

Sept 1966.

Dear Mr St John,

Since I have a feeling that you are trying to get a true picture of Ernest Hemingway - and since I am the only one who can give a picture of the past relating to me, I suppose I am stuck with it. To understand it you would have to know something about me in those days - so I am trying to remember.

First - I was more immature as regards than most thirteen year olds are today. I grew up in an all female household. I had no brothers and my father died when I was quite young. I was even afraid to talk to boys. I remember well walking around a block when I thought one was going to walk down the street with me. I was able to talk to Ernest and was not afraid of him. It was probably because he seemed more like the brother I had always wanted.

I had never gone out with boys at all. Having become acquainted with Ernest in more casual situations, the strain was gone.

I think he may have realized how immature I was and stayed away from the usual boy-girl angle of relationship. I have always been grateful to him that he made this first acquaintance with ^{someone} ~~someone~~ of the opposite sex such a good one.

I believe he did like me very much -
He probably loved me as I did him - as
a person with an understanding spirit.

But the thought of marriage could not
have entered it. I was full of plans for
going to college the following year. Ernest
had no money and no job. His father
was against his wish to try to become a
writer - and wanted him to go to work.

No stories were accepted. I believe
now that he came to our house as
often as he did because he needed to eat
there. I was living with my
~~grandfather~~ Grandmother that winter (Grandfather
had died). Ernest adored her and she
always made him feel welcome.

I always had two homes - my grandparents
house and ours next door. Sometimes I
stayed in one, and sometimes the other.

When my grandparents were away for the
winter I was at home, but as soon as they
returned I wanted to live with Grandmother.

I loved her deeply and she had a great
influence on my life. That is probably
why I had more of the ideas and ideals of
the generation before me, and was never
quite comfortable with people my own age.
That was probably why I married someone

twenty years older and was happy in
the marriage. { Mrs. Main enjoyed the casual
correspondence with Ernest }

I don't believe it was until Ernest
saw me really grown up with a home and
children that he may have had the thought
that perhaps he should have waited for me
to be more grown up. But it could only
have been only a passing thought. He
was then involved with Milton Gelman.
He wrote me about her.

A marriage for Ernest and me could
never have been a happy one. He wanted
his men to drink with him. One
drink is all I can manage. I was
very frail after having children and
needed lots of care all during my thirties.
The strenuous life Ernest led would
certainly have killed me had I tried
to keep up. I think we always
remained good memories for each other -
and it was only that short time of
misunderstanding that was a blot.

Perhaps even that had to happen to
send each of us on paths more suited
to our natures.

Please excuse my grandson's school
paper. I haven't time to copy.

M. M.