

Wed. April '69.

My dear Don.

Of course I am not upset with you. I am only upset with the whole subject of Ernest Hemingway and the impossibility of unscrambling fact and fiction. I feel ready to let fiction ride and forget the subject. One time events are made to seem the usual. I talk at the store with E. one time. It is reported that we continually hung around the store talking. I make sandwiches for the boys one time, and it goes in the record that I made sandwiches every day and laid around a camp fire with E. I was never, ever, alone with Ernest, at the point or any other place. I was with my friends, & he with his. I actually saw E. very little that summer. He didn't begin to take notice of me as other than a red headed, freckled face tom boy, until the end of that summer. So it is pictured as a romance. We wait on table, mostly as a lark, and it seems I have a job. There was no compulsion or responsibility involved, and no money.

Connie Curtis will be furious that C.B. put her in as a waitress. She was the pampered child of one of Petoskeys wealthiest family. She would never have waited on table, even in fun.

Katherine Dilworth was not a very accurate source of information. Maxine, her daughter was only born about that time.

I feel certain that the dock episode was fiction only. Who knows what real experience E. may have described, but I feel that he was not describing a true event there. But why does it really matter. E. enjoyed creating the person he created under alcohol. The world will remember that person. I won't.

Balmer was at Hortons Bay, living in the house that once belonged to A. Stroud, at the time of Ernest's first interview. ~~He~~ ^{his wife} took rooms over there to be more quiet. He may have gone to Walloon later.

I know Mrs H. was not a loveable person. but this blaming parents for the way a child creates trouble, has gone too far. They probably are responsible to a large degree, but it is true of every generation. We each have to adjust, and then go on to make a new set of mistakes with our children. At one time or another all parents are monsters to their children. I even went thru resenting my saintly grandmother. My own children will sometimes remark in telling a past event, "That was the year I hated you."

I don't really believe Astrology, but it is a fun thing, and surprisingly, often correct. Of course I don't think I should have married Ernest. I would have been his first divorced wife. What I was saying was that a Virgo is supposed to have qualities compatible with a Cancer. The person I knew is a happy memory. No one I talk to now will quite believe E was a "Nice Guy." Two people, today, have called to ask if Baker was the one asking me questions. They think you are he.

Between planes in San Francisco, I had time to glance thru the early part of Baker's book. My chief thought was, "How drab he makes it all sound." An idyllic time with qualities that could make a story or even a movie, have been reduced to ashes.

I heard once that E married Pauline twice, with a divorce between. Was that true? While living in the Asheville section of N.C. I met a cousin of Hadley. Her remark was that E was far over Hadley's head, but that the marriage survived until her money was gone.

I am glad to have helped you, Don. The association has made it more than worth while. I hope it won't end with Ernest. After all we Virgo people can suffer together.

Sometimes I want to laugh when I think about the true picture of me and what Ernest made of it in peoples minds. I would have been called "Slow," and a "Drip." For a "slow drip" I seem to have gathered quite a reputation. I should probably feel grateful to Ernest.
Love, of course.

Marge

Unrelated facts that come to mind -

Carrie Curtis was at the Bay very seldom -

perhaps a week at a time - now and then.

Helen Sly was my close friend - Carrie -

Pudges. Helen came and ^{met at} ^(paid for by their parents)

Carrie did - for short visits - Pudges

and I stayed for longer periods because

Uncle Ernest had his cottage - and

we spent more time there than

at the Dilworths. Again I say - there

was no real romance between E & a

me. It was a brother sister sort

of relationship. I thought he was

wonderful - and being on his enemy's word.

The romance - and its reputation more pure

fiction - I never spent the whole of

any summer at the Bay.

Pudges and I

would go home whenever we wanted to.

We had no obligation to stay to help -

or any feeling of responsibility about it.

So that general picture is the focus.

I remember no other mistress that would mean

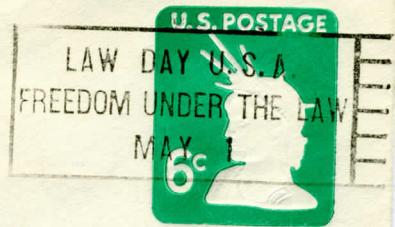
the description - but that doesn't mean there

wasn't one. The paid mistresses are

hazy in my memory - I actually saw

very little of Ernest - and always in

a group. I ~~thought~~ knew him better in Petersburg.



Mr Don St. John
Franconia
New Hampshire
03580

Mrs S. Main
Box 5434
Daytona Beach - Fla.