

Don't Touch 'A Moveable Feast'

**by A. E. Hotchner, New York Times,
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BOOKSTORES are getting shipments of a significantly changed edition of Ernest Hemingway's masterpiece, *A Moveable Feast*, first published posthumously by Scribner [sic] in 1964. This new edition, also published by Scribner, has been extensively reworked by a grandson who doesn't like what the original said about his grandmother, Hemingway's second wife.

The grandson has removed several sections of the book's final chapter and replaced them with other writing of Hemingway's that the grandson feels paints his grandma in a more sympathetic light. Ten other chapters that roused the grandson's displeasure have been relegated to an appendix, thereby, according to the grandson, creating 'a truer representation of the book my grandfather intended to publish'.

It is his claim that Mary Hemingway, Ernest's fourth wife, cobbled the manuscript together from shards of an unfinished work and that she created the final chapter, 'There Is Never Any End to Paris.'

Scribner's involvement with this bowdlerized version should be examined as it relates to the book's actual genesis, and to the ethics of publishing.

In 1956, Ernest and I were having lunch at the Ritz in Paris with Charles Ritz, the hotel's chairman, when Charley asked if Ernest was aware that a trunk of his was in the basement storage room, left there in 1930. Ernest did not remember storing the trunk but he did recall that in the 1920s Louis Vuitton had made a special trunk for him. Ernest had wondered what had become of it.

Charley had the trunk brought up to his office, and after lunch Ernest opened it. It was filled with a ragtag collection of clothes, menus, receipts, memos, hunting and fishing paraphernalia, skiing equipment, racing forms, correspondence and, on the bottom, something that elicited a joyful reaction from Ernest: 'The notebooks! So that's where they were! Enfin!'

There were two stacks of lined notebooks like the ones used by schoolchildren in Paris when he lived there in the '20s. Ernest had filled them with his careful handwriting while sitting in his favorite café, nursing a café crème. The notebooks described the places, the people, the events of his penurious life.

When Ernest returned to Cuba in 1957, he had Nita, his sometime secretary, type the stories on double-spaced pages to make them easy to edit. When I visited the Hemingways in Ketchum, Idaho, in the fall of 1958, Ernest was at work on what he called 'my Paris book'. He gave me several chapters to read. In 1959, when we were in

Spain following the great matadors Antonio Ordóñez and Dominguín, Ernest often worked on the Paris manuscript on the days when there wasn't a bullfight.

Back in Cuba, he suspended work on it to write 'The Dangerous Summer' about those bullfights, for Life magazine. But instead of the contracted 40,000 words, he wrote 108,746 and asked me to go to Cuba to help him pare down his manuscript.

When I was leaving for New York to give the manuscript to the editor of Life, Ernest also gave me the completed manuscript of the Paris book to give to Scribner's president, Charles Scribner Jr.

I recount this history of 'A Moveable Feast' to demonstrate how involved Ernest was with it, and that the manuscript was not left in shards but was ready for publication. Ernest died before the publication of the book could go forward. When I visited him in the Mayo Clinic a few months before his dementia led to his suicide, he was very concerned about his Paris book, and worried that it needed a final sentence, which it did not.

After his death, Mary, as executor, decided that Scribner should proceed with the publication. Harry Brague was the editor. I met with him several times while the book was in galleys.

Because Mary was busy with matters relating to Ernest's estate, she had little involvement with the book. However, she did call me about its title. Scribner was going to call it 'Paris Sketches,' but Mary hoped I could come up with something more compelling. I ran through a few possibilities, but none resonated until I recalled that Ernest had once referred to Paris as a moveable feast. Mary and Scribner were delighted with that, but they wanted attribution. I wrote down what Ernest had said to the best of my recollection, and this appears on the title page attributed to a 'friend,' which is the way I wanted it.

These details are evidence that the book was a serious work that Ernest finished with his usual intensity, and that he certainly intended it for publication. What I read on the plane coming back from Cuba was essentially what was published. There was no extra chapter created by Mary.