

# **The Paris Wife**

## **by Paula McLain**

### About the Book

A deeply evocative story of ambition and betrayal, *The Paris Wife* captures a remarkable period of time—Paris in the twenties—and an extraordinary love affair between two unforgettable people: Ernest Hemingway and his wife Hadley.

In Chicago in 1920, Hadley Richardson is a quiet twenty-eight-year-old who has all but given up on love and happiness—until she meets Ernest Hemingway and finds herself captivated by his good looks, intensity, and passionate desire to write. Following a whirlwind courtship and wedding, the pair set sail for Paris, where they become the golden couple in a lively and volatile group of expatriates that includes Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald.

But the hard-drinking and fast-living café life does not celebrate traditional notions of family and monogamy. As Hadley struggles with jealousy and self-doubt and Ernest wrestles with his burgeoning writing career, they must confront a deception that could prove the undoing of one of the great romances in literary history.

### Praise for the Book

“Impossible to resist... You’re swept along by [Paula McLain’s] portrayal of a once-sheltered woman who, in that prefeminist era, subsumed herself to her man yet got what she wanted—as the real Hadley put it, ‘the key to the world.’”

—*People*

“McLain has brought Hadley to life in a novel that begins in a rush of early love.... A moving portrait of a woman slighted by history, a woman whose... story needed to be told.”

—*The Boston Globe*

“By making the ordinary come to life, McLain has written a beautiful portrait of being in Paris in the glittering 1920s—as a wife and one’s own woman.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*

*Courtesy of Random House*

## About the Author

Title: Paula McLain

American Poet ( 1965 - )

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### PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Born October 7, 1965, in Fresno, CA; married. Education: University of Michigan, M.F.A., 1996. Addresses: Home: Cleveland, OH. Agent: Julie Barer, Barer Literary, LLC, 270 Lafayette St., Ste. 1504, New York, NY 10012. E-mail: paulamclain@paulamclain.net.

### CAREER:

Poet, memoirist, and novelist. Teaches in M.F.A. programs at New England college and John Carroll University. Has worked as a nursing assistant, pizza delivery girl, auto-plant worker, and cocktail waitress.

### AWARDS:

Publication grant from Greenwall Fund of the Academy of American Poets, 1999, for *Less of Her*; fellowships from Ohio Arts Council and National Endowment for the Arts; residency at Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, and Ucross Foundation.

### WORKS:

#### WRITINGS:

- *Less of Her* (poems), New Issues Press (Kalamazoo, MI), 1999.
- *Like Family: Growing Up in Other People's Houses* (memoir), Little, Brown (Boston, MA), 2003.
- *Stumble, Gorgeous* (poems), New Issues Press (Kalamazoo, MI), 2005.
- *A Ticket to Ride* (novel), Ecco (New York, NY), 2008.
- *The Paris Wife* (novel), Ballantine (New York, NY), 2011.

## Sidelights

In her memoir *Like Family: Growing Up in Other People's Houses*, poet Paula McLain recounts her childhood in foster care. When McLain was four years old, her mother abandoned her and her two sisters, going out to a movie and never returning; their father was in prison for attempted robbery. The girls lived briefly with relatives, but were soon placed in the foster-care system and moved through a series of homes in and near Fresno, California, until they came of age. Not until some sixteen years had passed did they see their mother again. Though some of their experiences with foster parents were happy, the sisters could never forget the pain of their mother's abandonment and of knowing that their foster placements were not real homes. McLain describes a series of foster homes in which she and her sisters enjoyed camping and sailing, had pets, and got presents such as bicycles. But in other cases, they experienced unreasonable rules--such as not being allowed to touch the plastic-covered furniture--emotional coldness from the host families, and even abuse at the hand of some foster fathers. Throughout, however, the sisters retained their close bond, nurturing and protecting each other. McLain and one of her sisters even took jobs in the same nursing home; one of the memoir's particularly memorable passages describes how, by singing songs to a mute patient, they drew a verbal response from the woman.

After aging out of the foster system, McLain supported herself at a series of jobs. In addition to working in the nursing home, she took stints as a pizza delivery girl, an auto-plant worker, and a cocktail waitress before realizing that she wanted to write. She earned an M.F.A. at the University of Michigan, and began publishing poems, with support from the Ohio Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

*Like Family* earned admiration as an unsentimental and honest work. A writer for *Publishers Weekly* deemed *Like Family* "a brave account" of a horrific childhood, and *Booklist* contributor Kristine Huntley deemed the book "straightforward and moving." A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor called the book "a thoughtful recalling of the emotional toll a life of uncertainty can take." Observing that many memoirs of painful childhoods overemphasize the dysfunctionality and pain of these lives, Deborah Straw commented in *Curled Up with a Good Book* that, in McLain's case, "the sadness does not tip the scales." *Like Family*, Straw wrote, "is a warm, courageous, page-turning memoir, one that is at heart about survival."

McLain's first novel, *A Ticket to Ride*, also deals with the theme of abandonment. Protagonist Jamie, who is fifteen in 1973, has grown up with her elderly grandparents after being abandoned in infancy by her mother. Recently, though, Jamie has been foisted on her aloof uncle Raymond. She is thrilled when her sixteen-year-old cousin, Fawn, arrives to spend the summer with them, and hopes that the older girl will bring a sense of glamour and adventure into the house. But Jamie's desperation to win Fawn's approval leads Jamie down an uncomfortable path. At the same time, Jamie learns more about the relationship between Raymond and her mother, and about why Fawn acts out in inappropriate ways. "Jamie and Fawn are achingly real," wrote *Booklist* contributor Mary Ellen Quinn. Observing that the novel's themes and plot are more familiar than original, a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer nevertheless acknowledged McLain's "sure-handed" approach to this material. "Characters are well drawn," commented Jane Ritter in *School Library Journal*, "and the prose magnificent."

McLain's works of poetry include *Less of Her* and *Stumble, Gorgeous*. McLain teaches in the M.F.A. programs at New England college and at John Carroll University.

#### FURTHER READINGS:

#### FURTHER READINGS ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

#### BOOKS

- McLain, Paula, *Like Family: Growing Up in Other People's Houses*, Little, Brown (Boston, MA), 2003.

#### PERIODICALS

- *Booklist*, February 1, 2003, Kristine Huntley, review of *Like Family*, p. 960; November 15, 2007, Mary Ellen Quinn, review of *A Ticket to Ride*, p. 32.
- *Kirkus Reviews*, December 15, 2002, review of *Like Family*, p. 1826; November 15, 2007, review of *A Ticket to Ride*.
- *Library Journal*, February 1, 2003, Rachel Collins, review of *Like Family*, p. 105.
- *Publishers Weekly*, January 20, 2003, review of *Like Family*, p. 66; October 29, 2007, review of *A Ticket to Ride*, p. 31.
- *School Library Journal*, May 1, 2008, Jane Ritter, review of *A Ticket to Ride*, p. 162.
- *Tribune Books* (Chicago, IL), May 18, 2003, review of *Like Family*, p. 4.

#### ONLINE

- *Curled Up with a Good Book*, <http://www.curledup.com/> (October 23, 2008), Deborah Straw, review of *Like Family*.
- *HarperCollins Web site*, <http://www.harpercollins.com/> (October 23, 2008), McLain profile.
- *Paula McLain Home Page*, <http://www.paulamclain.net> (October 23, 2008).\*

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## Author Interview

From The Hemingway Project website  
*An Interview with Paula McLain, author of The Paris Wife*  
March 1, 2011  
by Allie Baker

*In June of 2009, the New York Observer reported that Paula's novel was going to be published by Random House. The Observer article went on to describe the novel as being about "the five-year period after World War I during which Richardson and Hemingway, who was in his 20s, were married and living as expats in Paris alongside Lost Generation writers like Ezra Pound, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson. Ms. Barer (Paula McLain's agent) said that the book is a "heartbreaking love story" that ends with Hemingway betraying Richardson and marrying someone else."*

*Paula teaches in the MFA program in Poetry at New England College and at John Carroll University. She has published two books of poetry Less of Her and Stumble, Gorgeous as well as a memoir Like Family: Growing Up In Other People's Houses and another novel A Ticket to Ride. She lives in Cleveland.*

*Paula's book was released last month. We wish her every success with her new novel and look forward to reading it. Thank you Paula!*

AB: Where did your interest in Hadley start?

PM: With *A Moveable Feast*. At the end of his memoir, Hemingway writes of Hadley, "I wished I had died before I loved anyone but her." That line, and his portrayal of their marriage in his memoir—so poignant and steeped in regret—inspired me to first to read biographies of her, and then to write a novel, *The Paris Wife*, which tells the whole of their wildly romantic and ultimately tragic love story from her point of view. All the biographers agree that of Hemingway's four wives and numerous conquests, Hadley's the one who is changed for the better by knowing him. She blooms.

When the two meet in 1920, Hadley's a quiet, twenty-eight-year-old near-spinster. Her life has been difficult, strained by illness and death, and she's all but given up on love and happiness. Ernest bowls her over with his aliveness and intensity. Though she can't help but be anxious about his attractiveness to others, she takes the risk.

He represents life and she wants that.

AB: What kind of research did you do for your book? (Interviews, archived documents, etc.) What was your favorite item or source of information in doing this research?

PM: I read multiple biographies of both Hadley and Ernest Hemingway, and read or reread his early stories and novels, and his memoir, *A Moveable Feast*.

I also did research in the Hemingway Room at the John F. Kennedy Memorial library, which was really something. It's like the church of Hemingway there, a lovely small room with some of his furniture, an animal skin rug, some art and personal effects. And of course all of his works in manuscript form, as well as much of his correspondence. I went there expressly to read Hadley's letters to him during their courtship, and those are amazing. Her voice is incredible--charming, candid, funny, romantic. She's so open, and also creative. That was a surprise to me--what a good writer she is!

Hemingway's letters are fascinating, as you would expect, and his voice is mesmerizing. One of the first things I read in the archive was his letter to Bill Horne (a good friend) saying that Agnes von Kurowsky had called off their engagement. The letter is devastating because there's no irony or artifice, no trying to conceal his feelings; he's been blindsided. Reading his intimate correspondence and seeing handwritten drafts of *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Moveable Feast* changed my perception of Hemingway, which had been colored by his late persona. I couldn't help but feel compassion for him, his complexity and humanity, and that's when I knew I wanted to include passages in the book from his point of view—so readers can identify with and understand him too, not just Hadley. It's a more complex and portrayal, I think, and more true.

AB: Did you use “The Hadley Tapes” recorded by Alice Sokoloff for your research? What was it like to hear Hadley's voice?

PM: I didn't listen to the tapes, alas. That would have been something. But her voice--speech rhythms, turns of phrase, idiosyncrasies--comes through with remarkable clarity in her letters. In her first letter to him, for instance, she writes, "Do you want to smoke in the kitchen? Should say I do!" I love that!

AB: Did you travel to do research? Where did you go?

PM: I was so absorbed in the writing process and wrote so quickly (about seven months for the first draft) that I couldn't imagine taking time off to travel. But after I sent the first draft off to my agent, I went to Key West--because I really wanted to see his house there, and be in a space he had been. This summer I'm going to Paris and the French Riviera--spending time in Antibes, the site of the principal unraveling of the Hemingway's marriage. I'll also go to San Sebastian and Pamplona. Can't wait for that! Because the book is finished, this trip won't be research, per se, but an opportunity to further connect with and honor their story, their experiences.

AB: I would think that spending time researching another person's life for a biography, whether fiction or non-fiction, would cause you to really live with that person for a while. How did you think and feel about Hadley as you were writing? Did you feel that you knew her?

PM: I did feel very intimately connected to Hadley when I was writing the book--I was in her head after all, or in the head of the character I had constructed and imagined. But the real Hadley, the one I know from letters and biography, seems very familiar to me as well. I really fell in love with her and came to admire her forthrightness. She seems to me a very American girl--unpretentious, clear-headed, earthy, direct. She sticks to her guns. She knows who she is, even when things get emotionally dicey.

AB: Hadley's life straddled two eras for women – the end of the Victorian era and the beginning of the jazz age. She had unusual influences in her life – her mother and sister were ardent feminists and yet she chose Ernest – a very strong male personality. Much was written about her mistreatment from EH, her shabby clothes, the way she deferred to his career and his ego. At times in Paris she was very, very lonely. And yet, I felt that Hadley maintained her own quiet strength throughout her life with Ernest and afterwards. From where do you think Hadley drew this strength?

PM: I think Hadley was more of a Victorian holdout than a modern woman. She wasn't a flapper, wasn't Zelda, for instance, or sophisticated and cultured like Duff Twysden or Sara Murphy, or shrewd and self-confident like Pauline Pfeiffer. But she had her own kind of strength, and she did manage to hold her own in her marriage to Hemingway, although it doesn't always look that way from a distance.

She deferred to his career and partnered with him to further his ambitions because she loved him and believed they were a team. She didn't want to be the kind of wife her mother and sister were--demanding, controlling, full of bitterness. She chose to be flexible and supportive because she benefits from that choice. With Ernest, she finds deep happiness as well as zest for life, physical endurance, and emotional resilience she didn't believe were possible.

Even at the disastrous end of their marriage, when Ernest has fallen in love with Pauline and the three are thrown into emotional deadlock, Hadley never entirely loses faith in Ernest or herself. Ironically, she gives in to his demands for a divorce out of devotion for him. After all they've been through together, she still has faith in the definitive power of love. Knowing him and learning to live closer to the edge of life makes her strong enough to survive him—and she does.

AB: Both Hadley and Ernest were deeply transformed by Europe – they started out as inexperienced young lovers and they really became experienced together through travel, art, sexuality, and friendships with fascinating people. Some of the scenes of their life together are so remarkable – Hadley knitting baby clothing during a bullfight in Pamplona, learning to ski together in Shrums, winning a cow at the a beer drinking contest in Germany, betting on horses, hiking and fishing, - they were really partners for awhile. At the same time, they were meeting some of the most influential artists of the 20th century. How much of this romantic backdrop is part of your story?

PM: I agree that the backdrop for their love story is incredibly romantic, and I use all of that in my book—with scenes set in Schruns, Chamby, Rapallo, Milan, Pamplona, Antibes, San Sebastian, etc. They traveled so much together that it undoubtedly became part of the fabric of their marriage—but so too did the people who surrounded them—Stein, Pound, Dos Passos, the Fitzgeralds, the Murphys—for better or worse.

AB: Hadley's background was so remarkably similar to Ernest's – their mothers were a dominant force in the household, both of their fathers committed suicide, and both were itching for a bigger life away from their families. In many ways they nurtured each other in the beginning of their marriage. How much do you think Hadley helped incubate Ernest's career?

PM: Hadley was completely crucial to Ernest's apprenticeship as a writer. She understood him profoundly and because of this, he could trust her to anchor him, to shore him up. They did that for each other.

In Paris, as he labored with his work, she made their life possible, both financially and emotionally. With the absolute security she provided, he was free to pursue his genius, and with her, as with none of his later wives, he came close to realizing his yearning for a woman who would love him so much he could kill his “loneliness in that woman or pool it with hers.”

AB: Each time I read about the end of her marriage I am devastated, not so much that she didn't stay with Ernest but that she was such a sincere friend to him and his betrayal was deeper than that of just sexual betrayal. One of the reasons I admire Hadley so much is that she seemed to stay true to herself and her own femininity and values, especially after Bumby was born. Gertrude Stein treated her as second rate, Ezra Pound openly condemned motherhood, even the Murphy's, who had children, turned against her. I got the sense that Hadley really stayed true to herself (partly because of Bumby) while Ernest, in a way, succumbed to “the rich” despite all of his criticism of them. Did she ever talk about the betrayal of so many friends?

PM: Stein treated Hadley as second rate because she wasn't an artist and, therefore, had nothing to say. She was relegated to the “wives corner” with Alice B. Toklas, with whom she had absolutely nothing in common. Bohemian Paris celebrated the artist and, after that, the “modern woman,” and had very little patience for bourgeois values like monogamy. Pound didn't allow children in his studio because he said he didn't believe in them. That must have been a difficult environment for Hadley from the outset, but more so after she became a mother. EH was increasingly ambitious and obsessed with his creative goals, and sort of lost sight, over time, of his original intentions and what kept him grounded. He had his head turned by “the rich,” as he deplorably admits at the end of *A Moveable Feast*. Even friends who liked and admired Hadley, like Gerald Murphy, believed that Hadley might have been too “slow” and conventional for EH. Pauline Pfeiffer was shrewder and more aware of the demands of the age. In just this way, the Hemingway's set did turn their back on Hadley as EH's affections shifted

toward Pauline. Later in life, when she was interviewed by Carlos Baker and other biographers, she seemed fairly resigned to the way things went—and yet at the time, it must have been very difficult and painful for her. She had done nothing “wrong”; she was merely herself.

AB: How did you feel about Pauline Pfeiffer as you wrote this story?

PM: It’s hard to have too much compassion for Pauline. She was very much in love with EH, and I suppose that intensity of feeling drove her behavior. Perhaps she believed she couldn’t help herself but the fact is, she betrayed Hadley, her very good friend, and in a very clear-eyed and deliberate way. She ingratiated herself to the Hemingways, became a trusted fixture in their life, and then took full advantage of that position. Even when she was sleeping with EH and fantasizing about being his wife, she never gave up the pretence of being Hadley’s friend. If you read her letters to Hadley at the time, they seem downright pathological. She seems to need Hadley’s affection and approval even as she’s trying to unravel the Hemingway’s marriage. That’s very difficult to understand, don’t you think?

AB: How did you come up with the title?

PM: The working title for my novel, *The Great Good Place*, comes from a short story by Henry James, who was Hadley's favorite writer. American ex-patriots called Paris, "the great good place," but more than this I liked thinking that she would have known the story and gotten the real reference. Now that the book is in production, the title has changed to *The Paris Wife*, which folks at Ballantine and Random House prefer. I like the irony in it, and the way that gets twisted, turned on its head. From a distance, Hadley was simply Hemingway's "Paris wife," the way Pauline was his "Key West wife"-- but beneath the obvious surface, Hadley was fundamental to the rest of his life and career. He couldn't have "made" the writer we know now without her influence.

AB: One of the huge events in Hadley’s marriage to EH was the loss of his manuscripts on a train from Paris to Lausanne. Gioia Diliberto describes this as “the beginning of the end” of their marriage because it was something that Ernest never truly forgave. Do you think this is true?

PM: I believe he didn't ever truly forgive her--because he couldn't. Loyalty was more important to Hemingway than almost anything, and when she lost the manuscripts, it introduced the thought that perhaps she couldn't be trusted. Not that he believed it was deliberate or meant to sabotage his career in a retaliatory way, as some critics and biographers have suggested, but that in leaving the valise with his manuscripts unattended on the train, she showed her inability to comprehend their worth. At one point he repeated to her what the painter Mike Strater said to him in response to the loss, that "no other writer or even painter—no one who makes something with all their soul could ever have left that valise on the train. Because they’d have known what it meant.”

AB: How do you think the end of his marriage to Hadley affected Ernest throughout his life?

PM: I think he loved Hadley for the rest of his life. In *A Moveable Feast*, their marriage is rendered with an almost religious tenderness. Part of why she persisted in his heart and consciousness was her strength of character—she remained a kind of ideal woman for him. Later he grew to hate Pauline for her manipulation of him, and hate himself for giving in to that manipulation. He never felt the same about women after this turn of events. It's as if he lost his faith in them, but Hadley remained untainted.

AB: Ernest and Hadley stayed friends for the rest of their lives, but this was not true for Paula, and Martha. Hadley seemed in some ways to be relieved by the end of her marriage, describing Ernest as very complicated. Did you find anything in your research to support this? What did you learn about Hadley's life with Paul Mowrer?

PM: Mainly that it was simple and good. Paul didn't seem to be remotely as complicated as EH, and I think Hadley found this to be a relief. She once said to Alice Sokoloff that she wasn't sure she could have "kept up" with Ernest if their marriage had continued. All of the traveling and tests of physical endurance were exhilarating, but difficult to maintain once Bumby came along. I also think she was referring here to emotional endurance. EH wasn't an easy person to love unequivocally. He required a great deal—and those demands only increased as his professional ambitions increased.

AB: How do you think your book will impact the interest in Hemingway? I'm sure readers will want to know a lot more about Hadley, but how do you think your book will affect your readers' view of Ernest?

PM: I hope my novel will revive interest in Hemingway. I think the time is certainly ripe for that. There was a lot of attention when Sean Hemingway published the restored edition of *A Moveable Feast* last year, which makes me believe the general reading public is still very interested in Hemingway. How could they not be? I've taken a lot of creative license by writing several chapters from EH's point of view to try and get into his consciousness and answer questions like, How could he have possibly cheated on Hadley? What was he thinking? He was an incredibly complex person, but I came to have a lot of compassion for him. I'm hoping readers will too. I also hope the book generates real interest in and appreciation for Hadley. I can't imagine that readers won't identify with her. She was simply an incredible woman.

AB: I think motherhood gave Hadley a lot of confidence in herself. What was Bumby's life like after they left Paris? Where was he raised, etc. . . ?

PM: When Hadley became pregnant with Bumby she said that she'd finally found what she was meant to do. Motherhood gave her a clear purpose and a confidence in her role in the marriage. She knew, finally, how absolutely necessary she was to making her domestic life with Ernest run. She was the heart of that family. Nothing worked without her. When her marriage was on the rocks, Hadley became very depressed for a time and wondered if she would have the heart and fortitude to parent Bumby alone. And yet she found an inner strength and resourcefulness when it most mattered. She was able to go on and, ironically, had much better luck in love and happiness than EH did.

After EH left her for Pauline, Hadley and Bumby went to the US for some months, and then back to Paris, where she became intimately involved with the journalist Paul Mowrer, whom she later married. In 1933, the two moved with Bumby to Chicago where Paul took a job at the Daily News. Paul had children from a previous marriage, but seemed very fond of Bumby and happy to have him in their life. After several years in Chicago, Bumby--now Jack--went away to boarding school in New York State and then on to Dartmouth. Before graduating, however, he enlisted in the army—in 1942. Although he principally lived with his mother and Paul, Bumby spent summers with his father and Pauline and his brothers in Key West and elsewhere, and seemed, always, to feel connected to his father. He became a writer and conservationist and avid fly fisherman—surely, his father's influence weighed heavily in his life.

AB: Thank you so much Paula, I look forward to your book.

The Hemingway Project. *An Interview with Paula McLain, author of The Paris Wife*. Retrieved 12/05/2011, from <http://www.thehemingwayproject.com/2011/03/interview-with-paula-mclain-author-of.html>

## Discussion Questions

1. *In many ways, Hadley's girlhood in St. Louis was a difficult and repressive experience. How do her early years prepare her to meet and fall in love with Ernest? What does life with Ernest offer her that she hasn't encountered before? What are the risks?*
2. *Hadley and Ernest don't get a lot of encouragement from their friends and family when they decided to marry. What seems to draw the two together? What are some of the strengths of their initial attraction and partnership? The challenges?*
3. *The Ernest Hemingway we meet in THE PARIS WIFE—through Hadley's eyes—is in many ways different from the ways we imagine him when faced with the largeness of his later persona. What do you see as his character strengths? Can you see what Hadley saw in him?*
4. *The Hemingways spontaneously opt for Paris over Rome when they get key advice from Sherwood Anderson. What was life like for them when they first arrived? How did Hadley's initial feelings about Paris differ from Ernest's and why?*
5. *Throughout THE PARIS WIFE, Hadley refers to herself as "Victorian" as opposed to "modern." What are some of the ways she doesn't feel like she fits into life in bohemian Paris? How does this impact her relationship with Ernest? Her self-esteem? What are some of the ways Hadley's "old-fashioned" quality can be seen as a strength and not a weakness?*
6. *Hadley and Ernest's marriage survived for many years in Jazz-Age Paris, an environment that had very little patience for monogamy and other traditional values. What in their relationship seems to sustain them? How does their marriage differ from those around them? Pound's and Shakespeare's? Scott and Zelda's?*
7. *Most of THE PARIS WIFE is written in Hadley's voice, but a few select passages come to us from Ernest's point of view. What impact does getting Ernest's perspective have on our understanding of their marriage? How does it affect your ability to understand him and his motivations in general?*
8. *What was the role of literary spouses in 1920's Paris? How is Hadley challenged and restricted by her gender? Would those restrictions have changed if she had been an artist and not merely a "wife"?*
9. *At one point, Ezra Pound warns Hadley that it would be a dire mistake to let parenthood change Ernest. Is there a nugget of truth behind his concern? What are some of the ways Ernest is changed by Bumby's birth? What about Hadley? What does motherhood bring to her life, for better or worse?*

10. *One of the most wrenching scenes in the book is when Hadley loses a valise containing all of Ernest's work to date. What kind of turning point does this mark for the Hemingway's marriage? Do you think Ernest ever forgives her?*
11. *When the couple moves to Toronto to have Bumby, Ernest tries his best to stick it out with a regular "nine-to-five" reporter's job, and yet he ultimately finds this impossible. Why is life in Toronto so difficult for Ernest? Why does Hadley agree to go back to Paris earlier than they planned, even though she doesn't know how they'll make it financially? How does she benefit from supporting his decision to make a go at writing only fiction?*
12. *Hadley and Ernest had similar upbringings in many ways. What are the parallels, and how do these affect the choices Hadley makes as a wife and mother?*
13. *In THE PARIS WIFE, when Ernest receives his contract for **In Our Time**, Hadley says, "He would never again be unknown. We would never again be this happy." How did fame affect Ernest and his relationship with Hadley?*
14. ***The Sun Also Rises** is drawn from the Hemingways' real-life experiences with bullfighting in Spain. Ernest and his friends are clearly present in the book, but Hadley is not. Why? In what ways do you think Hadley is instrumental to the book regardless, and to Ernest's career in general?*
15. *How does the time and place—Paris in the 20's—affect Ernest and Hadley's marriage? What impact does the war, for instance, have on the choices and behavior of the expatriate artists surrounding the Hemingways? Do you see Ernest changing in response to the world around him? How, and how does Hadley feel about those changes?*
16. *What was the nature of the relationship between Hadley and Pauline Pfeiffer? Were they legitimately friends? How do you see Pauline taking advantage of her intimate position in the Hemingway's life? Do you think Hadley is naïve for not suspecting Pauline of having designs on Ernest earlier? Why or why not?*
17. *It seems as if Ernest tries to make his marriage work even after Pauline arrives on the scene. What would Hadley it have cost Hadley to stick it out with Ernest no matter what? Is there a way she could have fought harder for her marriage?*
18. *In many ways, Hadley is a very different person at the end of the novel than the girl who encounters Ernest by chance at a party. How do you understand her trajectory and transformation? Are there any ways she essentially doesn't change?*
19. *When Hemingway's biographer Carlos Baker interviewed Hadley Richardson near the end of her life, he expected her to be bitter, and yet she persisted in describing Ernest as a "prince." How can she have continued to love and admire him after the way he hurt her?*

20. Ernest Hemingway spent the last months of his life tenderly reliving his first marriage in the pages his memoir, **A Moveable Feast**. In fact, it was the last thing he wrote before his death. Do you think he realized what he'd truly lost with Hadley?

*Courtesy Random House*