

The Sun Rose Differently

**Hemingway biographer Carlos Baker
on the deleted opening chapters of
The Sun Also Rises in The New York Times, Mar, 1979**

ERNEST HEMINGWAY used to say that he'd like to live long enough to become a wise old man. This dream ended nearly two decades ago when, ailing in mind and body, he removed himself permanently and tragically from the status of senior citizen. Otherwise, astonishingly enough, he would be celebrating his 80th birthday next July.

But in 1925, when he wrote his first novel, 'The Sun Also Rises,' he was still young and vigorous, on the way up before the long journey down, and able to examine his fellow expatriates with a wry, acidulous and often condescending wit that carried over into his account of Robert Cohn, the gentleman boxer from Princeton — the famous opening of the most famous novel of its time.

The original beginning, now first published in the spring 1979 issue of *Antaeus* magazine, was something else again. Relegated to the crap heap, though happily not to oblivion, long before the final version appeared to wide acclaim in the fall of 1926, was a 15-page sequence that Hemingway summarily deleted on the editorial advice of his new friend Scott Fitzgerald. These two chapters, totalling some 3,700 words, contained capsule biographies of Brett Ashley and Mike Campbell, a brief autobiography of Jake Barnes, the narrator, and an extended anecdote about an English writer named Braddocks, whom the cognoscenti of the time could easily identify as Ford Madox Ford.

Hemingway had completed his first draft between July and September of 1925. That winter he took it along to his hideaway in the Austrian Alps for a thorough reworking. He finished the job in March, had it typed professionally in Paris in April, and in May sent it across the Atlantic to his new editor, Maxwell Perkins, in New York. He and his first wife, Hadley, and his small son, Bumby, were on the French Riviera early in June, when one of the luckiest accidents of his early career took place: a reluctant decision to show Fitzgerald a carbon of the novel as it had been submitted to Scribner's.

Fitzgerald rose to the occasion with a long and frank critique that condemned the carelessness, ineffectuality, wordiness, condescending casualness, 'sneers, superiorities, and nose-thumbings-at-nothing' that in his opinion marred the opening chapters. 'To preserve these perverse and willful non-essentials,' he argued, 'you've done a lot of writing that honestly reminded me of Michael Arlen.' This last was an especially painful twist of the editorial knife. On a trip to Lyon in 1925, Fitzgerald had regaled his friend with the plots of 'The Green Hat' and other works by the Armenian expatriate Kouyoumdjian, whose nom de plume was Michael Arlen. Nothing could have been more shrewdly calculated to turn Hemingway's stomach than Fitzgerald's comparison, particularly because Arlen's heroine, Iris Storm, who had hit the bookstalls in 1929 [sic],

bore at least some resemblance to his own femme fatale, Brett Ashley. Thereafter he wasted no time. On June 5, 1928, from the Villa Paquita in Juan-les-Pins, he wrote Max Perkins that he had now decided to start 'The Sun' with what was then page 16 of the submitted typescript. The first 15 pages, said he, contained nothing that was not explained later on in the story and the book would move faster if this section were simply omitted.

It wasn't the first time that such a deletion had occurred. He had lopped off the original opening of his short story 'Indian Camp' as well as the original conclusion of 'Big Two-Hearted River.' Three years into the future he would perform a similar operation on 'A Farewell to Arms,' slicing away the lame pseudo-historical ending and closing the novel far more effectively with Lieutenant Henry's solitary walk back to the hotel in the rain following Catherine's death in childbed.

Even as late as 1940 something similar happened to a tentative mop-up section at the end of 'For Whom the Bell Tolls,' and Hemingway chose instead to leave his hero, Robert Jordan, drawing a bead [sic] on the approaching rebel officer, Berrendo, to halt his advance and allow Maria, Pilar and the others to escape to another mountain range. The appropriate generalization might be, not that the young Hemingway was unsure of himself, though to some degree he often was, but rather that he encountered persistent troubles with his beginnings and his endings. Still, it was characteristic of him to stay with his problems until they were solved to his complete satisfaction. In 1926 it happened to be his good luck that Fitzgerald was around with a pruning-hook, a handsaw and the best will in the world.

So what have we been missing for the last 53 years? Book I, Chapter I of the uncut version began with Brett. 'This is a novel about a lady,' wrote Hemingway. 'Her name is Lady Ashley and when the story begins she is living in Paris and it is spring. That should be a good setting for a romantic but highly moral story. As everyone knows, Paris is a very romantic place. Spring in Paris is a very happy and romantic time. Autumn in Paris, although very beautiful, might give a note of sadness or melancholy that we shall try to keep out of this story.'

'Lady Ashley was born Elizabeth Brett Murray. Her title came from her second husband. She had divorced one husband for something or other, mutual consent; not until after he had put one of those notices in the papers stating that after this date he would not be responsible for any debts, and so forth. He was a Scotchman and found Brett much too expensive, especially as she had only married him to get rid of him and to get away from home. At present she had a legal separation from her second husband, who had the title, because he was a dipsomaniac, he having learned it in the North Sea commanding a minesweeper, Brett said. When he had gotten to be a proper thoroughgoing dipsomaniac and found that Brett did not love him he tried to kill her, and between times slept on the floor and was never sober and had great spells of crying. Brett always declared that it had been one of the really great mistakes of her life to have married a sailor. She should have known better, she said, but she had sent the one man she had wanted to marry off to Mesopotamia so he would last out the war, and he had

died of some very unromantic form of dysentery and she certainly could not marry Jake Barnes, so when she had to marry she had married Lord Robert Ashley, who proceeded to become a dipsomaniac as before stated.'

Fitzgerald was right. 'Paris is a very romantic place.' Brett divorced her first husband 'for something or other.' Her second spouse drank heavily, 'he having learned it in the North Sea.' He 'proceeded to become a dipsomaniac, as before stated.' And so on through further paragraphs. The surprising aspect of these banalities and ineptitudes is that their promulgator was already an experienced writer of fiction with four books to his credit and a rising reputation for crisp and manly prose.

Of Brett's companion, Mike Campbell, we learn that he could be 'most charming. He was nice and he was weak and he had a certain very hard gentleness in him that could not be touched and that never disappeared until the liquor dissolved him entirely. Mike sober was nice, Mike a little drunk was even nicer. Mike quite drunk began to be objectionable, and Mike very drunk was embarrassing.... You could always count on him to behave absolutely as he should until the alcoholic process had taken place, which always seemed rather like that old grammar school experiment in which a bone is dissolved in vinegar to prove it has something or other in it. Anyway the vinegar quite changed the bone and made it very unlike itself, and you could bend it back and forth, and if it were a long enough one and you had used enough vinegar, you could even tie it into a knot.'

The 'elephantine facetiousness' that Fitzgerald urged his friend to expunge from the text of the novel is well represented by this laborious simile of bones dissolved in vinegar. The image in fact points up a less than admirable tendency in the Hemingway of the middle-1920's: the satirical crucifixion of those whose characters or ways of life he rather condescendingly deplored. The most extended of his early satires was 'The Torrents of Spring,' the parody-portrait of his erstwhile champion, Sherwood Anderson. Another instance was the gossip story, 'Mr. and Mrs. Elliot,' in which he made malicious fun of the alleged sexual inabilities of Mr. and Mrs. Chard Powers Smith. Though many similar sketches appeared posthumously in 'A Moveable Feast,' at least four others written in 1924-25 have remained unpublished to this day. One depicts Ford Madox Ford petulantly arguing with his wife, Stella Bowen, over dinner at the *Negre de Toulouse*. Another drenches in vinegar and gall an American artist named Bertram Hartman, who painted Hemingway's portrait in Austria. A third impugns the poetical pretensions of a retired American lumber dealer, Dave O'Neil, with whose son Hemingway went skiing in Switzerland. The fourth was a story about a sexually frustrated fat girl named Flossie, a friend of his wife Hadley's who puts in a brief appearance in the deleted second chapter of 'The Sun' as 'a splendid sort of 200-pound meteoric glad girl' with 'lovely skin and hair and appetite, and an invulnerability to hangovers.'

If practice does indeed make for perfection, it is relatively easy to excuse young Hemingway for trying out his satirical prowess on the people he knew. As Edmund Wilson once shrewdly observed, 'He was not a propagandist, even for humanity.' All his

life he divided his friends and acquaintances, male and female, into the categories of ‘good guys’ and ‘jerks’ and took special joy in the ungentle art of the putdown, reserving his unqualified admiration for heroic men of action such as the bullfighter Maera, the white hunter Philip Percival and the professional soldiers Dorman O’Gowan and Charles T. Lanham.

Among the literary fraternity the jerks preponderated. A frequent target of Hemingway’s wrath was Ford Madox Ford, with whom he had quarrelled sharply over the editorial policies of the transatlantic review [sic] and whom he blamed for the demise of the magazine at the end of 1924. The anecdote about Ford that closed the deleted portion of ‘The Sun’ depicts him as a pompous ass named Braddocks, who takes unholy joy in ‘cutting’ a man who says he is, Hilaire Belloc but who turns out to be the diabolist Aleister Crowley. Fitzgerald found the whole thing unimpressive. On page 14 or thereabout, he said, ‘I think this anecdote is flat as hell without naming Ford which would be cheap. It’s flat because you end with mention of Allister Crowley [sic]. If he’s nobody, it’s nothing. If he’s somebody, it’s cheap. This is a novel. ... Why not cut out the inessentials?’

Which, as it turned out, was exactly what Hemingway did, to the ultimate profit of both his book and his reputation, though he liked the Ford–Belloc anecdote enough to rework it for ‘A Moveable Feast.’ Whatever the ups and downs of the Fitzgerald/Hemingway relationship — and in the 14 years that followed there were many of both — Scott saved Ernest a very probable drubbing by reviewers for the insouciance of the original opening. After the novel appeared, Fitzgerald wrote from Washington that he was delighted with the American reception of ‘The Sun’. ‘I can’t tell you,’ he added, ‘how much your friendship has meant to me during the year–and–a–half — it is the finest thing in our trip to Europe for me.’ If Hemingway didn’t reply in kind, it was probably because his first marriage was breaking up, he was otherwise occupied, and he was anyway too proud to acknowledge the help that others gave his work.

The welcome publication of these early pages does not, however, complete the story of Hemingway’s struggles to get ‘The Sun’ well started. In the collection of his papers at the temporary Kennedy Library in Waltham, Mass., are three other fragments that show that his first idea was to begin the novel in Spain rather than France. One is only a few paragraphs, another runs to 38 typed pages, and a third, which opens with the statement that ‘It was half–past–three in the afternoon,’ gives an arresting account of the young bullfighter Romero dressing for the *corrida* in a dark bedroom at the Hotel Montoya in Pamplona. Two Americans named Gorton and Barnes are staying at the same hotel, whose owner, Montoya, introduces them to Romero.

It is a memorable scene. Hemingway fixes the time and place with economy and force, catching the feel of the shabby room, the admiring band of hangers–on, the embarrassment of the Americans, and Romero’s dignified aloneness and aloofness. Then, unhappily, Hemingway spoils his promising start. Bill and Jake cross the blazing square to the Cafe. A gray Rolls–Royce is parked at the curb, surrounded by a curious crowd. Inside the car is the American ambassador, an Ohioan named Watson, as well as

his niece and a flirtatious woman called Mrs. Carelton. Like Zelda Fitzgerald's, her blonde hair is streaked from exposure to the sun; and like Duff Dwysden [sic], Hemingway's real-life model for Lady Brett Ashley, Mrs. Carelton wears a man's felt hat. Jake and Bill hurry along to join their friends at the cafe. Lady Brett, seizing the upper hand, scolds Jake for having snooted the ambassador, urging him to go back and speak to Watson and the ladies. Jake is angry at himself afterward for having played up to the flirtatious Mrs. Carelton and even more for having allowed Brett to 'devil' him into it. So an auspicious beginning fizzles away in social claptrap. Hemingway thrust his pages aside and tried again.

Trying again would become, in effect, the story of his life, then and thereafter. If there is any object lesson in his repeated attempts to get his novel off to a good start, it is that he refused to be nonplussed by temporary failures and that, with Fitzgerald's help, he moved on to a memorable success. Many readers continue to like 'The Sun' better than any of his later novels, and Antaeus's publication of the rejected opening reveals something of the process by which the book became a 20th-century classic.