench coat off the rack.

Actually, Ernest's attire was very restricted and, in a manner of speaking, constituted a uniform; there were leather vests, the knitted tan skullcap, the GOTT MIT UNS leather belt which had been appropriated from a dead Nazi and was religiously worn with all raiment (it was too wide for the loops of any of his pants but he wore it anyway outside the loops). He owned one decent jacket, made for him in Hong Kong, two pairs of pants, one pair of shoes and no underwear. I was with him when he went into Mark Cross on Fifth Avenue to buy a bag. The salesman showed him one that held ten suits and cost three hundred dollars. "Can afford the bag," Ernest told him, "but can't afford to buy nine suits."

But getting back to that October day in 1949 when Ernest checked into the Sherry-Netherland with his *Across the River* manuscript. On the morning of that day Herbert Mayes (who had succeeded our friend Arthur Gordon as editor of *Cosmo*) called me into his office and said that eighty-five thousand dollars was so exorbitant as to be beyond reason and I was to tell Mr. Hemingway that, and offer fifty thousand instead. I refused. As far as I was concerned, a solid deal had been made and I was not going to carry the weasel. I offered, however, to bring Mayes and Ernest together so that Mayes could tell Ernest himself. But Mayes decided, with considerable rancor, to let the price stand, and I was dispatched to the Sherry-Netherland to get the manuscript.

Ernest's suite was well attended when I got there. In the center of the sitting room was a round table on which rested two silver ice buckets, each containing a bottle of Perrier-Jouet, a huge blue tin of beluga caviar, a salver of toast, a bowl of finely chopped onions, a bowl of lemon slices, a salver of smoked salmon and a thin vase containing two yellow tea roses. Around the table were Marlene Dietrich, Mary Hemingway, Jigee Viertel, Charles Scribner, Sr., and George Brown. Off to one side, with a stenographer's pad in her lap, sat Lillian Ross of *The New Yorker*. Jigee Viertel, formerly Buck Schulberg's wife, at that time married to Peter Viertel, had known the Hemingways for some time and was booked to cross on the *lie de France* with them. George Brown was one of Ernest's oldest and best friends; the genesis of their friendship was George's demised Brown's Gymnasium, once the hangout of the boxing elite. Ernest always said that George knew more about prize fighting than all the New York managers and trainers put together. Lillian Ross, in her corner, was taking rapid shorthand notes for a profile of Ernest she was doing for *The New Yorker*. ("It was a shorter hand than any of us knew," Ernest was to say a few months later.)

Ernest introduced me to his guests and suggested that later on we all go to "21" for dinner. He said that "21" first qualified as his alma mater back in the Twenties at a time when he was living in a little room at the Brevoort. He was behind in his rent and had not eaten solidly for a week when Jack

Kriendler, co-owner of "21", eased him into a posh party that was being given on the second floor of the speak-easy. During the course of the evening Ernest was introduced to an Italian girl who he said was the most beautiful girl—face and body—he had ever seen, before or since, any country, any time. "She had that pure Renaissance beauty, black hair straight, eyes round at the bottoms, Botticelli skin, breasts of Venus Rising. After the joint closed and everyone started to leave, she and I took our drinks into the kitchen. Jack said it was okay, since there were two or three hours of cleaning up to be done downstairs. So we talked and drank and suddenly we were making love there in the kitchen and never has a promise been better fulfilled. By now it was five in the morning, and she said we'd better be leaving, but we got only as far as the stairway—you know that landing as you come up the stairs. Twenty-One? That's as far as we got and then we were making love again, on the landing, and it was like being at sea in the most tempestuous storm that ever boiled up; you think you'll go under with the rises and falls, but ride it out, knowing you are close to solving the mystery of the deep.

"She would not let me take her home, but when I awoke the next day in my Brevoort squirrel cage my first thought was to find her again. As I put on my jacket, I noticed green sticking out of the pocket—three hundred-dollar bills. I hurried back to Twenty-One, but as I came in, Jack pulled me to one side. 'Listen, Ernie,' he said, 'you better lay low for a while. I should have warned you—that was Leo Diamond's girl, and he's due back in town at five o'clock.'"

We made reservations at "21" and then Ernest led me into the bedroom, where he opened his old battered leather briefcase and took out the manuscript of the book. "Christ, I wish you were coming along," he said. "This is going to be a jolly autumn. One of my Venice girls has written she is coming to Paris. It will be necessary to maneuver and if you were there with the proofs, we could always get into conference. And when we weren't in conference with the proofs, we could be in conference at Auteuil. Georges could keep track of the form—not this George, Georges the Ritz barman. You know him? Well, he's very classy on form and we could do the field work and I would brain and watch what happens and we could set up a bank and work out of that. Hell, the more I think of it, the more depressed I get that we'll be off on this absolutely jolly autumn and there you'll be behind a desk on Eighth Avenue, and a *Hearst* desk at that." He pulled at his mustache thoughtfully.

"Well, Papa," I said, "like Mr. James Durante says, 'It's the conditions that prevail.'"

"Conditions are what you make them, boy. Now here's what we do." He picked up the manuscript and removed a sheaf of pages from the end of it. "Now you take this to your editor and tell him that it's all there except for the last few chapters, which I'm taking with me because they need more polishing."

When I handed the manuscript to Herbert Mayes and told him that, he practically leaped out of his chair. "The last few chapters! My God, you know how unreliable he is! The way he drinks! There we are, going to press with the third installment and we won't have the ending! You'll have to go with him. Keep after him! Don't let him out of your sight! We *must* have these chapters by the first of January!"

When I went back to the Sherry-Netherland later that evening, Ernest was sitting in an armchair wearing a white tennis visor and reading a book. As I walked into the room, without looking up he said: "When are you leaving?"

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