

To: Donald St John

From: Marjorie Bump Main

Date: December 4, 1966

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Dear Mr. St John,

Yes, both versions are true, or rather overlap. I didn't mention Horton's Bay or the Dilworths because it seemed to open up a subject too wide to cover, and not too important. The James Dilworths Sr. were friends who knew my mothers uncle Stroud. While in our teens, my sister and I, and sometimes friends, loved to spend parts of our summers at Horton's Bay with the Dilworths. They had a small hotel and also were famous for there dinner parties. We used to love to wait on tables for the big dinner parties from Charlevoix, but it was no job arrangement. Except we had been told to help where we could. Our uncle, Prof. Ohle had a cottage across the street, so our mother let us stay at the Delworths because he was near to keep an eye on us. It was a wonderful spot of freedom.

I first met Ernest there, and also the other Hemingways. Walloon Lake was within hiking distance. (short end) I remember the Smiths, Bill and Kate. There was another brother, I believe, named Ken. I also remember their Aunt, Mrs. Charles with whom they lived.

I didn't know Ernest very well at the Bay or at Walloon, except to admire him. You remember he was away in Italy for some time. Also, three or four years difference in ages is greater during the only ????? than any other time. I am sure I remember much more about him than he remembered about me. Our close friendship didn't begin until the years he stayed in Petoskey, and that was only from September thru December, then he went to Toronto to work on the newspaper.

As I stretch my memory back, I think of someone who might tell you more about Ernest, if he is still living. His name is Carl Edgar of St. Joseph, Missouri. His sister, Mrs. ???????? Shultz, was married in Horton's Bay one summer. They were all friends of Mrs. Charles. Carl was a bachelor if 25 or 6 and was fond of Kate Smith. Kate used to call us the "Rabbits", which we considered insulting. But we all adored Carl, tho in the diary I kept that year, I referred to him as "dreadfully old". Carl also admired Marcelline Hemingway. He is in some of the kodak pictures I had of a picnic at the Hemingway cottage. I visited in St. Joseph one Christmas when I was in college in St. Lewis.

I also remember that one of the guests at the wedding wrote us up in the paper, when she went home. It made us feel very important. By us I mean my sister and I and two friends. (The Rabbits) It was quite a flattering picture of what she called the modern ???? ???? of that day.

I had Christmas cards with notes from Carl, for a few years after I married, but gradually lost interest.

I believe it was thru the Edgar family that Ernest got a job with the Kansas City Star, but my memory is hazy on that. I think Kate Smith married John Das Passos and died some years ago. I don't know what happened to Bill, but he and Ernest were close friends in those days. I think I heard later that something broke up that friendship. Sooner or later Ernest seemed to want to hurt the people he liked. I have worked out my own theory about that on a psychological basis, but it is only my own theory. My personal theory based on conversations and letters. You might check it with his psychiatrist.

When Ernest was young he felt rejected by his mother. This seemed pretty true, but was not a personal thing. Mrs. Hemingway gave up a possible career in opera to marry Dr. Hemingway. She was overwhelmed by six children and tried to make a personal life for herself where ever possible. She would escape to a cottage of her own to train a musical protege. When she wasn't as interested in Ernest's stories as he wanted her to be, he decided he hated her. This couldn't have been true, for he never wanted to say anything against her. It would have been this feeling about his mother that made him want to reject mine. When he rejected my mother I felt I wanted to reject him. But our basis of friendship was strong in understanding and survived.

When Ernest married he began a gradual change, not from the marriage, but from his way of life. He began to drink more and more, and under alcohol he not only could write better, but he could become the sort of person he wanted to be, stronger and able to knock anybody's block off. I think his first shocking stories were written because he wanted to shock his parents who were strict Presbyterians. I believe the story about the Jim Dilworths was because they agreed with his parents against him. He was fond of them and he could hurt everyone thus them.

When his parents considered his first divorce a disgrace for the the whole family, he wanted to shock them more and more. Gradually more and more he took on the image he was creating, and finally couldn't leave it.

It is my feeling that he may have taken his life because, after he was not allowed to drink, his true sensitive and gentle nature became more dominant and he couldn't endure the memories of the man created by himself. I believe he may have continued to remember me because I saw him as he was as a young man, not the author. But he might not have become the great author had he not gone on to live the life he chose.

I would be interested in the other versions of the short story. There is always some truth in everything, and I wasn't quite certain where the real truth lay, other than as Ernest explained it. There was probably an element of misunderstanding some place. Stories were circulated that Ernest and I were engaged, but it was nothing but the gossip of a small town. My mother would have been the last to want to start it.

Another slight ?????????? Dr. Main went out for more liquor, not limes. They arrived unexpected after the dinner hour and the cook had gone home. When I found they hadn't eaten, I searched the refrigerator and found only limes and the makings of a salad. There were no food stores near, and no one wanted to go out. I didn't know how to cook limes, so Ernest's driver helped me. They met our two daughters and small son. My daughter, here, remembers it well, even to what I was wearing tho she was about eleven.

The Jennings were friends of my grand parents. There son married my fathers cousin. The parents of Dutch Pailthorp were also friends of my grand parents.

I haven't thought of these things for many years, but I have a vivid memory.

I find your letters very interesting. All of these things were so long ago and for such a short period of time. It must be dreadful to be famous. I don't even like having known someone famous. I haven't read Hemingway in Michigan.

I will be returning to Florida Dec. 17th. I would be glad to talk with you if you are in Daytona Beach. I will be at the Princess Issena Hotel for a few months. It is a retirement hotel on Seabreeze Blvd.

Sincerely,
Marjorie B Main

P.S. I am not beautiful and never have been.

M.M.

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Florida.