THE HEMINGWAY READER

A WIDE-RANGING COLLECTION, SELECTED, WITH A FOREWORD AND TWELVE BRIEF PREFACES BY **CHARLES POORE**

Ernest Hemingway

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SELECTED

with a Foreword and twelve Brief Prefaces

by CHARLES POORE

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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FOREWORD

BY CHARLES POORE

THIS book is planned for the pleasures and rewards of reading. The selections are arranged chronologically. They were chosen mainly to give variety and balance. Other hands, I am aware, would make other choices; no doubt they duly will. The field of choice is as wide as the world the men and women who live in these stories wander over, in peace and in war.

There is the full text of a novel that set the flags for a generation, *The Sun Also Rises*, and a freely sketched satire on the eternal pomposities of unconventionality, *The Torrents of Spring*. There are complete episodes from five other novels in Hemingway's chronicle of modern chivalry: *A Farewell to Arms, To Have and Have Not, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Across the River and Into the Trees,* and *The Old Man and the Sea.* There are chapters on Spain and the art of the torero, "the only art in which the artist is in danger of death and in which the degree of brilliance in the performance is left to the fighter's honor," from *Death in the Afternoon*, and the wonderful dialogue on American writing from *Green Hills of Africa.* There are eleven short stories. These, alone, would be worth a book.

The stories and the novels together represent a body of work that has changed the course of storytelling and given new cadences to the language. They are not gathered here, though, to illustrate academic principles or to pepper elegies. They are alive, a part of experience that tells us more vividly than any casual actuality ever can, where men and women have been, and what they have done and left undone in this brightest and bloodiest of centuries.

Excellence is never as recent as its discovery. The elements of what we admire in a late story, toward the end of this book, are unmistakably present in an early one. It is the field of operations that broadens, from Michigan to the Gulf Stream, from Spain and Paris to the Hurtgen Forest, from Tanganyika to the Venetian Plain; it is the perception that deepens as all that is not essential is burned away to make a story like *The Old Man and the Sea.*

The clarity, the intensity, the humor, valor, grace and love of life in an age that happens through no particular fault of Hemingway to be much concerned with death, were always there. The rough passages of our day's hallowed and unhallowed forages, pilgrimages and crusades are rendered as scrupulously as the smooth ones along the way. These are qualities that have given him his place as the outstanding storyteller, the finest stylist, of his time.

It is idle to observe that he has written no three-generation dynastic family novels, no romances in which Napoleon wins the Civil War and marries Mary Queen of Scots. We have many eminently available novelists for those occasions; we can depend on other authors to create for us private counties and principalities of their own devising. The measure of Hemingway's stature is that he shows us what he has seen of the world as it is, with its gallantry and havoc, its dreams of fair women and hopes of peace.

The age of Hemingway is as shaken and open to adventure as the end of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. We are all Tudors now, whether we like it very much or not. Yet these pages also remind us that we always have marked Napoleonic characters around in hot, close pursuit of destiny; wars civil and uncivil, and heroines as appealing as the Scottish Queen. He might have written his own chronicle of chivalry in the manner he used when he composed the inscription for a book of stories, *Winner Take Nothing:*

> "Unlike all other forms of lutte or combat the conditions are that the winner shall take nothing; neither his ease, nor his pleasure, nor any notions of glory; nor, if he win far enough, shall there be any reward within himself."

Instead, he created his own prose for a new time.

It is for him, I imagine, a process without ending. After service in the first World War on the Italian Front where he was severely wounded before he was 19 and won the Medaglia d'Argento al Valore Militare and three Croces al Merito di Guerra, he came back to America and then went abroad as a correspondent for Canadian and American papers, serving in Europe and the Middle East. "I was trying to write then," he said in *Death in the Afternoon,* "and I found the greatest difficulty, aside from knowing truly what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel . . . was to put down what really happened in action; what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced. . . . The real thing, the sequence

of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year or in ten years or, with luck and if you stated it purely enough, always, was beyond me and I was working very hard to try to get it."

Then there were the years when none would pay money to publish stories that now are in a hundred anthologies, the times he remembered in *Green Hills of Africa*, living in Paris: "in Notre Dame des Champs in the courtyard with the sawmill (*and the sudden whine of the saw, the smell of sawdust and the chestnut tree over the roof with a mad woman downstairs*) and the year worrying about money (*all of the stories back in the mail that came in through a slit in the sawmill door, with notes of rejection that would never call them stories, but always anecdotes, sketches, contes, etc. They did not want them, and we lived on poireaux and drank cahors and water*) and how fine the fountains were at the Place de L'Observatoire (*water sheen rippling on the bronze of horses' manes, bronze breasts and shoulders, green under thin-flowing water*) and when they put up the bust of Flaubert in the Luxembourg on the short cut through the gardens on the way to the rue Soufflot (*one that we believed in, loved without criticism, heavy now in stone as an idol should be*)."

The years of fame have not banked the fire. He will say, I think, "Aún aprendo," like Goya, "I'm still learning," in his eighties.

Ford Madox Ford pointed out in an introduction to *A Farewell to Arms* that "the aim—the achievement—of the great prose writer is to use words so that they shall seem new and alive because of their juxtaposition with other words. This gift Hemingway has supremely. . . . You cannot throw yourself into a frame of mind and just write and get that effect. Your mind has to choose each word and your ear has to test it until by long disciplining of mind and ear you can no longer go wrong. That disciplining through which you must put yourself is all the more difficult in that it must be gone through in solitude. You cannot watch the man next to you in the ranks smartly manipulating his side-arms nor do you hear any word of command by which to time yourself. On the other hand a writer holds a reader by his temperament. That is his true 'gift'—what he receives from whoever sends him into the world. It arises from how you look at things. If you look at and render things so that they appear new to the reader you will hold his attention. If what you give him appears familiar or half familiar his attention will wander."

It was Ford who defined the style many have bumbled through a

volume trying to define when he said: "Hemingway's words strike you, each one, as if they were pebbles fetched fresh from a brook. They live and shine, each in its place. So one of his pages has the effect of a brook-bottom into which you look down through the flowing water. The words form a tessellation, each in order beside the other." That judgment, made early in Hemingway's career, sets Ford apart from those who cherish the simple notion that the style is all a matter of simple sentences. The simplicity is there—but few things are more complex than Hemingway's simplicity. It is about as simple as a Bach fugue or a Cézanne landscape and it is as clearly, cleanly present in this book's first story, the classic "Big Two-Hearted River" ("the river shallow ahead entering the woods, curving into the woods, shallows, light glittering, big water-smooth rocks, cedars along the bank and white birches") as it is in the 424-words-long sentence about all our yesterdays, todays and tomorrows in *Green Hills of Africa.*

It is in *Across the River and Into the Trees,* a novel of man's experience that can best be experienced by those who have known girls as lovely as Renata and worn Cantwell's armor, where dusk and dawn seem to happen on the page, somehow, as he thinks, "I could be part of the ground where the children play in the evenings, and in the mornings, maybe, they would still be training jumping horses and their hoofs would make the thudding on the turf, and trout would rise in the pool when there was a hatch of fly." And in the memory of the West in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," ". . . the ranch and the silvered gray of the sage brush, the quick, clear water in the irrigation ditches, and the heavy green of the alfalfa. The trail went up into the hills and the cattle in the summer were shy as deer. The bawling and the steady noise and slow moving mass raising a dust as you brought them down in the fall. And behind the mountains, the clear sharpness of the peak in the evening light and, riding down along the trail in the moonlight, bright across the valley."

The observation is always miraculously precise, as in *The Sun Also Rises,* where Jake, crossing the Seine, notices "a string of barges being towed empty down the current, riding high, the bargemen at the sweeps as they came toward the bridge"; Pilar, in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* remembering Finito, "as he furled the heavy flannel cloth around the stick; the flannel hanging blood-heavy from the passes where it had swept over the bull's head and shoulders and the wet streaming shine of his withers and on down and over his back as the bull raised into the air and the banderillas clattered." That is writing, isn't it?—

the "sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion," as it is in the unforgettable opening sentence of "The Light of the World": "When he saw us come in the door the bartender looked up and then reached over and put the glass covers on the two free-lunch bowls."

I do not hold with those who are comparing Chaucer favorably to Hemingway these days. Nor do I think it is wise to expend spirit in trying to move him farther away from the Browning Automatic Rifle, closer to the circle of Robert Browning. One world at a time, please. There is still reason to wish that he had begun *The Sun Also Rises* at Chapter III, that he had left stuff about Radiguet and his band out of *Death in the Afternoon*, and that Colonel Cantwell were less touched with vainglory. But I am most certain that he will stand with Yeats and Joyce as one of the three principal men of letters of our time. And since clocks and calendars move forward, not backward, from here on out he may be the strongest influence in literature that this age will give to posterity.

The readers of this era have passed many worthy authors by to choose in Hemingway's books their emblems. He gives us grace and fortitude to face the Toynbee-paced calamities of modern history and a measure of laughter to deal with follies and pomposities. His standards of writing are severe and arduous. They are serious. But they specifically exclude solemnity, as he has said in a passage from *Death in the Afternoon* that anybody interested in writing should read once a year:

"Prose is architecture, not interior decoration, and the Baroque is over. For a writer to put his own intellectual musings, which he might sell for a low price as essays, into the mouths of artificially constructed characters which are more remunerative when issued as people in a novel is good economics, perhaps, but does not make literature. People in a novel, not skillfully constructed *characters*, must be projected from the writer's assimilated experience, from his knowledge, from his head, from his heart and from all there is of him. If he ever has luck as well as seriousness and gets them out entire they will have more than one dimension and they will last a long time. A good writer should know as near everything as possible. Naturally he will not. A great enough writer seems to be born with knowledge. But he really is not; he has only been born with the ability to learn in a quicker ratio to the passage of time than other men and without conscious application, and with an intelligence to accept or reject what is already presented as knowledge. There are some things which cannot be learned

quickly and time, which is all we have, must be paid heavily for their acquiring. They are the very simplest things and because it takes a man's life to know them the little new that each man gets from life is very costly and the only heritage he has to leave. Every novel which is truly written contributes to the total of knowledge which is there at the disposal of the next writer who comes, but the next writer must pay, always, a certain nominal percentage in experience to be able to understand and assimilate what is available as his birthright and what he must, in turn, take his departure from. If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing. A writer who appreciates the seriousness of writing so little that he is anxious to make people see he is formally educated, cultured or well-bred is merely a popinjay. And this too remember; a serious writer is not to be confounded with a solemn writer. A serious writer may be a hawk or a buzzard or even a popinjay, but a solemn writer is always a bloody owl."

He is more at home in the world beyond American borders than any writer of his stature since Henry James and Stephen Crane, and he has given us aspects of that world they could not have known as contemporaries, for Crane died young and James would scarcely be the man to help Hemingway move into Rambouillet. Nor go with him on the 4th Division's run north from Paris that led to St. Quentin and Le Cateau, crossed the Ardennes, and broke the Siegfried Line in the Schnee Eifel. In the second World War he was called a war correspondent by masterly understatement. In actual fact, his activities had a somewhat longer trajectory. He began amphibious action by hunting German submarines in the Caribbean when their sinkings of our oil tankers were making those waters a sea of fire. Then he went on to fly combat missions with the Royal Air Force. Officers and enlisted men of the 4th Infantry Division, those who survived out of the more than 24,000 casualties that Division suffered, speak of him with affection and remember how he tried to be of service to that Division in any way that he was able to, in more than one hundred days of combat.

He had already seen more of war, in Italy and Spain, than some of the leading novelists of the second World War would ever see. His books were records—and prophecies. A rout, a long march in the dark

backwash of defeat, is one of the tragic commonplaces of our era. There have been many, all over the world since Caporetto. It is not easy to find on ordinary maps. In *A Farewell to Arms* Lieutenant Henry had first seen it as "a little white town with a campanile in a valley. It was a clean little town and there was a fine fountain in the square." But the world knows Caporetto better than many more famous battles now because it remembers Lieutenant Henry and the retreat to which it gave the name, and the way "the whole country was moving, as well as the army," and the battle police, the questioners who "had that beautiful detachment and devotion to stern justice of men who are dealing in death without being in any danger of it."

In Hemingway's books the dialogue, the famous dialogue, varies more subtly than any hasty reading shows. The cadences change not only from speaker to speaker, but also in the way the same person will discuss the same subject with different people. Lieutenant Henry discussing matters of love and religion with Rinaldi, the young Italian Army doctor he has served with for two years so that they understand each other ribaldly and completely, changes when he speaks to Count Greffi, the old diplomat with the beautiful manners who had been a contemporary of Metternich and was living to be one hundred years old.

"All my life I encounter sacred subjects," Rinaldi says, "but very few with you." And Lieutenant Henry challenges: "I can say this about your mother and that about your sister?" They both laugh as Rinaldi says swiftly: "And that about *your sister*." It gets rough. When Lieutenant Henry is talking to Count Greffi, though, the difference is like the difference between the captured enemy cognac Rinaldi pours into what he calls "your old toothbrushing glass" and the cold dry champagne Count Greffi serves in stemmed crystal.

Lieutenant Henry has asked the Count whether he would like to live after death, and Count Greffi says: "This life is very pleasant. I would like to live forever." He smiles. "I very nearly have." Count Greffi asks Lieutenant Henry to pray for him, if he ever becomes devout; "I am asking several of my friends to do that. I had expected to become devout but it has not come." Like Jake Barnes and others in Hemingway's books, Lieutenant Henry is more deeply concerned with matters of faith than the glib salvationists who have never prayed in true humility in the Duomo or at Santiago de Compostella. He tells the Count that his own devotion comes and goes. "I might become very devout. Anyway, I will pray for you." And the Count says: "Then too you are in love. Do not forget that is a religious feeling."

Catherine gives Lieutenant Henry the faith of love, as Renata brings

the faith of love to Cantwell in *Across the River and Into the Trees.* It is Catherine he is thinking of in a passage from *A Farewell to Arms* that became a part of the belief of a generation: "If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry."

When Hemingway was writing it, he said, "the fact the book was a tragic one did not make me unhappy since I believed that life was a tragedy and knew it could only have one end. But finding you were able to make something up; to create truly enough so that it made you happy to read it; and to do this every day you worked was something that gave a greater pleasure than any I had ever known. Beside it nothing else mattered."

The tragic sense of life is always present in the minds of thinking men. It is a part of existence to Harry Morgan in *To Have and Have Not,* a novel that answered stingingly those who had said Hemingway was not enough concerned with the state of his own country. It is in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" and "Old Man at the Bridge" and "The Capital of the World," the story of the boy who "died, as the Spanish phrase has it, full of illusions. He had not had time in his life to lose any of them, nor even, at the end, to complete an act of contrition."

Yet even in the face of death the pleasures of life are remembered. El Sordo, dying on the hill in *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* hates the idea of death but has no fear of it: "But living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill. Living was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailed out and the chaff blowing. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg and a hill and a valley and a stream with trees along it and the far side of the valley and the hills beyond."

There are two inscriptions on the flyleaf of *The Sun Also Rises.* One, naming the lost generation, ascribed to Gertrude Stein, was mindlessly taken up by many strange people who somehow seemed to think it forgave them their trespasses forever. The other, the longer one, is taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes, the words of the Preacher, the

Son of David, King of Jerusalem, who gave his heart "to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven," and it may well have led a few readers back to read Ecclesiastes on vanity and responsibilities. A part of the iceberg-depth of the novel that on the surface concerns Lady Brett Ashley, who at 34 is a little old for her generation, is to be found in her despairing efforts to share Barnes' faith. She wants to go to church when he does. Once he says, "I'm pretty religious," and she asks him not to start proselyting, and at the end Jake reminds her that "Some people have God. Quite a lot." These are not points that were emphasized when the book was published in the Nineteen Twenties, though they may be a part of the reason why the book is still read, just as Jake prays for the bullfighters in the cathedral and the bullfighters pray before they go into the ring.

The dialogues give the story its incomparable vitality. A thousand writers have tried to imitate the conversations between Jake and Bill Gorton, Brett, Mike (who upon being offered a chance to go into the bullring grandly said: "It wouldn't be fair to my creditors"), and Robert, in a thousand books.

At one place Hemingway now seems to have an uncanny air of having parodied ahead of time what vicarious moralists would say for years about his work. "You know what's the trouble with you?" the slightly sauced Gorton happily asks that reasonably diligent correspondent, Jake. "You're an expatriate. One of the worst type. Haven't you heard that? Nobody that ever left their own country ever wrote anything worth printing. . . . You've lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see? You hang around cafés." "It sounds like a swell life," Jake suggests. "When do I work?"

A few decades later, the uproars over prolonged residence abroad that once made livid the little reviews and large ones had grown hazy. Several million Americans had since then served their years of expatriation in South Pacific former-paradises and the European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army. The effect on the styles of those who wrote was the least of their concerns, but they were often in very close touch with the soil.

The Torrents of Spring, which mentions expatriation, Mencken, rustic fertility rites and other institutions, is a satire of many devices. It has a plot of awsome, Benchleyan complexity. The author obviously can't quite follow it, but others may try. At one time I thought it might

be meant as an antidote to Franz Kafka's fatal allegories. Many savants have noticed that it holds in no reverence Sherwood Anderson's dairy tales; some have charged that Hemingway was trifling with Gertrude Stein's massive affections. The bedeviled existence of Scripps O'Neil is shrewdly paralleled by the bewildering fate of Yogi Johnson. Academicians who conduct scholarly safaris through Hemingway's subconscious will find a challenge here. In one place we are told that O'Neil's father was a great composer, his mother an Italian lady from Northern Italy. In another place we learn that his father was a Civil War general and that Sherman himself put the match to his mansion. Now here is the question for psychoanalytical exegetes to ponder: *What part of Northern Italy did O'Neil's mother come from?* For if it can be proved that she came from one region she may be significantly related to one aspect of the Hemingway canon; if she came from another, she may even be the great-aunt of the post-war Milanese rich in *Across the River and Into the Trees*. Who knows? Who cares?

The chair of Hemingway studies will have many far more irrelevant matters brought before it in the years ahead, and some that only seem irrelevant to those they do not interest. Somewhere, right now, I hope, a student inspired by the wonderful references to Mr. DiMaggio in *The Old Man and the Sea*, is tracing other ballplayers in other stories, such as Frankie Fritsch in *The Sun Also Rises* and Heinie Zimmerman in "The Three-Day Blow." There is an interesting study to be made of the amazingly wide range of painters mentioned throughout Hemingway's works, and I have entertained the idea that Colonel Cantwell and the Countess Renata might be considered as an allegory of Goya and the Duchess of Alba, only slightly deterred by Bernard Berenson, speaking of another book in the chronicle of chivalry.

"Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*," Berenson said, "is an idyll of the sea as sea, as un-Byronic and un-Melvillian as Homer himself, and communicated in a prose as calm and compelling as Homer's verse. No real artist symbolizes or allegorizes—and Hemingway is a real artist—but every real work of art exhales symbols and allegories."

No part of Hemingway's work, in Donne's words that stand at the beginning of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, is only an island, entire in itself; every part is a piece of a continent, a part of a main, created in a new prose for a new world.

Alone among so many of his earliest and best contemporaries, Hemingway has never needed a revival.

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STORIES

From ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES

From THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

from IN OUR TIME

BIG TWO-HEARTED RIVER

"BIG TWO-HEARTED RIVER" is a story about a boy who has come back from the war. The war is never mentioned. That is one of the things that give it the undertones and overtones of a timeless experience. Young men who fought at Waterloo or Gettysburg or on any D-Day have thought of coming back some day to old fishing grounds and tranquility remembered. They would understand how he savors everything, the unimportant details now tremendously important, the feeling of shadowed peace as he returns to a country that has changed in some ways yet is more true to what survived in hope than any journey with maps. He has changed as much as the country.

The story was written in Paris, probably in 1924. "I can't tell you when, exactly," Hemingway once said, "but it was before The Sun Also Rises, when we lived at Notre-Dame des Champs over the sawmill. I used to write it there and at the Closerie des Lilas mornings and at another cafe in the Place St-Michel where I didn't know anybody and would go to work." Information like that damages a theory he was an expatriate who collected franc-numbered saucers and held the scenes of his own country in disdain while worthier scriveners were building tall, deeply rooted epics in Iowa.

An anthology might be defined for our day as a volume by many hands that contains a story by Ernest Hemingway. "Big Two-Hearted River" may be one of the stories that came back through the slit in the sawmill door, before it appeared in In Our Time in 1925. It has been reprinted as often as any. There are always new things in it to be discovered.

C. P.