

Friday, Jan. 7-80

My dear Don -

The biggest thing that makes me sad is the fact that those to read the story would see Marge Bump as you did. I remember the things you said. You saw me as a cheap summer romance who was probably seduced. You pictured someone pursuing Ernest for marriage.

What you still don't see is that I was still in high school and certainly no romantic figure. During many of those evenings that I spent at grandmothers - I was studying -

He cared a lot about my grandmother. He wrote me much later that she was the finest woman he ever met.

She was the one who had the picture painted of the church in which I was married. It cost the whole sum of five dollars. Even

Bill Ahl didn't know about that. I ma
was the one to buy him a warm
sweater, and Glen asked him to eat
with us because she felt he was
lonely and hungry. (E. brought Hadley to call
on her. I had gone to college.)

The story about E keeping an eye
out for Mrs Bump, couldn't have been
true. He never had money to buy
me ice cream, and she was then
Mrs Graham, busy with his own life.

We would have been at grand mother's
making fudge or pop corn. ^{Dancing to a big victrola} My
family didn't want me to see too
much of Ernest because I was such
a young eighteen and he was such
an experienced twenty one. They
had nothing against him. Otherwise
at no time did he ever get out of
line. By today's standards he

was a "square". He didn't like my mother, perhaps because he didn't like his own. He didn't like my step father because he felt his disapproval.

When the story was first published it caused a furor in Petoskey that has never been forgiven by those who remember. We were related to several first families and they took it personally. It even spread to Grand Rapids where Grandmother had relatives - one in high places. The first wife of Arthur Vandenberg was my father's first cousin. She was also the sister of Mrs Guy Hanky in Petoskey. So I got into a hornets nest. Ernest's family constantly tried to make it up to us... Did you know that Marceline once had Ernest's books banned from Detroit libraries?

Fortunately Sidney took the story for what it was. He felt secure enough not to resent it. He and Ernest even made a joke about a law suit. I said it might be a good thing to save on taxes. It was all in fun and made me relax.

Ernest was more than one person. I am glad I knew the one he was during those years. Ursula was one of my best friends and we spent time in each of our homes. I loved Dr. Hemmingway. I even liked Mrs H.

I am sure that E never consorted with Indians. The Indians in Michigan were a dirty diseased ^{people}. E was too idealistic in those days and probably as young for his age as I was for mine.

Basically we remained friends - He asked me to forgive him for the story.

I did, but the scar never went away. I did, but the scar never went away.

You may ask all the questions your wish. I would like you to see it as it was, tho probably that is impossible.

Ernest never wrote true facts. I know a true artist must give impressions - not pictures. a good writer must do the same.

But to use true names and make fiction sound like fact is a crime that can't be corrected. Even you keep trying to see

interesting vignettes where none exists. In the realm of emotion there could probably be a story - but in reality the facts are dull.

Enough for now -

Love - Marge

The phrase was not - "Our old castle" It was "Our own castle"

Some day when Ernest is laid to rest
I will write you about life in a
retirement home. Also I will tell you
about the miraculous return of my
spirit after its trip into a deep black
hole. I now understand what Ernest
felt when he could no longer face
living. I would have done the same
had I known how. It wasn't that
I didn't have much to live for but
my strength and energy were gone.

Gorgie and Cynthia are coming the
25th of March for six days. Sid gets
down fairly often. My room is large
enough to put in 2 roll away beds -
so we can talk and talk. Cynthia is
Barbara's second daughter.

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