

A Reader's Guide  
to the Short Stories of  
**ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

Paul Smith



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A  
*Reference*  
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James Nagel  
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## The Author

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# Preface

## The Scope of this Guide

This book takes as its domain the fifty-five works of fiction Hemingway offered to his readers as short stories in his lifetime, all but seven of which he saw published in five collections between 1923 and 1938, and those seven published in magazines. The remaining twenty that some will claim deserve inclusion have been excluded or only briefly reviewed for three reasons: either Hemingway did not consider them short stories, or he did not see them into print, or they tell us little if anything more of how he mastered the genre than do the fifty-five stories considered here. Those twenty excluded or reviewed works are cited in the Epilogue.

## The Organization of this Guide

The fifty-five short stories are considered here in the chronology of their composition from "Up in Michigan" in the fall of 1921 to "A Man of the World" in the spring of 1957. The sequence is derived largely from the evidence of the stories' manuscripts, lists of titles, memoirs, biographies, critical studies, Hemingway's published and unpublished correspondence, and then some speculation. For some stories the date of composition can be precisely determined—"Old Man at the Bridge" was written in Barcelona in the late evening of 17 April 1938 (Watson 154–55). For others only the earliest and latest dates of composition can be suggested with an inference drawn for the story's probable date of completion—"Ten Indians" was begun in September 1925, substantially revised in May 1926, and given a new ending in May 1927.

This chronology differs, of course, from that of the stories' publication and their arrangement in the five collections, and, incidentally, at some crucial points from that followed by Hemingway's biographers and critics.

Each chapter, with the exception of the last on "Two Tales of Darkness," considers one story under the following headings:

### Composition History (Date or Period of Composition)

This section dates and reviews the writing of the story, describing each of its more important manuscripts, noting their differences from the published text, and summarizing the relevant bibliographical studies.

Hemingway's most common practice in writing a story followed these stages: first, a pencil or ink manuscript, revised slightly as he wrote, and then again when the draft was finished, with additions more often than deletions, except for the few large excisions of beginnings and endings; second, his own typescript, incorporating the manuscript revisions and adding others, and at times, if these were major, a third typescript; then a final typescript, usually by another typist; if the revisions here were slight, this version was often submitted for publication.

Once a story was accepted for publication and in proof, there is evidence—albeit heretical to some Hemingway scholars—that Hemingway's reading of proofs was cursory; and once published he rarely revised the first printed text. Perhaps remembering the rejection slips from 1919 to 1922, or even the theft of his early work, he felt that making it into print at last was enough for the time being—and then, of course, there were other stories to write.

## Publication History (Dates of First Publication and First Collection)

Since Audre Hanneman's *Ernest Hemingway: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (1967) and its *Supplement* (1975) provide the publication history of the fifty-five stories, this section reviews only the circumstances leading to the story's first and subsequent publications before its inclusion in one of Hemingway's collections.

A few of these sections are more detailed when the later history of publication reveals something of Hemingway's commitment to the story—as in his futile efforts to include "Up in Michigan" in the collections from 1925 to 1933—or when a crucial change was made in the text—as in the waiters' dialogue in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place."

## Sources and Influences

This section summarizes the more influential events, places, and individuals in Hemingway's experience and the works of other writers—journalists, essayists, and, most important, recent or contemporary authors of short stories—that served as sources or informing influences on his short fiction. Here, too, are noted the more substantive relationships among his own stories.

However often Hemingway criticism and the recent biographies by Peter Griffin, Jeffrey Meyers, Michael Reynolds, and Kenneth Lynn have found threads, from gossamer to steel, running from the life to the fiction and back to the life again, relatively little scholarship has ventured beyond the earlier, and perhaps strained, literary influence of Gertrude Stein and Sherwood

Anderson. James Joyce and T. S. Eliot have yet to be recognized in detail for their influence; and Mark Spilka's recent work on that of the lesser Victorians and Frederick Marryat points to other largely unexplored sources.

Those critical studies that primarily identify biographical origins or literary analogues are reviewed in this section; others that draw on those sources to reorient the interpretation of a story are considered in the final section.

## Critical Studies

Some principle of selection was essential in this section, especially for the stories with what sometimes seems unending bibliographies—"Big Two-Hearted River," "The Killers," "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." The intent of this section is to review the more important critical issues raised by a story and to note or summarize those critical studies that, in meeting those issues, have advanced or redirected Hemingway scholarship. Critical studies of Hemingway are perhaps not unique in being—to put it politely—sometimes redundant; and when they are, this section will pass quietly by. (The bibliographies consulted appear in "A Note on Sources" following this preface.)

The reviews of critical studies follow one of two structures: historical, for those stories with relatively few commentaries, like "Out of Season"; and thematic, that is to say, considering those critical studies together that gather about a single theme or issue, like Mrs. Macomber's guilt or innocence. In the latter case, those commentaries on a single issue are reviewed chronologically, so the reader may follow the exchange in a critical controversy.

These surveys often conclude with a comment on those questions scholarship has not—perhaps cannot—resolve, but still deserve attention, or with a note on those issues overlooked in the critical history of the stories. Again, the intent of this book is to acknowledge the good criticism of the past, to suggest where it deserves reconsideration, and to offer some suggestions for new work on the stories that have been neglected only because so many others have captured and still challenge our imagination.

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# Introduction

When Ernest Hemingway arrived in Paris in December 1921, his literary baggage was as light as his letters of introduction heralding him were heavy. Sherwood Anderson had written extolling Hemingway's extraordinary promise and sophistication to Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Sylvia Beach, a friend to James Joyce, and Lewis Galantière, familiar with all of Paris and its literati. Whatever manuscripts he had with him would hardly prove that promise: some imitative poems, the beginning of a novel, perhaps some sketches, and for certain a draft of "Up in Michigan." That he left the other stories of the last two years behind when he embarked for France argues that he knew the high standards Paris would set for prose and that, perhaps for the moment, a poet was the thing to be. Hadley Richardson, his wife of three months, had liked the poems.

## Three Stories and Ten Poems (1923)

With Galantière's help the young couple found an apartment on rue du Cardinal Lemoine and immediately set off for a skiing holiday at Chamby-sur-Montreux in Switzerland. It had been raining in Paris, a flu epidemic threatened, and there were those promissory letters with little currency behind them. When they returned in February 1922, he revised "Up in Michigan" and in the late summer finished "My Old Man." Then in December, just a year after his arrival, everything he had brought with him or had written recently, except those two stories, was stolen from Hadley in a Paris station as she was on her way to join him in Switzerland. That loss, recollected years later in *A Moveable Feast*, was one of the earliest of Hemingway's uncanny strokes of luck. If the lost stories were like those he had written in Chicago, it was time to clear his desk and begin again. Ezra Pound advised him that if a lost story's form had been right at first, then "one ought to be able to reassemble it from memory," but if it "won't reform then it has no proper construction, and never *wd.* have been *right*" (Hagemann 207). Years later Hemingway agreed that it "was probably good for me to lose early work" (*Moveable Feast* 74).

After a few dark months in early 1923, he wrote "Out of Season" in a fury over an argument with Hadley. Then with that story and the two

that escaped the loss, "Up in Michigan" and "My Old Man," Hemingway published his first collection in the summer of 1923, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*. He was still placing bets in both genres, but with those three stories he had found his voice and answered the promise of Anderson's letters of introduction.

## In Our Time (1925)

During the summer of 1923 he worked on the early chapters of *in our time* (published in 1924), of which two ("A Very Short Story" and "The Revolutionist") were to become "short stories"; then returned to Toronto with Hadley in the fall for the birth of their son "Bumby" and a brief but restive stint reporting for the *Toronto Star*. He resigned on New Year's Day and they fled back to Paris.

Then the miraculous year—in the twelve months after February 1924, Hemingway wrote twelve short stories: he finished eight of them by May ("Indian Camp," "Cat in the Rain," "The End of Something," "The Three-Day Blow," "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," "Soldier's Home," "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot," and "Cross-Country Snow"); began "Big Two-Hearted River" in May and revised it by November; finished "The Undefeated" in December, "Banal Story" in January 1925; and when Boni and Liveright objected to "Up in Michigan" for *In Our Time*, he wrote "The Battler" by March.

Later, as if for good measure, he wrote the first draft of *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) in six weeks of the summer of 1925, and between April 1926 and April 1927 another twelve stories for *Men Without Women* (1927)—but by then he had practiced. However remarkable these later achievements, the writing of *In Our Time* first seems the greater and, at last, an inexplicable mystery.

Certainly, after chafing under the *Star's* editor, Hemingway was determined to write himself free of journalism, but sometimes the will's not the way. The manuscripts of those stories at times show how he labored over them, but at others how often his first draft was the right one. So one may wonder whether early drafts of the *In Our Time* stories were among those that were stolen at the Gare de Lyon in 1922. Apparently Hadley remembered them as Nick Adams stories, but that was much later. If some of the lost manuscripts had been drafts of the stories of early 1924, then perhaps Ezra Pound was right when he told Hemingway that those stories with a significant form will be remembered and those without, fortunately forgotten. That, at least, would account for the creation of eight stories, several among his finest, in the remarkable first three months of 1924.

## Men Without Women (1927)

After the marathon writing and months of revising *The Sun Also Rises* and, by the way, ten days dashing off *Torrents of Spring*, Hemingway wrote "An Alpine Idyll" in April 1926 and, during a lonely May day in Madrid, returned to two manuscripts he had begun for "The Killers" and "Ten Indians," brought them close to completion, and wrote "Today Is Friday."

By the end of the summer his marriage to Hadley was over. They separated, and for a month he wrote little more than sad, self-incriminating letters. Then in September he drew on his last train ride with Hadley for "A Canary for One." Somehow, writing that story initiated the first two stories of woundings in war as well as in marriage, "In Another Country" and "Now I Lay Me," followed by two unusual tales, "A Pursuit Race" and "A Simple Enquiry," as well as "On the Quai at Smyrna."

Between his divorce from Hadley in January 1927 and marriage to Pauline Pfeiffer in May, he turned his *New Republic* article into "Che Ti Dice la Patria?," revised the ending of "Ten Indians," and wrote "Hills Like White Elephants"—in the idyllic setting of Grau du Roi he would return to in *The Garden of Eden*. With "The Undefeated" from the fall of 1924, "Fifty Grand" and "Banal Story" finished in January 1925, he had his usual fourteen stories for a collection, and "On the Quai at Smyrna" to use later as an introduction to Scribner's 1930 reissue of *In Our Time*. *Men Without Women* was an early and tentative choice for a title in February 1927, when Hemingway listed ten stories (including "Up in Michigan"), in "almost" all of which, he wrote, "the softening feminine influence through training, discipline, death, and other causes [was] absent" (*Letters* 245). By the time he had relented on including "Up in Michigan," added "A Canary for One" and "Now I Lay Me," and had written "Che Ti Dice la Patria?," "Ten Indians," and "Hills Like White Elephants," the title was no more and perhaps less descriptive of the collection. Training and discipline may account for the absence of women in the stories of bullfighters and boxers (including that champion Christ of "Today Is Friday"), but that fact is irrelevant; wives die in "An Alpine Idyll" and "In Another Country," but Olz's simple "I loved her, . . . I loved her fine" in the first and the extremity of the major's grief in the second both imply ways in which love instructs us to bear its loss.

The stories Hemingway either did not mention ("A Canary for One" and "Now I Lay Me") or mentioned but, for good reasons, did not submit to *Scribner's Magazine* ("A Pursuit Race" and "A Simple Enquiry") say something of the "other causes" he had in mind for these men without women. Some were close to home: divorce and its unspoken provocations ("A Canary for One") and the binding ties of incompatibility ("Now I Lay

Me"); others he had witnessed from Kansas City to Paris: homosexuality ("A Simple Enquiry") and addiction to drugs and alcohol ("A Pursuit Race").

If, finally, Hemingway's title was better than he first thought, it is because the completed collection ranged over a variety of dramatic situations delineating not only the lives of men without women, but also those of men with women who are less than they deserve, Nick's mother, or more, Jig in "Hills Like White Elephants." And not by coincidence, as Hemingway's purview widened, so did his exploration of modes of narrative and narration, to extend his sense of the art of the short story.

### Winner Take Nothing (1933)

From March to August 1928 Hemingway wrote the first draft of *A Farewell to Arms* and revised it for nearly another year. Two years later *Death in the Afternoon*, on his mind for some time, claimed his attention from the summer of 1930 to the early winter of 1932. With the novel the early reviewers took as fact and a work of nonfiction now read as a fiction, both written in these years, it is not surprising that more of the *Winner Take Nothing* stories seem closer to the life than those in the earlier collections: "Wine of Wyoming," "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," "A Day's Wait," and "Fathers and Sons." Four draw on the accounts of others: Bra Saunders's tale in "After the Storm," Sidney Franklin's in "The Mother of a Queen," and, from Carlos Baker's evidence, the anonymous letter-writers behind "God Rest You Merry, Gentleman" and "One Reader Writes" (*Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* 227). The fragments from early 1929 through the late summer of 1931 that became "A Natural History of the Dead," first submitted as a short story, then included in *Death in the Afternoon*, and finally reinstated as a story, are central documents for all these stories challenging the claims along the boundaries of fiction and nonfiction.

Nor is it surprising that ten of these fourteen stories were begun and revised over a period of one or two years; and not simply because the second novel and the bullfighting book intervened, but because Hemingway was, once again, testing the limits of his art, some of which he had set by 1930 and his readers had come to expect—and demand, for many reviews were critical.

✓ Although "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" became the thematic centerpiece of this volume and of nearly all his fiction, and "The Light of the World" filled in part of the Nick Adams's saga, Hemingway was about other business as well. Only recently Joseph Flora has shown that "Wine of Wyoming," "A Day's Wait," and "Fathers and Sons" form a sequence of late "marriage tales" like the earlier sequence from "Out of Season" to "A Canary for One," which most had missed the first time. "Homage to Switzerland,"

perhaps Hemingway's most ambitious but unrealized experiment, joins the end of a marriage with the theme of homosexuality; and that story, with "The Sea Change" before it and "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot" from *In Our Time*, form another sequence that associates varieties of sexual experience with the writer's creative act, a sequence that ended with *The Garden of Eden*.

Among these stories of the early 1930s is his last on the wounded Nick Adams, "A Way You'll Never Be," another experimental story with a technique realized in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." This story with the late marriage tales and the studies of lesbianism and male homosexuality repeat the themes of the stories from late 1926 and early 1927 with which he rounded out *Men Without Women*.

### The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories (1938)

With *Winner Take Nothing* complete in the spring of 1933, except for revising "Fathers and Sons," Hemingway turned once again to a novel and, after the African safari in the winter of 1933–34, a long work of nonfiction. Although the first two sections of *To Have and Have Not* (1937) were published as stories in 1934 and 1936, from his first mention of them in a letter of February 1933, he thought of them as chapters in a novel. *Green Hills of Africa* (1935), again mixing the strategies of fiction in nonfiction, took up the months from March to November of 1934; but recalling the safari in that experimental genre led to the climax in Hemingway's career as a writer of short stories in the winter and spring of 1936.

Having begun "The Capital of the World" the preceding fall and "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" perhaps a year before that, between February and April of 1936 he brought all three to brilliant conclusions. With the deaths of the Spanish waiter Paco and Francis Macomber—both killed by someone doing the work of a bull—he extended his experiments with various narrative points of view and the manipulation of time. "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" joins the *Green Hills of Africa* with scenes recollected later in *A Moveable Feast*. It, too, mingles the past and the present in a writer's memory, and at the end, leaps to the ultimate future in his vision of death.

The last story Hemingway collected during his lifetime was "Old Man at the Bridge." Begun as a Spanish Civil War dispatch in April but submitted as a story in May 1938, it recounts the narrator's meeting an old man with steel spectacles, too tired to retreat or even stand, resigned to his own death from the advancing troops but still concerned that he had left behind two goats, a cat, and four pairs of pigeons.

## The Fifth Column and Four Stories of the Spanish Civil War (1969)

Although "Old Man at the Bridge" was the last story to be collected, it introduces the four stories of the Spanish Civil War and their sentimental Cuban epilogue, "Nobody Ever Dies," all written between May 1938 and February 1939, and published during those years in *Esquire* and *Cosmopolitan*. In "The Denunciation," "The Butterfly and the Tank," "Night Before Battle," and "Under the Ridge," Hemingway continued to probe the lines between fact and fiction in a series of related stories. The first three share settings in Chicote's bar in Madrid and a narrator with the conflicting roles of a detached observer and an engaged participant in the politics and bloodshed of that prophetic civil war. The stories themselves prophesied the next novel; and when he began writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) in March 1939, they must have seemed to have served that purpose. They were collected in 1969, eight years after his death.

## The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (1987)

Hemingway's last two stories were published in response to a request from the *Atlantic Monthly* in early 1957 for its centenary issue. He began a memoir of Scott Fitzgerald, gave it up, wrote "A Man of the World" and with it finessed "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog" from three years before, both under the title "Two Tales of Darkness." Each is more a sketch than a story, and blindness is their only unity. "Get a Seeing-Eyed Dog," set in Venice, is elegiac and contemplative; while "A Man of the World" is a brutal tale of violence told to a novice in a Wyoming saloon. Sounding with grim rage and whispers of self-pity, the last two stories published in his lifetime may echo that old king challenging the elements on a heath or bidding farewell to a loving daughter; but in the bright and enduring light of the stories from the twenties and thirties, they seem more like a voice from the depths.

Hemingway's art of the short story was born, flourished to greatness, and died within a brief life of some fifteen years, between 1923 and 1938, before the succession of novels in his last two decades. To come to Paris knowing as little of the art of fiction as he knew of French, to meet the promise of his mentors in two years, to lay claim a year later to an original and influential style, to become a master craftsman in the next two years in a guild to which he had so recently been apprenticed, and then in a final decade to give a new form and meaning to the art of the short story—to do all this in that brief time is the remarkable achievement this book will



try to record and explain, knowing, of course, that the original sources of genius are beyond us all.

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