

Feb. 13, 1974

Hey Marge:

I love my wife, but oh Margie, I think I love you too.

-And-I mean aside from being a Hemingway person, which reminds me that in this respect you become ever more important. Perhaps you read it in the paper, my good friend, Harold Loeb went and died in Marakesh, Morocco a few weeks ago while he was vacationing there with his younger-wife, Barbara. As you know, Harold had become far more than a Hemingway person to me, even though he used to tease me at parties but pointing me out to his old friends as that man whose made a souvenir out-of me. Of course that wasn't true, but it is true that in the-beginning, as in the beginning of our own acquaintanceship, our conversations may have sounded a bit like interviews. But I always protested this description. An interview to me is a kind of a monologue with one person questioning and one person answering but in my case I always felt free to put in my own two cents worth and this was good for two reasons. It made the important one easier with himself and with me and it perhaps stimulated courses of conversation that would not otherwise have been generated. Towards the end with Harold and me we often went for days without talking about Hemingway. After a while if the Hemingway theme had continued, it would have suggested a thinner kind of relationship than I believe existed. I go into all this because I felt approximately the same way with you, although different for several reasons. One, we never actually saw each other after the first time and two, you are a girl and pretty. Actually, and perhaps surprisingly, Harold often wanted to talk about Hemingway more than I did and certainly more than you did. If we were alone he would often make the most objective statements and occasionally he would forget him-self and say something almost downright loving. But in company if encouraged and perhaps because it was expected of him he would make the usual cliché dig about Hemingway's treachery to his friends. But his heart was never in this, really, and the plain fact is that Hemingway was one of the best friends he ever had. In a way he never got over the shock of Hen's depiction of him in THE SUN ALSO RISES, and in another, he would often seem to ignore this development completely. The difficulty with Harold, as I may have told you that despite his being a Jew he was somewhat anti-semitic the way well-bred jews often are, sometimes despite their own inner disgust at such posture. His code word for Jews he didn't like, when speaking to Barbara or me was "you know, those people." I would sometimes laugh out loud at this. He would look at me puzzled, solemn, and then break into a kind of sheepish grin.

Harold died in a hotel in Marakesh early one morning after a night of suffering. I can't somehow forgive him for giving up. He was so strong, really, despite his outward fragility and his 82 years, and he had been through the almost dying so many times, sometimes with me up here in N.H. or in Taormina, and he would gobble his glycerine and lie still and complain that he was too old and then in a couple of days he would be okay again and lying in bed in the morning having his usual affair with the N.Y. Times and the Wall Street Journal. Barbara really kept him alive in the last few years and loved him dearly despite his occasional-or, should I say, frequent crabbiness and insensitivity. Susan, Harold's oldest daughter, about 60, was with them when

he died. Harold is buried in Marakegh, which seems strange and lonely to me; but apparently the paper work of getting a body out of that heathen land was just about insurmountable and, at the very best, would have required Barbara and Susan to stay in Morocco for a minimum of eight weeks. After a few days, Barbara went to her home in England and then flew back to Weston, Conn. We have been in touch on the phone a couple of times. A memorial service will probably be held in Weston sometime in the spring, which will be appropriate enough because always, far away from home, Harold would announce to one and all that he had to return to America to plan his piselli (peas). He had landscaped his 12 acres himself over a period of 18 years. Part of the estate was a nice fenced in garden up on the hill. It is all quite a testament to him now, so many dogwoods, both Japanese and American, Buttonball trees, weeping willows, and shrubs of every kind dotting the shoreline of the lake-like Saugatuck River flowing past his pink stucco house.

Now I have just you and Donald Ogden Stewart. Since it all began, Bill Smith has died too and one or two others. Yes, I interviewed old Bill on the end of the same trip that I first saw you. I liked him very much even though he was a bit cold. For all of his Anglo-Saxon charm and attractiveness, I do not think I could ever have formed the same kind of friendship with Bill that I did with old Harold. Harold and I didn't always get along you know. I had at least two major clashes with him but somehow they were repaired, probably through the doings of Barbara who felt that I was good for Harold and could get him talking and writing again. I didn't always hit it off with Barbara either. Once, in Taormina, I got tired, after a few drinks, of hearing Barbara knock the good old U.S. of A. and I told her off, real sparky. Things got a bit quiet, but then Harold said something cheerful and when they got ready to leave our place he looked at me half smiling and said, "Why Donald I didn't know you were such an American." Well of course he was such an American himself and could understand it.

If I have lost you a little on this ramble I must protest that the relevancy of all this is that Harold is dead and this will change our life style a bit. By God, now I will have to visit my own family when I am down that way. Horrors. Instead of the fun of staying with the Loeb's. I know there is a weakness in that position, but I am just confessing the truth. Ruth and Barbara get along very well, talking, shopping, so that will hold the friendship together now that I do not have Harold anymore.

sure wish I could see you Marge.

Our book business goes on pretty well. Have just put out our sixth catalogue and in it was one book priced at \$950, a first edition of Moby-Dick. A few like that and life would be a breeze. I sell some Hemingways in each catalogue but only where I have duplicates from my own collection, and usually nothing very important is involved.

Ruth is going through a lot of periodontal work (gums) which is painful, etc. but at least she feels she is making progress in that respect.

Most of the time I feel about 100 years old, and I am not writing anymore because all the vigor and time is channeled into the books.

I don't see another trip at this point but who knows what the future will bring. So hang tough, Marge, and write me. All our love etc.