

HEMINGWAY AND THE TEXTUAL
STRUGGLE OF PATERNITY

by

ALLISON ROSE SCHUVER

PHILIP BEIDLER, COMMITTEE CHAIR
K. MERINDA SIMMONS
EMILY O. WITTMAN

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ABSTRACT

Ernest Hemingway bears the legendary reputation of a hyper-masculine hunter, drinker, and womanizer, though much criticism has sought to complicate notions of gender in the author's life and fiction. This research project considers fatherhood in particular, one aspect of masculinity that was never easily-defined for Hemingway. Hemingway's fiction frequently has autobiographical roots, and his writing reflects his own obstacles with transferring from the role of a son to the role of a father. Writing as a way "to get rid of it," as Nick Adams does in "Fathers and Sons," Hemingway wrote again and again of his conflict with being a father and being a son, but never seemed to overcome his struggles or find his separate piece. Troubled by his father's suicide, the stunted rearing of his sons, and a tumultuous relationship with his youngest, cross-dressing son Gregory, Hemingway makes fatherhood remarkably present in several texts that span the decades of his career. He was known to his friends and even the public at large as "Papa," but this identity is constantly muddled and strained in his writing. This project pursues Papa Hemingway in four texts with particularly rich paternal content: "Fathers and Sons," major sections of *Islands in the Stream*, "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something," and "Great News from the Mainland." Hemingway's real-life relationships with his father and his sons were filled with hardship, confusion, and self-doubt, but the repeated reworking of father-son relationships in these texts offers the potential for healing, even if this healing is simply fiction.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“If he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them. But it was still too early for that. There were still too many people.”

– Ernest Hemingway, “Fathers and Sons”

The family unit, however troubled it might be, serves as the characterological basis for many of Hemingway’s texts. Comley and Scholes argue that Hemingway only “viewed the family configuration from the position of a son” (28) – while this may be the case in much of his early fiction, the position expanded for Hemingway as his own familial roles evolved. Hemingway’s fiction frequently has autobiographical roots, and his writing reflects his own obstacles with transferring from the role of a son to the role of a father. Writing as a way “to get rid of it,” Hemingway wrote again and again of his conflict with being a father and being a son, but never seemed to overcome his struggles or find his separate piece. Troubled by his father’s suicide, the stunted rearing of his sons, and a tumultuous relationship with his youngest, cross-dressing son Gregory, Hemingway makes fatherhood remarkably present in several texts that span the decades of his career. He was known to his friends and even the public at large as “Papa,” but this identity is constantly muddled and strained in his writing. This research project is needed so that we can become more aware of who Papa Hemingway is and was – in pursuing this answer, I will consider a few texts with particularly rich paternal content, namely, “Fathers and Sons,” major sections of *Islands in the Stream*, “I Guess Everything Reminds You of

Something,” and “Great News from the Mainland.” Hemingway is often considered to be an author who worked to define what it means to be a man,¹ but this project will look at part of that equation that was never so clearly defined for Hemingway: what it means to be a father and what it means to be a son.

As with tracing any legend, it is best to start at the beginning. Ernest Hemingway was born in 1899 to Grace Hall Hemingway and Dr. Clarence Hemingway of Oak Park, Illinois, a Chicago suburb. Grace Hall Hemingway was, in many ways, the leader of the Hemingway family. Her large inheritance from her father, Ernest “Abba” Hall who lived with the Hemingway family for a few years before his death in 1905, supported the upper-middle class lifestyle of the clan. Furthermore, the money that Grace earned from teaching music lessons at times exceeded her husband’s medical income (Reynolds, *Young*, 106). Grace was a uniquely independent woman for her time period; in the local newspaper, she was known as Grace Hall Hemingway (both her maiden and married names) while nearly all other community women were referred to as the “Mrs.” of their husbands’ names (107). Throughout Ernest’s childhood, she employed a staff to do housework and help with the children. When extra housekeeping chores needed attending, Grace’s husband was the spouse who performed domestic tasks (109). However, Grace was not the only guiding force of the Hemingway family; for the time that he lived with the Hemingways, Ernest Hall was a domineering figure. He led the family in rituals of daily prayer and insisted on being called “Abba,” the biblical word for father. Grace adored her father and wanted young Ernest to grow up to be like him (Spilka 8); she took the initiative in naming Ernest after her father, but Hemingway later took his own initiative by adopting a variation of his grandfather’s nickname “Abba” in his late twenties: “Papa” (42). The imitation

¹ Philip Young asked this critical question of general masculinity when defining the Hemingway code hero in *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration* (1966).

is a peculiar one, for Abba represented the same oppressiveness that Hemingway grew to so strongly despise in his mother.²

Perhaps Hemingway's near hatred of his mother stemmed from her treatment of the figure who was left behind by her and her father's strong personalities – Dr. Clarence Hemingway. He was a prominent, well-respected physician with a passion for the outdoors and collecting natural specimen. It is from his father that Ernest developed his equal passion for the natural world, a passion that he honed during the family's long summer vacations in northern Michigan. Though Hemingway biographies reflect a strong camaraderie between Ernest and his father, Dr. Hemingway's severe depression that escalated during Ernest's youth dampened their relationship. He took several trips away from his family and job to cope with his depression but by 1917, his behavior had changed dramatically. Dr. Hemingway developed several obsessive qualities – he constantly fretted over finances, filed insurance policies with eleven different agencies, and almost compulsively wrote multiple letters every day.³ His moods shifted wildly and he grew distant from his children, especially young Ernest, with whom he had once shared so much (Reynolds, "Home" 606). Marcelline Hemingway, Ernest's older sister, wrote in a letter to her mother in 1919: "Dad tries to be nice, but his temperament does not allow him to see things as I do – and tho we get along beautifully on the surface, I feel a thousand miles away from his soul" (604). Hemingway held his mother accountable for his father's "nervous

² Ernest was close to his mother as a young boy, but beginning in adolescence and continuing into his adult years, the two clashed on nearly all fronts. Michael Reynolds writes, "Their conflict was as unrelenting as it can be between two strong wills" (*Young* 117). One can sense the tension between the two in Grace's now-famous "over drawn" letter to twenty-one year old Ernest. In it she writes that a mother's love is like a bank and that Ernest's bank account is low on funds. She writes, "Unless you, my son, Ernest, come to yourself, cease your lazy loafing, and pleasure seeking [...] stop trading on your handsome face, to fool little gullible girls, and neglecting your duties to God and your Savior Jesus Christ – unless, in other words, you come into your manhood – there is nothing before you but bankruptcy: *You have over drawn*" (qtd. in Reynolds *Young* 137-38). For more on the mother-son relationship, see Reynolds' *The Young Hemingway* and Kenneth Lynn's *Hemingway*.

³ Ernest would later exhibit similar practices and was particularly worrisome about his finances in the years before his death. Carlos Baker estimates that he wrote six to seven thousand letters in his adult life and says of him, "All his life after adolescence Hemingway was a confirmed, habitual, and even compulsive correspondent for whom communication was a constant necessity" (*SL* ix).

condition,” believing that it was her controlling and emasculating behavior that drove her husband to mental anguish. As Dr. Hemingway’s depressive tendencies continued, his physical health deteriorated as well. Ultimately, on December 6, 1928, Dr. Clarence Hemingway shot himself in the head in the bedroom of his Oak Park home (607-08). He used his father’s Smith and Wesson revolver – this was the one item that Ernest requested to be his as an “historical keepsake” after his father’s death (L. Hemingway 111).

By this time, Hemingway, nearly in his 30s, had adopted the self-imposed nickname of Papa. Perhaps he desired to be the papa that he and his siblings had lost years before his father’s suicide. Hemingway turned his maternal grandfather’s name of Abba on its head, inverting it to stand for the type of father-figure that he imagined himself to be – not one of a cold Christianity, but one that represented a care-free and energetic lifestyle, one that mimicked the fatherhood that Dr. Hemingway possessed in those early Michigan summers. However, this Papa would make a deliberate effort to not be destroyed by a spouse, or any woman for that matter – he would always be dominant in his relationships, even at times veering toward misogyny. Mark Spilka writes that young Hemingway “had always been a kind of fatherly travel guide to his readers, their paternal instructor in the empirical hows of sporting or expatriate or military life, the lay of landscapes, towns, cities, and the stoic wisdom needed for survival in such climes and times” (262). Papa was the figure that encompassed those qualities on which Hemingway prided himself, the qualities that he had lost in his own father. “Papa” emerged from loss, and like most matters in Hemingway’s biography, lost fatherhood found its way into his fiction.

CHAPTER TWO

“FATHERS AND SONS”

Hemingway’s fiction suggests that the author was preoccupied with issues of fatherhood early in his career; for example, over half of the stories in *In Our Time*, Hemingway’s first American publication, deal with issues of fatherhood in some way.⁴ This concentration is particularly evident in the Nick Adams stories, a series of twenty-six deeply autobiographical short fictions that Hemingway wrote in the 1920s and 30s. The stories follow Nick, the Hemingway-like character, through different stages of his life, from childhood to adulthood, from the summers of northern Michigan to the war-torn seasons of Italy during World War I. “Indian Camp,” for instance, the first of the Nick Adams stories, depicts Dr. Adams’ failed attempt to create for his young son a rite of passage, an initiation into adulthood.⁵ Similarly, in *Men Without Women*’s “Ten Indians,” we see the father’s reluctant attempt, one that is somehow both tender and cruel, to initiate his adolescent son into the world of adult betrayal.⁶ In both of these stories, the interactions between father and son reveal the trials of what would ideally be an

⁴ *In Our Time* (1925) was preceded only by *in our time*, published in France in 1924. The French publication was comprised of the vignettes that are featured between the short stories in the American collection published the following year. The stories of *In Our Time* that deal with fatherhood are: “Indian Camp,” “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife,” “The Three-Day Blow,” “Soldier’s Home,” “Mr. and Mrs. Eliot,” “Cat in the Rain,” “Cross-Country Snow,” and “My Old Man.” Robert Gajdusek goes so far as to call the collection “a carefully integrated study of patriarchal failure” (172).

⁵ In this story, Dr. Adams takes a very young Nick with him to the camp to help an Indian woman give birth. During the cesarean operation, the Indian father kills himself. Dr. Adams intended to show Nick the “miracle of life,” so to speak, but the tragic turn of events changed Nick’s lesson to one on death.

⁶ “Ten Indians” contains a tense back-and-forth between Nick and his father; Dr. Adams tells Nick that he saw Prudie, Nick’s Indian love interest, “having quite a time” the woods with Frank Washburn (256). Dr. Adams repeatedly offers Nick pie as he breaks the news.

easy relationship; they are interactions that are subtly charged with troubled communication and a lack of intergenerational understanding.

Some of the most powerful stories of the Nick Adams series depict conflicts between father and mother that frame the son's impression of the father, specifically seen in "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" and "Now I Lay Me." In the former, the second Nick Adams story published in *In Our Time*, Dr. Adams is conversationally and emotionally dominated by his wife, Nick's mother. The tension between the two is muffled by the father's almost complete acquiescence, yet the son still prefers the father at the end of the story. The wife (the narration refers to her only as this, never "the mother") sends the father to bring Nick to her inside the house, and when Dr. Adams informs his son of his mother's request to see him, Nick refuses. He rejects his mother's call, saying to his father instead, "I want to go with you" (76).⁷ In a scene of a touching alliance that opposes the dominant mother, father and son set off together on a walk in the wilderness. In *Men Without Women's* "Now I Lay Me," though, the childhood alliance has faded and Nick recalls his father as a man who is utterly defeated by his wife. The story contains the noteworthy image of a hooked and baited salamander trying to hold onto the hook that has speared him – Nick remembers how he observed the humanness of the salamander and never baited one again. This image is followed by Nick's memories of his mother who at one point cleaned out the attic of all of his father's jarred specimens, then on another occasion, rid the basement of his father's collection of Indian artifacts, burning them in a large fire in the yard. Nick remembers his father coming home to the fire and how he desperately tried to salvage his collection. He said to his on-looking son, however, that "the best arrow-heads went all to pieces" (278). Dr. Adams does not react to his wife's invasive actions, and though not explicitly

⁷ All short stories quotations are sourced from *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, Finca Vigía Edition* (1987).

stated in the text, Nick observes this silence, a silence that is akin to the speared and struggling salamander.

“Fathers and Sons,” published in the 1933 collection *Winner Take Nothing*, is the last story in the Nick Adams series, and in a way, it encapsulates the variety of emotions that we see in the father and son relationships of the previous stories. Nick’s recollections of his father in the story reach back to the happy partnership of Michigan summers, the crumbling communication between father and son, and the father’s ultimate deterioration and death. It is in this story that we truly sense the loss of a father, a loss that feels as though it was destined to occur; as the story reads, “[Dr. Adams] had much bad luck, and it was not all of it his own” (370). In the previous Nick Adams stories, Comley and Scholes’ claim that Hemingway viewed the family from the viewpoint of the son is correct (28). However, it is only partially true in “Fathers and Sons,” for Nick’s vantage point is now colored by his own role as a father – it is important to remember that as he recalls his childhood and the years with his father, Nick’s son sleeps next to him. Nick is a father now himself, and “Fathers and Sons” is his reflection on the only model of fatherhood that he has. After the death of Nick’s father, a death that seems to have been a suicide, Nick is left to be the new father figure, one who must cope with the loss of his own father before fully assuming his paternal role. His reflections that form the text are his attempt to cope with this loss, but by the end of the story, this seems to be an impossible task, both for Nick and his author. At the time of its publication, “Fathers and Sons” was Hemingway’s most comprehensive writing on fatherhood – the autobiographical details of the Nick Adams series culminate in this last installment to form not only a clearer picture of the troubled relationship between Nick Adams and his father, but between Ernest Hemingway and his father as well.

The story opens with Nick Adams, maturely called Nicholas Adams here, driving through a small town that is “not his country” on a Sunday in the middle of fall (369). The roads are empty of other travelers, and he goes through a detour, making his way to the countryside. Some fifteen lines from the beginning of the story, we learn that Nick’s son is asleep in the seat beside him; his presence is almost surprising. As Nick observes the rural landscape, he “hunt[s] the country in his mind,” remembering the times of his childhood when he hunted with his father in northern Michigan (369).⁸ Memories of his father begin to flood Nick’s thoughts. He fondly recalls his father’s amazing eyesight, but the tone of his memory changes when he remembers his father’s sentimentality and cruelty. Nick believes his father “had died in a trap that he had helped only a little to set”; at this early point in the story, the reader is unsure of the cause of death, whether it was a literal or metaphorical trap (370). Nick’s memory continues to run wild as he reflects on his father’s skill in hunting and his contrasting naivety concerning sex. In a fluid manner, his thoughts then move to his first sexual encounter with an Indian girl in the Michigan summers, then to a time when he became so angry at his father that he contemplated shooting him with the shotgun that his father had given him. Nick is brought back to the present when his son awakens and, as if he could somehow read his father’s thoughts, asks about his grandfather and Nick’s own childhood. The story concludes when the son asks to visit the grave of his grandfather, and Nick, with some hesitation, agrees to take him someday.

The eight pages of “Fathers and Sons” make for a rather long story when compared to others in the canon, but this does not mean that the text contains more straight-forward details

⁸ It should be mentioned that Hemingway’s “Fathers and Sons” is indebted to Ivan Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons* (1862). Both texts concern the generational disconnect between a son and his father. Turgenev, in many ways, was a literary father to Hemingway. The modernist writes in *A Moveable Feast* that Turgenev’s “landscape and the roads” particularly affected him, and of the Russian authors in general, “To have come on all this new world of writing ... was like having a great treasure given to you” (133-34). Traces of Turgenev can be particularly seen in “Fathers and Sons” in passages on Nick’s traveling.

than typical of Hemingway's token brevity; the story remains fairly ambiguous on the details of Nick's declined relationship with his father, though the reader senses that more lies beneath the surface.⁹ The narration creates for the reader a certain distance from Nick because his interior monologue is not relayed to us in first-person, but rather by a third-person limited narrator. Nonetheless, the narration follows the sequence of Nick's thoughts, and one of the first statements about the father-son relationship occurs when the story reads, "[Nick] was very grateful to [his father] for two things: fishing and shooting" (370). When Nick thinks about the passion for hunting that still remains a part of his life, he seems to reflect lovingly on his father; this is particularly evident in the line, "Nick had loved him very much and for a long time" (371). However, the past perfect tense of the sentence hints at a falling out, that this love existed only "before things had gone badly" (371). Nick's thoughts do not wander to the specifics of the fracture, though the estrangement is elaborated upon in the line, "After [Nick] was fifteen he had shared nothing with [his father]" (375). The narration tells us that Nick is thirty-eight now; if we believe that his father has died somewhere close to the story's present, then "nothing" has been shared by father and son for several decades. Susan Beegel relates this key word of "nothing" to another Hemingway story, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place." In this story, a similar emptiness can be found in the prayers, "Our nada who art in nada, nada by thy name" and "Hail nothing, full of nothing, nothing is with thee" (391, Beegel 90). A sort of comfort with a lack of meaning is characteristic of the Hemingway code hero, the reoccurring character of the Hemingway canon that exudes grace under pressure and a tragic sense of honor. When left with nothing, as he often

⁹ On brevity, Hemingway wrote to Maxwell Perkins: "Eschew the monumental. Shun the Epic. All the guys who can paint great big pictures can paint great small ones" (*SL* 352). As for what lies beneath the surface of Hemingway's texts, his "theory of omission" or "iceberg principle" is clarified in *Death in the Afternoon*: "If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them" (154).

is, the code character finds an inner strength by silently enduring. True to form, Nick Adams is hesitant to reflect on the deterioration of the relationship he had with his father and seems eager to endure the emptiness that is left behind.

But in “Fathers and Sons,” Nick simply cannot stop thinking about his father. Even as his mind wanders away from the topic, his thoughts repeatedly return to his father throughout the text. Nick’s active thinking is contrasted with the typical Hemingway code hero who is defined more by his actions than by his thoughts. For instance, Frederic from *A Farewell to Arms*, Jake from *The Sun Also Rises*, and even Nick in other stories like “Big Two-Hearted River” are characters who physically move around the space of the texts and busy themselves with various manual tasks to avoid thinking too seriously about their troubled existences. I do not mean to imply these characters’ inability to think, but only point out their characteristic avoidance of deliberate reflection. In “Fathers and Sons,” Nick is essentially unmoving, a static figure whose action occurs only in his mind. At this point in the series, the reader learns that Nick is a writer, another instance of Hemingway’s autobiographical modeling of the character. While he is certainly guarded in his thoughts and tries to rein them in at various points throughout the text, he is even more apprehensive about the idea of transferring the feelings he has for his father from the fluid spaces of his mind to the permanence that the written word would produce. When Nick thinks of writing about his relationship with his father, the story reads, “If he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them. But it was still too early for that. There were still too many people ... There was nothing to do about his father and he had thought it all through many times (371). Nick’s emotions may be too fresh to be recorded on the page, but his thoughts actually compose the story that we have in front of us. The final product of the text is shrouded in metaphor, mimicking the uncertainty of Nick’s emotions; for example,

because Nick stops his thoughts from wandering to the specific details of his father's death, the reader cannot know for certain what the "trap" that killed his father really represents.

If we consider the autobiographical qualities of the Nick Adams stories, we may assume that the "trap" that Dr. Adams died in can be equated to the mental deterioration and eventual suicide of Hemingway's own father. After all, the story bears resemblance to Hemingway's life in a variety of ways; besides the already-established similarities between Hemingway's and Nick's occupations, their fathers' occupations, the vacation spot of northern Michigan, and the general love of hunting shared by fathers and sons, Paul Smith notes that the setting of the story can be traced back to a trip that Hemingway took with his first son Bumby in 1932, from Key West to the Midwest for an uncle's funeral (307). The young age of Nick's son reflects the youth of Bumby, who was nine years old at the time of the trip. Hemingway began composing "Fathers and Sons" in 1932 as well, and so it seems, just as with Nick, the trip primed his thoughts on matters of life and death. We cannot know for certain, but the four years between the death of Hemingway's father and the composition of the story might have been a time that was "still too early" for Hemingway to record the story of his father's death.

Along these lines, Smith describes a story that Hemingway's younger sister Carol wrote for her high school magazine, one that detailed her father's suicide just two years after his death. Smith writes of Carol's work, "A fine story that must have astonished her teachers, it tells of hearing the shot, the confusion in the house, the inquest, and the gathering of the relatives to the view the body" (311). From Smith's description, Carol's story certainly seems to contain more specific details of the death than anything we could imagine from Hemingway's work. Perhaps for Hemingway, his sister's story was too much, too soon; Smith adds that Carol's story might add a different meaning to Hemingway's line, "It was a good story but there were still too many

people alive for *him* to write it” (Smith 311, emphasis his). Whatever spurred Hemingway to finally tackle the complex emotions involved in his father’s suicide, he did so on his own terms; he carefully navigated these sensitive details, just as Nick does in his own mind. Smith notes, “No other manuscripts show more extensive and detailed revisions and additions through so many versions that do those for ‘Fathers and Sons’” (310).¹⁰ In addition, the story went through several working titles, including “The Tomb of My Grandfather,” “Indian Summer,” and “Long Time Ago Good,” each telling in its own way (308-09).¹¹ The product of these revisions leaves the reader to piece together Nick’s reaction to his father’s life and death, and presumably Hemingway’s same reactions as well; the wanderings of Nick’s thoughts – the details that Hemingway chose to include – are what illuminate the emotions that lie beneath the surface.

Through all of Nick’s wanderings, the reoccurring bird imagery throughout “Fathers and Sons” offers some of the text’s most enduring indications of the relational complexity between fathers and sons. When Nick first begins to think about his father, he recalls the doctor’s “big frame, the quick movements, the wide shoulders, the hooked, hawk nose, the beard that covered the weak chin,” but he knows those memories are all secondary – he always thinks of his father’s eyesight first. He remembers, “They saw much farther and much quicker than the human eye sees.” The story continues, “and they were the great gift his father had. His father saw as [...] an eagle sees, literally” (370). This comparison of the father to an eagle reflects the previous description of his “hooked, hawk nose,” but also draws the reader back to an even earlier mention of birds in the story. When Nick first began “hunting the country in his mind,” he recalls that in hunting quail, you have to be careful that they do not fly out of their cover, whiz

¹⁰ Smith includes several interesting excerpts from the story’s drafts; the full manuscripts are stored at the Kennedy Library in Boston and are subject to selective, scholarly viewing.

¹¹ The first title emphasizes the generationality of the story through the words of Nick’s son; the second and third emphasize the Indian portion of the story, though the third more strongly indicates Nick’s nostalgia.

past your face, and make you lose your target (369). With the connections that Nick makes between Dr. Adams and birds, the quail come to represent the memories of Nick's father pouring out uncontrollably; Nick is bombarded by them, unable to think about anything else.¹²

The bird imagery continues later in the text when Nick's thoughts truly begin to wander; the story reads, "His father came back to [Nick] [...] when he saw, or heard, wild geese, or in a duck blind; remembering the time an eagle dropped through the whirling snow to strike a canvas-covered decoy, rising, his wings beating, the talons caught in the canvas" (374). In this passage, the text clearly states that a variety of wild birds make Nick think of his father; this repetitive remembrance reinforces the quail-as-memory interpretation even more. However, the eagle portion of this excerpt has led several critics to connect birds and Nick's father in a few other ways. Paul Strong notices the eagle's independent nature, calling it a "solitary, distant, somewhat scary creature" (52). For him, the frightful elusiveness of the eagle reinforces the uneasy distance in the relationship that Nick had with his father. Susan Beegel discusses the image in more detail, noting the difference between this ensnared eagle and the associations we commonly make with the animal, writing that "the eagle is highly vulnerable – not the traditional symbol of empire, strength, and prowess" (91). It's difficult to imagine today because of endangered species protection, but Beegel also notes that eagle-hunting was common in the 1930s, around the time that "Fathers and Sons" takes place. Although the story does not offer specifics, she suggests that Nick, gun in hand while watching the eagle rising in the snow, might have shot the entangled bird (91). Since the eagle is so closely tied to the father figure, a man who is supposed to embody "strength and prowess," Beegel sees the overlap of the son killing, or at least attempting to kill, the father figure at his weakest moment (91). This concept is repeated

¹² Paul Strong corroborates this reading: "Like quail, memories have their 'habitual cover,' and unless approached with care, they flush and come at us in ways we do not expect and cannot control" (52).

later in “Fathers and Sons,” when Nick remembers his momentary desire to shoot his father, “to blow him to hell” after being “whipped for lying” (375). Extending from Beegel’s reading, this imagery is also mirrored in Nick’s remembrance of the “trap” that killed his father. Falling into a trap denotes some element of the accidental, similar to the way that Nick thinks about his father’s death – his father had “much bad luck,” luck implying that intentionality is not involved (370). Even more, his father “had helped *only a little* to set” the trap – more responsibility is given to those in his life “that had betrayed him in their various ways before he died” (370, emphasis mine). The eagle’s entanglement in the decoy was unintentional, though the decoy was placed there to attract whatever animal intended, to betray that animal’s trust in some way. The eagle’s powerful wings are emphasized, fighting to be freed from the entrapping canvas. The memory, though, has no resolution – the final effect of Dr. Adams’ trap finds its way into the eagle’s outcome as well, suggesting that the trap means the death of the creature.

The correlation between avian behavior and Nick’s father occurs near the end of the text as well, but first, following the development of Nick’s thoughts and the chronology of the story, Nick’s memories move to his sexual education as a young boy. Though Nick is grateful to his father for the hunting and fishing education that he gave him, he pairs this strength with the fact that his father gave him no sort of education on sexual matters. The story reads, “His father was as sound on [hunting and fishing] as he was unsound on sex” (370). It continues, though, that “Nick was glad it had been that way; for someone has to give you your first gun or the opportunity to get it and use it” (370). In one of the few comical portions of the text, Nick contrasts the need for a hunting education with the needlessness of a sexual one: “While for the other, that his father was not sound about, all the equipment you will ever have is provided and each man learns all there is for him to know about it without advice” (370). Nick recalls the

mere two times that he discussed sex with his father, once to ask the definition of a “bugger,” which according to Dr. Adams is a person who performs the “heinous crime” of having intercourse with an animal, and the other to ask about the meaning of “mashing.” The terms references masturbation, but here, Dr. Adams answers only that it too is a “heinous crime,” leaving Nick’s childlike – and rather funny – thoughts to run wild: “Nick’s imagination pictured [a man] doing something strange, bizarre, and heinous with a potato masher to a beautiful lady” (371). Frightened by his father’s vague answer, and a little curious too, Nick “resolved, with considerable horror, that when he was old enough he would try mashing at least once” (371).

As his thoughts lead him to Trudy, the Indian girl from the Michigan summers, Nick recalls his first sexual acts that defied his father’s conservatism. Though it seems at first that his thoughts are veering away from his father, the details that we can extract from the biographically-rooted character of Trudy tie back to the father once again. Biographically, it can be assumed that Trudy is based on a girl named Prudence Boulton, possibly “Prudie,” an Indian who Hemingway was friends with during the Michigan summers.¹³ Paul Smith researched the real Prudence and discovered that in 1918, at only 16-years-old, the young girl killed herself (312). Her suicide is reflected in the story in one of the more confusing sections of the text, one in which Nick recalls the memories he has of the Indians:

[Nothing could] take that away. Nor what they did finally. It wasn’t how they ended. They all ended the same. Long time ago good. Now no good. And about the other. When you have shot one bird flying you have shot all birds flying. They are all different and they fly in different ways but the sensation is the same and the last one is as good as the first. He could thank his father for that. (376).

¹³ Although there is a slight name-change here, Nick’s Indian love interest is called “Prudie” in “Ten Indians.” Perhaps Hemingway decided to make the change in “Fathers and Sons” to avoid the unintended “prude” pun.

As with so many passages in this story, and in the Hemingway Text in general, there is more to this section than first meets the eye. Since this passage follows the scene with Nick and Trudy in the woods, it initially seems to only concern intercourse with Trudy. Nick looks back on his first sexual experiences fondly at first, “long time ago good,” but the tone shifts when he moves to “they all ended the same.” He seems nonchalant, almost dismissive, about his sexual encounter that he reflected upon before with such passion: “uncomfortably, tightly, sweetly, moistly, lovely, tightly, achingly, fully, finally, unendingly, never-endingly, never-to-endingly, suddenly ended” (376). What Nick had before was good, but now those feelings and encounters have ended. Trudy had done first to Nick “what no one has ever done better,” but in Trudy’s absence, in the life that Nick has formed outside of those Michigan woods, nothing special remains (375). If we match Trudy with Prudence, Trudy’s absence with Prudence’s suicide, then those emotions will lie permanently in the past, leaving no good for Nick now or in the future. In this passage, there is an equation between death and sex, between true death and “the little death.”

But what of the meanings that lie even deeper beneath the surface? These readings are sparked when Nick’s thoughts take a sharp turn: “And about the other.” With these four words, even with no regard for the ones that follow it, Nick’s father reenters the text. He is the other, that figure that is never too far away in Nick’s memories. Nick does not overtly name his father in this passage, but after these four words comes more bird imagery that has been tied to Nick’s father time and time again in “Fathers and Sons.” After the sequence of adverbs describing Nick’s intercourse with Trudy, the climatic end is paired with the image of a flying bird, “like an owl in the twilight” (376). But after Nick’s father comes back into the focus of his memory, we again are confronted with an injured or impaired creature – here, Nick observes that shot birds, though their flights might be different, all fall the same. The shooting action calls suicide to

mind; with Trudy's previously assumed suicide, and the "other" suicide that has been looming over the text, the "they" in the passage becomes both Trudy and Dr. Adams. "They all ended the same" becomes not just the ending of intercourse with the orgasm, but the ending of life with a gunshot. There is a bitterness in the passage that seems peculiar when applied only to early sexual experiences, but the bitterness becomes more clear when suicide is taken into consideration. "The sensation is the same" turns into something more than the repetition of the orgasm; the feeling of emptiness that Nick experiences after his father's suicide is the same that he felt after Trudy's. The final line, "He had his father to thank for that" puts the blame directly on the father for killing himself, for causing the pain that Nick has to feel again.

Although my interpretation links Trudy and Dr. Adams together by their suicides, Paul Strong sees the young girl as the doctor's foil. Her "flat eyes" contrast Dr. Adams' eyes, which are "protected in his head by the formation of the brows; set deep as though a special protection had been devised" (375, 370). Strong also writes that Trudy is "uninhibited, uncomplicated, [and] warm," especially sexually, which differs greatly from the doctor's conservatism and lack of sexual knowledge (55). However the two figures may differ, Nick's mind maintains a strong connection between the memory of sex with Trudy and the memory of his father. The reason Nick begins to think of Trudy is in reaction to his thoughts about the few things that his father taught him about sex. His first sexual encounters occurred in the very same woods where he and his father hunted. However sexually free Trudy and her brother Billy (also present in the woods) might have been, Nick, perhaps indeliberately, adopts his father's conservatism. He is guarded in sex with Trudy and feels uncomfortable that Billy is so close by. For instance, when Billy mentions that their older brother Eddie wants to sleep with Nick's sister, Nick becomes enraged and threatens to kill Eddie. He calls Eddie a "half-breed bastard," completely disregarding the

fact that if he were to have a child with Trudy, the baby could be considered a “half-breed bastard” as well (373). Through these instances, it is clear that Nick is unable to let go of his discomfort with sex – he has inherited it from his father. Strangely, right as Nick stops thinking about Trudy, the story reads, “Nick was all through thinking about his father” (374). This line suggests that even while Nick is consumed by his memories of sex, at some level he is still thinking of Dr. Adams. The impact of his father’s sexuality greatly affected Nick; either consciously or unconsciously, his father and sex are connected in Nick’s mind.

Through all the memories of his childhood and adolescence, Nick tries to escape the ties that he has to his father. Despite the closeness that Nick once had with him, now most that is left is bitterness. The line “After he was fifteen he had shared nothing with him” denies the bond between father and child, but it is one that does not easily fade away. Importantly, Nick shares a common characteristic with his father: sentimentality. Although Hemingway as the writer intentionally included this commonality, it might be one that Nick is not consciously aware of. In gruff outdoorsmen like Dr. Adams and Nick, and in characters seen time and time again in the Hemingway Code, a sentimental nature is viewed as a weakness. Nick describes his father as “sentimental, and, like most sentimental people, he was both cruel and abused [...] All sentimental people are betrayed so many times” (370). Some guilt is hinted in this passage, especially when one considers Nick to be the author of his story; perhaps the guilt lies in Nick’s sharing memories of his father that paint Dr. Adams in a negative light. Nick’s concern about presenting his father in a written text is reflected in the passage about the undertaker at his father’s funeral. The story reads that Nick had complimented the undertaker on the “handsome job [he] had done on his father’s face,” leaving the undertaker “both proud and smugly pleased” (371). The narration continues, though, that this was not all the undertaker’s doing: “It was not

the undertaker who had given [Dr. Adams] that last face. The undertaker had only made certain dashing executed repairs of doubtful artistic merit. The face had been making itself and being made for a long time” (371). Susan Beegel senses a camaraderie between Nick and the undertaker, finding that Nick identifies with the undertaker’s pride in the presentation of the father. Like the undertaker displays the man in the coffin, Nick displays his father in the story. However, Nick realized that both are inaccurate representations. Beegel writes, “The momentary identification...reflects not only shame for planning to exploit the father’s suicide in a story, but also for failing to tell that story honestly” (83). This connection between the undertaker’s untrue presentation and Nick’s own is reinforced when at the end of the passage, Nick once more struggles with his writing project, thinking, “It was a good story but there were still too many people alive for him to write it” (371).

A similar feeling of writer’s guilt can be sensed in Hemingway’s biography; in a 1925 letter to his father, Hemingway insisted that in the Michigan stories, “the country is always true—what happens in the stories is fiction” (*SL* 153). To counteract his audiences’ search of autobiographical roots, he enforced the following disclaimer at the beginning of several of his works: “In view of a recent tendency to identify characters in fiction with real people, it seems proper to state that there are no real people in this volume: both the characters and their names are fictitious. If the name of any living person has been used, the use was purely accidental” (Leff 140). Hemingway’s evasion of the biographical readings of his texts is in some ways similar to Nick’s writing evasion in “Fathers and Sons.” But even beyond his hesitation to write the story of his father, Nick makes attempt after attempt to disassociate himself from Dr. Adams. Though Nick criticized his father for his sentimentality, Nick himself shows that same character trait throughout the story – it is the trait that guides his entire journey through his memories. As

Nick dismisses his father's personality throughout the text, he actually informs the reader of how much he still shares with his father.

Nick and Dr. Adams shared the good, the bad, and the ugly just as Hemingway and his father did. The cycle lasted from the boys' childhoods until their fathers' deaths, and then even afterward. The presence of Nick's son during the car-ride in "Fathers and Sons," and especially in the dialogue between him and Nick at the end of the story, signifies the continuity of the father-son relationship. Through my interpretation, however, the relationship, at least in the Adams/Hemingway family, seems to be doomed. Consider again the first Nick Adams story, "Indian Camp." Paul Strong points out that this story features a canoe-ride between father and son, Dr. Adams and Nick, at dawn. Alternatively, "Fathers and Sons," the last Nick Adams story, features a car-ride between Nick and his son from dusk into the nighttime. In "Indian Camp," after the father-son talk about suicide and death, the son feels "quite sure he [will] never die" (70). Years later, that son has come to understand that everyone dies, and sometimes by their own doing. The new son, Nick's son, does not have the optimism that his father once had. He is aware of death and is concerned about where his family, including himself, will be buried. The movement from dawn to night and from immortality to awareness seems to be a complete cycle, one that cannot easily start again in the next generation (Strong 57).

In reality, the father-son relationship between Ernest and Dr. Hemingway seems to have been doomed as well. The struggles of the father passed on to the son, and then even to the grandson. In his later life, Hemingway had the same troubles that his father did. His family heredity gave the author problems with blood pressure, insomnia, diabetes, and severe depression that finally culminated in suicide (Reynolds "Home" 609). After his adolescence, Hemingway, like Nick, shared close to nothing with his father (600-01). Though Ernest and Dr.

Hemingway always shared a passion for hunting, the bond grew less important with time, just as with Nick and Dr. Adams. This dying bond between father and son appears again in later texts to be discussed, but a line from “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something” bears particular significance here: “It was sad to know that shooting did not mean a thing” (601). In that story, the line refers to the Hemingway-figure and his own son, but when paired with “Fathers and Sons,” it seems to apply to Nick and his father as well. Across all generations, when shooting no longer means anything, there is nothing left.

In writing “Fathers and Sons,” Hemingway makes an attempt to cope with the confusion and anger involved in his father’s death. However, it seems that the story was not a successful coping device; Hemingway struggled with the memories of his father his whole life. Ironically, he became his father in many ways. He spoiled his sons at a young age, but then became a distant father later on. He suffered from the same illnesses that his father had, and ended his life in the same way, very close to the same age. In a look ahead to the next chapters of this project, we can see how the troubled memories of “Fathers and Sons” are generational struggles. Although Bumby Hemingway, Ernest’s first child, is viewed as the basis for Nick’s son in “Fathers and Sons,” Hemingway’s relationship with his third and last child, Gregory, better represents the doomed father-son cycle that we see in Hemingway’s fiction. Like his father before him, Gregory experienced a falling out with his father and suffered from mental illness. Though he did not commit suicide, his life ended tragically as well. In another generational similarity, Gregory also shared a great passion for hunting with his father. Thus, we see the bond three times, with Ernest and Dr. Hemingway, Nick and Dr. Adams, and Gregory and Ernest (the bond is hinted at once more with Nick and his son, when Nick promises that his son will learn to hunt soon). In those three instances, the bond faded away with time. With time comes mental

illness, something that played an enormous part in the hopelessness of Hemingway father-son relationships. Gregory lived his life questioning his relationship with his father and feeling guilty about his father's suicide, exactly mirroring Nick Adams (and Ernest) in "Fathers and Sons." He even began his memoir with the line, "I never got over a sense of responsibility for my father's death" (*Papa* 19). Written decades later by the son of the author, these words almost seem like they could be an excerpt from Nick's thoughts in "Fathers and Sons." But, whatever the bitterness, the hate, and the confusion that could be found in Hemingway's relationship with his father, and later, Gregory's relationship with Ernest, a great yearning for what used to be was always present. Perhaps that nostalgia made it impossible to deal with the present, impossible for the generational Hemingway sons to cope with the deterioration of the father-son relationship. This impossibility becomes the meaning of "Fathers and Sons."

CHAPTER THREE

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

By the time Ernest Hemingway was thirty-two years old, he had become a husband twice and a papa three times. John, known as “Bumby” during his childhood, was born to Hemingway and his first wife, Hadley Richardson, in the fall of 1923. Hemingway began an affair with Pauline Pfeiffer in 1926, divorced Hadley in January of 1927, and married Pauline that May.¹⁴ Patrick was born the following year, and his last son, Gregory, several years later in 1931. In many ways, Hemingway’s relationship with his young sons mirrored the relationship he had with his father when he was growing up; father and sons bonded in the outdoors, the father passing down his knowledge of hunting and fishing to his successors. Years later, conflict would emerge just as with Hemingway and his own father, but by most accounts, the early years that the Hemingway sons spent with Papa seem to have been filled with love and adventure. In 1940, Ernest and Pauline’s marriage ended in divorce, this one spurred by another of Ernest’s affairs, now with Martha Gellhorn. Pauline maintained custody of Andrew and Gregory; Ernest spent only a few weeks a year with the boys, but his letters reveal that at least at first, Hemingway attempted to maintain a strong relationship with his sons.

Just as his father before him, Hemingway was an avid letter writer and wrote to his children while they were at school. Many of Hemingway’s letters have been published, many more can be viewed by scholars at the Kennedy Library, and a select portion are stored at the

¹⁴ Hemingway and Pauline Pfeiffer divorced in 1940 and Hemingway married Martha Gellhorn later the same year. These two divorced in 1945 and then Hemingway married Mary Welsh in 1946. Mary and Hemingway remained married until his death in 1961.

Library but kept from the public eye because of their controversial content, some of which almost certainly reveal the disintegration of Ernest's relationship with his son Gregory. Lou Mandler surveyed the collection of letters that Hemingway wrote to Patrick and Gregory while the boys studied at Canterbury Prep School in Connecticut in the 1940s. When the letters are reviewed together, Mandler finds that they demonstrate a "strong thread of paternal affection" that would surprise anyone familiar only with the author's legendary – albeit problematic – machismo (107).¹⁵ He lists the nicknames that Hemingway nearly always called his children by – Mouse or Mousie for Patrick, Gig or Giggy for Gregory – and includes quotations from and summaries of letters that reflect Hemingway's concern for his children. Letter topics ranged from sporting advice, to praise of academic successes, to scolding his sons for not writing him often enough. In a piece of rather comical advice on playing football, Hemingway's token masculine bravado shines through: "Try always to fall sideways so as to protect your balls as in boxing. Wear a jockstrap when you play" (qtd. in Mandler 113, *SL* 543). His joking nature is evident again, though this time perhaps more intentionally, when praising Patrick for his success before his high school graduation. He compared himself to an "old Italian woman" with intelligent sons; furthermore, he told Patrick he would make an effort to avoid grammatical mistakes in his letters so as not to embarrass him (109).¹⁶ These letters depict Hemingway as a father who cherished his children and yearned to maintain a close relationship in spite of the separation caused by physical distance and divorce.

¹⁵ To this day, Hemingway is popularly defined by common readers for his womanizing, drinking, boxing, fishing, hunting, and general displays of masculinity. However, Hemingway critics have been troubling this legendary machismo for decades. This important critical trend was triggered by the gender-bending themes of *The Garden of Eden*, posthumously published in 1986. Mark Spilka, Nancy Comley and Robert Scholes, and Carl Eby most notably studied issues of gender in the Hemingway Text and directed the field away from a purely masculine-centered approach to the author and his works.

¹⁶ The quickest review of Hemingway's personal writings reveal how atrocious the author's spelling was. Even his famously refined polysyndetonic sentences would be marked up as run-on sentences in any freshman's writing. Editors exist for the former, and the latter largely defines Hemingway's remarkably rhythmic style.

These happier times in Hemingway's relationships with his sons are reflected in the opening section of the posthumously published *Islands in the Stream*. Hemingway worked on the novel in 1950 and 1951, but it was left unfinished at his death in 1961. It was released in 1970, having been condensed and edited by Charles Scribner, Jr. and Mary Welsh Hemingway, the author's fourth and final wife.¹⁷ The autobiographical connections of the text are undeniable as in many of Hemingway's texts, but as Fred Ashe points out, the novel is the "[only] sustained portrait of [Hemingway's] life as the father of three young boys" (89). In *Islands in the Stream*, the portrait is fictionalized with the Hemingway code hero of Thomas Hudson and his three sons, Tom, David, and Andrew. The novel is separated into three acts, each titled by the location in which that portion of the text takes place: "Bimini," "Cuba," and "At Sea." The boys appear in the novel in the first act only, though they cast a shadow over the entire text. In the "Bimini" act, Thomas Hudson, divorced from his sons' mothers, is reunited with his young sons for the summer on the Bahaman island of Bimini.¹⁸ In this act, Thomas Hudson and his sons spend their time together fishing, diving, and boating, and for the most part, "Bimini" is happy act. However, there is a darker side to the novel's section, for it ends in the unexpected death of Hudson's two youngest sons. In the "Cuba" section, Hudson learns of his oldest son's death in the war, and in the "At Sea" section, Hudson himself dies while chasing German U-boats in the Caribbean. The novel overtly resembles Hemingway's life in countless ways: Thomas Hudson

¹⁷ Foreseeing the inevitable controversy of "finishing" a novel left unfinished by the author, Scribner and Mary Welsh Hemingway inserted the following disclaimer at the beginning of *Islands and the Stream*: "Beyond the routine chores of correcting spelling and punctuation, we made some cuts in the manuscript, I feeling that Ernest would surely have made them himself. The book is all Ernest. We have added nothing to it."

¹⁸ In *Islands in the Stream*, young Tom is the son of Hudson and his first wife and David and Andrew are the sons of Hudson and his second wife. David and Andrew are full brothers and young Tom is their half-brother. The fraternal relationships of Hudson's boys mirror the fraternal relationships of Hemingway's sons – the author's first wife Hadley was Bumby's mother and Hemingway's second wife Pauline was the mother of Patrick and Gregory. In the novel, though, young Tom rejects this familial separation. He says to his father, "You know at school somebody said David was my half brother, not my real brother, and I told him we didn't have half brothers in our family" (127).

mirrors Hemingway in his artistry and marriage history; the sons are separated in age just as Hemingway's sons were; Hemingway spent several summers with his sons in Bimini (though according to Fred Ashe, the first act also corresponds to summers spent in Cuba¹⁹); and Hudson's boat is almost a direct reflection of Hemingway's *Pilar*, which the author also used to hunt German U-boats during WWII. Mark Spilka writes that Hudson raises his sons as Clarence Hemingway had raised his: "as empirical novices in a simplistic world of externals, a world of physical adventures from which complicated questions about human relations are excluded or unasked" (263). In many ways, the world of *Islands in the Stream* mimics Hemingway's own worlds of being a father and of being a son.

The instances in which Hemingway's life and *Islands in the Stream* converge garner much critical interest; in the wake of divorce and family separation, the warm, salty air of Bimini offers an almost-ideal setting for the relationships between father and sons, both fictional and autobiographical, to thrive. Unavoidably, though, the relationships cannot endure. Just as in "Fathers and Sons," the father-son relationship is colored by nostalgia and anxiety. Hudson longs for his first wife and wishes that the family could somehow be reunited. He faults himself for being an absent father, and importantly, worries about Andrew's "dark side" that only Hudson himself can understand. In a modern reading, these anxieties reflect off the page as manifestations of Hemingway's own struggles with fatherhood and the dark side of Gregory that he had become all too familiar with in his older age.²⁰ But importantly, the ways that Hemingway's life and *Islands in the Stream* diverge also call for much attention. After a learned

¹⁹ Ashe finds that "Bimini" is a composite of several summers: "Hemingway spent large portions of the summers of 1935, 1936, and 1937 in Bimini, although at this time he was still married to his second wife, Pauline, and his boys from that marriage were very young. [...] Hence, 'Bimini' would seem to graft the post-divorce (1940) summer visits of Hemingway's sons to their father's new home in Cuba onto his mid-1930s summers in Bimini" (90).

²⁰ Ernest and Gregory's uniquely troubled relationship is hinted at in *Islands in the Stream*, though it will become more developed in the stories of the next chapter, "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something" and "Great News from the Mainland."

reader comes to expect a biographical mapping of Hemingway's life in the novel, the sons' deaths, and the father's too, come as a great shock. Hemingway did not witness the deaths of his sons during his lifetime, but the fictional deaths of his sons and Hudson's subsequent attempts to cope reflect an author who is faced with the impossibility of an enduring kinship between father and sons. Written from the perspective of the father, *Islands in the Stream* descends from "Fathers and Sons" – now, the father mourns the loss of his children. For Thomas Hudson, and seemingly for Hemingway too, there can be no healing of the broken bond between a father and his children. In this chapter, my reading of *Islands in the Stream* will once again reveal the disintegration of the father and son relationship, proving that in the Hemingway Text, it is a love that somehow cannot persist.

The opening pages of *Islands in the Stream* depict Thomas Hudson's bachelor lifestyle on the island of Bimini; his days are filled with drinking, painting, and more drinking. Thomas Hudson's emotional uncertainty and self-destructive habits are obvious from the earliest pages of the novel. The third-person limited narrative describes the stacks of driftwood alongside Hudson's island home, and here the reader find the first instance of the lead character's misplaced affection: "he would become fond of different pieces [of driftwood] so that he would hate to burn them" (11). Fondness for beautiful and aged pieces of driftwood is understandable enough, though the reader will find that Hudson often feels a closeness to objects and animals in place of the emotions he should feel for his family and friends. The detail that follows this driftwood fondness further suggests that something is amiss. Later, Hudson would find that "it was fun to burn even the pieces he was fond of" and though he feels that the burning of his favorite pieces is somehow wrong, "he felt no guilt about it" (11). The shift here, from fondness to destruction, and his knowing lack of guilt foreshadow Hudson's emotional struggles with his

own sons, his destructive habits that have torn his family apart, and his ultimate inability to address his emotions while his children are alive and then too after their deaths. “Bimini” opens with Thomas Hudson’s contented isolation; he looks forward to his sons’ impending visit in the spring, but still enjoys the solitude of winter best (12).

When the boys do arrive several pages in and the reader begins to know the characters, Thomas Hudson does seem genuinely happy to have the boys on the island. The narration is colored by the character’s feelings, and his affection for his sons often shines through in the chapter’s descriptions. Like the typical Hemingway code hero, Hudson has trouble sleeping at night, but he finds comfort in the sound of his sons’ breathing while they sleep on the screened porch (56). As the act continues, character descriptions of Hudson’s sons begin to emerge; we come to know the eldest, Tom, as a well-spoken and intelligent young man, one who endearingly attempts to act cultured and wise beyond his years. Tom likes to remember his youth in Paris, or at least likes to “remember” the stories he has heard about his “friends” Mr. Pound and Mr. Joyce (67-71). Here of course, Tom is modeled on Bumby during Hemingway and Hadley’s Lost Generation days. David, the middle son, is stoic and inquisitive and reminds Hudson of an otter with his brown hair and dark gold tan. The narration reads, “He always reminded his father of the sort of animal that has a sound and humorous life by itself [...] He had a lovely small-animal quality and he had a good mind and a life of his own” (57). As with Tom’s modeling, David also resembles Hemingway’s middle son Patrick in his independent and carefree demeanor. The boys refer to their father as Papa time and time again in the text, and their actions around him reflect love and admiration for their Papa Hudson.

The youngest son, Andrew, does not necessarily receive more narrative attention than the other two sons, but the descriptions of him in the “Bimini” act depict a secretly troubled young

boy. The resemblance that the two older boys bear to their biographical counterparts makes for an interesting read, but they do not tell us much about Bumby and Patrick except that they were probably normal, fun, and intelligent children. However, the connections between Andrew and Gregory are darker and thus much more significant – readers cannot escape the oddities that surround Andrew’s character and the implications that the character has for its real-life counterpart. The narration tells us that Andrew greatly resembled Thomas Hudson, just as Gregory physically resembled Hemingway. Other commonalities between father and son are reinforced several times in the text. In the first description of Andrew, the narration tells us that “He was a devil too, and deviled both his older brothers, and he had a dark side to him that nobody except Thomas Hudson could ever understand” (57). The darker side is never explicitly explained, but the commonality is reinforced when the novel continues, “Neither of them thought about this except that they recognized it in each other and knew it was bad and the man respected it and understood the boy’s having it” (57).

Hudson seems concerned that Andrew is much too similar to himself, though the worrisome qualities escape the reader’s perception. In his article “‘A Very Attractive Devil’: Gregory Hemingway in *Islands in the Stream*,” Fred Ashe explores Hudson’s seemingly unwarranted hostility toward his young son in great detail; he writes that Hudson’s harsh criticism of Andrew “raises the likelihood that he is projecting self-doubt on his young son” (89). Ashe posits that Hemingway transferred his own struggles with the boundaries of gender and the realization that his youngest son was a compulsive cross-dresser onto the relationship between Hudson and Andrew in the novel. Critics have traced Hemingway’s learning of Gregory’s cross-dressing to no later than 1946 when fourteen-year-old Gregory was caught stealing underwear from his stepmother Mary Walsh Hemingway. Gregory’s habits came to a head in 1951 when he

was arrested for entering a women's restroom, dressed in women's clothing (91). Ashe points out that around this time, too, Hemingway was dealing with gender-bending themes in his writing, most notably seen in *The Garden of Eden*, which Hemingway began writing in 1946 but left unfinished at the time of his death. Much criticism has been done on this work that was posthumously published in 1986 to trace the fictional gender-swapping of its characters in Hemingway's own relationships. Studies of Hemingway's own struggles with gender, both fictionally and biographically, have been ground-breaking in the field of Hemingway criticism and have made its students question Hemingway's legendary reputation of bravado and machismo.²¹ In *Islands in the Stream*, these issues appear ever so slightly in Hudson's troubled relationship with his son Andrew; the conflict is referenced only in the broadest of terms. Hudson shows some sympathy for his son's "devilry" at times – he concedes that only he can truly understand his son. At one time he chastises himself for thinking of Andrew so harshly: "What a miserable, selfish way to be thinking about the people you love, he thought" (144). Overall, though, Hudson's feelings for Andrew throughout *Islands in the Stream* are characterized by an almost fearful awe. Andrew might appear to be a normal boy, but Hudson knows the truth: "He was a boy born to be quite wicked who was being very good and he carried his wickedness around with him transmuted into a sort of teasing gaiety. But he was a bad boy and the others knew it and he knew it. He was just being good while his badness grew inside him" (58). Only the mapping of Gregory Hemingway onto Andrew Hudson can explain such apprehension from a father – the son's wickedness threatens both figures in the father-son relationship.

Hudson's troubled impressions of Andrew are only one aspect of the strained relationships between father and sons in *Islands in the Stream*. The "Bimini" act has an island

²¹ See footnote 15.

slowness throughout, but there are two incidents that heighten its dramatic effect: one involves a really big shark, the other a really big marlin, both feature David most prominently, and both leave Hudson feeling defeated in his role as a father. In this first incident, the boys are spear-fishing near a reef when an enormous hammerhead is drawn to the bloody water around David after the middle son has speared a fish. Thomas Hudson and the cook Eddy are aboard the ship as the shark approaches, “slicing through the water with heavy, tail-propelled, lunging thrusts” (87-88). Hudson shoots at the shark with a .256, misses, shoots again, misses, shoots again, and misses. All the while, the shark continues to weave toward David who by then has become aware of the shark’s approach. Hudson “felt sick to his stomach, as though something had hold of him inside and was gripping him there,” knowing that he has but one shell left (88). While Hudson struggles to shoot the shark, Eddy runs to the stern and fires the submachine gun at the hammerhead, hitting it and driving its enormous body to flail above the water before sinking to its death.

Hudson essentially choked; though neither he nor the reader will ever know if he could have hit the shark with his final shot, Hudson did not save his own son. Instead, the cook Eddy rescued the boy. Hudson is overwhelmed, as is everyone in the scene, and his novelist friend Roger Davis gets the boys back on the boat. David tries to remain collected and soon pleads with his father to let him go out in the water again. Hudson subtly expresses his sense of failure, saying to David that he had already endangered his son enough for one day. David says to his father, “Papa, we were all out there. Don’t make yourself some sort of special guilt about it” (93). Here, David’s is the rational voice, and he attempts to comfort his father despite the fact that it was his life that had been threatened in the water. Hudson senses the imbalance and attempts to correct himself. “Didn’t he come just like a hound though?” he says to his sons, and

the narration continues, “He was trying to get rid of the emotion.” Still, he succumbs to his feelings of failure again, telling his son, “I’m very ashamed I couldn’t hit him.” Now, it is young Tom that tries to comfort his father by saying, “You were shooting awfully close to him, papa” (93). The scene eventually comes to a close after Hudson has had some time for private reflection. He stifles his feelings of paternal failure and reorders his emotions, choosing not to think about the day’s dramatic events and his ultimate shortcomings.

The second event of the “Bimini” section that shakes Hudson’s paternal grounding is a much more drawn-out affair. On another fishing trip, this one aboard Hudson’s boat, David again takes center stage by hooking an enormous marlin.²² The boy struggles to contain the fish that he has caught only a fleeting glimpse of: “the calm of the ocean broke open and the great fish rose out of it, rising, shining dark blue and silver, seeming to come endlessly out of the water, unbelievable as his length and bulk rose out of the sea into the air and seemed to hang there until he fell with a splash that drove the water up high and white” (123). The men had never seen a larger fish and guessed that it weighed at least one thousand pounds. The hours pass, two, three, and four go by, and David still has the massive creature hooked, but he cannot reel it in. During the extended ordeal (it spans thirty pages in the book), Thomas Hudson strategically steers the boat to help David maintain his hold. His brothers, Roger, and Eddy help David as much as they can, bringing him water and attempting to relieve his chapped and raw hands and feet. Catching the fish is David’s battle alone – it is David’s fish, and all on board respect his singular struggle. When young Tom expresses his worry for David to his father,

²² Although *The Old Man and the Sea* was inspired by a real Cuban fisherman’s days-long struggle with a great marlin (Baker 294), the similar subject matter of the novella and David’s experience here in *Islands in the Stream* is striking. In his memoir, Gregory Hemingway remembers a fishing trip from his youth that at first resembles this episode in the novel. His brother Patrick (David’s real-life counterpart) hooked a marlin aboard the *Pilar*, but the real-life occurrence did not progress as the fiction does. Gregory writes, “The force of the strike was so great that it would have jerked him overboard if [Patrick had] tried to hold the rod. Instinctively, he had sensed the strength of the fish, and had just let go, relinquishing rod, reel, and line to the sea” (47).

Hudson replies, “There is a time boys have to do things if they are ever going to be men. That’s where Dave is now” (132). Hudson sees this experience as a rite of passage for David – if he catches this fish, it will somehow make him a man. He further explains to his eldest son, “If David catches this fish he’ll have something inside him for all his life and it will make everything else easier” (132). David is in the position of the Hemingway code hero who, in the words of Robert Gajdusek, must make that journey that “most frequently exists at the center of the elaborated distinction between unindividuated boyhood and mature manhood” (170). Hudson speaks of the journey as a nearly mystical feat, a mysterious and masculine “something” that David will gain, only if he can hold on long enough to reel the fish in. It is almost as if he will gain a code-hero-like sense of assuredness. As David’s father, Hudson believes he knows enough to stand back and let David forego this rite of passage alone.

But, David loses the pulling match with the great marlin, and like before, Hudson is left feeling disconnected from his son and disappointed in his performance as a father. David’s rite of passage is botched, just like Nick Adams’ rite in “Indian Camp,” and again, the father is the one responsible. After the fish escapes, Thomas Hudson watches Roger Davis, who had been coaching the child through the entire ordeal, put his arms around the shaking and exhausted David. The narration reads simply, “But he left David to Roger” (140). In the pages that follow, the reader learns more about Hudson’s paternal difficulties with the marlin experience, but here, in this first hint, we see Hudson’s concern over not having been there for his son, for having let another man act in the fatherly role. Hudson was almost an outsider during the hours and hours of the attempted catch; he played a crucial role by controlling the direction of the boat, but Roger was the one who stood by David’s side and guided him through the process. Hudson stood aside during the rite of passage, and David did not make it through to the other side – at least, not in

the way that Hudson initially intended. While David recuperates from the battle, he politely replies to his brothers' and father's comments, but there is a clear distance between David and his family – he says to Andrew, “Nobody knows how I feel” (140). When Hudson sweetly comforts the boy, David pushes him away, saying back to him, “Thank you very much, papa. Please don't talk about it” (141). Yet at the end of the chapter, David opens up to the group, telling them that in the worst and most tiresome moments of the battle, “I couldn't tell which was him and which was me.” He communed with the creature, grew to love it in the fight, and when the fight was over and he had lost, he wished the marlin no harm: “I'm glad that he's all right and that I'm all right. We aren't enemies” (143). When Hudson spoke with young Tom on the flying bridge, he said that if David were to catch the fish, he would gain that “something” that would make his life easier; but since David lost the fish, it seems that David let that something slip from his grasp. From the boy's words at the close of the chapter, though, it seems that David did undergo a maturing experience, that he did gain something positive from the fight, even though he might have technically lost the battle with the fish. David steps outside of the masculine ideals of his father and the Hemingway code hero at large to quickly find meaning and a strange sort of satisfaction from the experience.

The divide between father and son becomes even stronger in the very last lines of the chapter and continuing into the next. After David opens up to the group about his experience, Thomas Hudson says to his son, “I'm glad you told us.” Directly after, David says “Thank you very much,” leading the reader to believe that David is thanking his father for his help and support. But instead, the thanks is directed to Roger Davis. The full line reads, ““Thank you very much, Mr. Davis, for what you said when I first lost [the fish],’ David said with his eyes still shut.” What follows, the last line of the chapter, leaves a lasting effect: “Thomas Hudson

never knew what it was that Roger had said to him” (143). At the chapter’s close, the bond between David and Roger, a bond that Hudson cannot understand, is what separates father from son. They had been disconnected from one another all day, but the distance is no more evident than in these lines. In the next chapter, the group is still reeling from the day’s events. Hudson is unable to fall asleep that night and reflects on the day. He is well aware of the distance that grew between him and David, and he sees a distance in his relationship with Andrew, too. The novel reads, “It seemed as though all of his children except Tom had gone a long way away from him or he had gone away from them” (143). Young Tom had kept his father company as Hudson steered the boat, but both David and Andrew had been part of the adventure on deck with Roger Davis. Hudson’s reflections continue in the narration, “David was always a mystery to Thomas Hudson. He was a well-loved mystery. But Roger understood him better than his own father did. He was happy they did understand each other so well but tonight he felt lonely in some way about it” (144). It seems to be a rather sad truth for a father to admit that a surrogate father figure understands a son better than the real father; Hudson’s “happiness” at Roger and David’s relationship flimsily masks his ultimate loneliness after the day’s events.

This mask peels away later in the chapter when Hudson and Roger discuss David and the marlin. Roger feels guilty that he let David hold onto the fish for as long as he did, but Hudson quickly corrects Roger, telling him that it was the father’s responsibility to “call it off.” Here, though, it seems that Hudson claims paternal responsibility in broader terms than just David’s battle with the fish. He says to Roger, “The father has the responsibility [...] And I turned it over to you when I had no right to. It isn’t anything to delegate” (153). Hudson grasps for paternal control and tries to assert himself as the rightful father, the one with responsibility for his sons. He attempts to correct his wrongdoing of neglecting David during a pivotal event in his

son's life. More broadly, he attempts to rein in the relationships with his sons that are slipping away from him, but as the "Bimini" act progresses, it is clear that he can never quite regain his children. Subsequently, Hudson feels "the happiness of the summer [begin] to drain out of him as when the tide changes on the flats and the ebb begins in the channel that opens out to sea" (190).

The summer eventually comes to a close, and suddenly, the boys are rowed out to a seaplane to take them away from the island. Their goodbyes are colored by the past events of the act, but they also foreshadow the most significant event that is yet to come. Interestingly, the narration does not touch on Hudson the day that the boys leave; the absence of his thoughts and dialogue with the boys hints that the separation is almost too tormenting to describe. We are given each of the sons' goodbyes: Young Tom yells from the dinghy, "Goodbye, papa. It certainly was a swell summer"; "David cries out, "Goodbye, papa. It certainly was wonderful. Don't worry about anything. We'll be careful"; and Andrew adds, "Goodbye, papa. Thanks for a wonderful, wonderful summer and for the trip to Paris" (191). Each son adds a statement to his farewell that portrays his personality and relationship to Hudson, but it is the repetition of "Goodbye, papa" and the omission of Hudson's words in this scene that cast an foreboding shadow on the boys' departure. The next day, Roger leaves the island as well. In a matter of hours, Hudson is alone again; he admits to his bartender, "It's going to be goddam lonely" (192). A distance grew between Hudson and his sons that summer, particularly David and Andrew, but he does not yet know how permanent their separation will become.

Permanence arrives with a telegram. Some time after the boys' departure, Hudson receives a telegram from his Paris bank that reads: "YOUR SONS DAVID AND ANDREW KILLED WITH THEIR MOTHER IN MOTOR ACCIDENT NEAR BIARRITZ ATTENDING

TO EVERYTHING PENDING YOUR ARRIVAL DEEPEST SYMPATHY” (193).²³ It seems as though the entire act has been building to this moment, the moment of realization that a relationship can never be restored, that the former happiness of Bimini will never again be possible. The passage moves quickly, and Hudson is soon aboard a ship to take him to Paris to make arrangements. He tries to constrain his emotions and distract himself with drinking and reading, but he “learn[s] that you cannot read *The New Yorker* when people that you love have just died” (196). The reader sees glimmers of Hudson’s inner turmoil on the voyage; he drinks, he tries not to think about it, he scolds himself for thinking about it, he regrets having loved his sons so deeply in the first place. He creates for himself a system of coping, one that will continue on and dominate the rest of *Islands in the Stream*. Hudson’s tragic and oftentimes cynical grief bleeds through his thoughts as he pushes himself to move on. He is able to return to *The New Yorker* a few days later, finding that “it’s evidently a magazine that you can read on the fourth day after something happens” (198). His tepid recovery is forced, and he knowingly thinks to himself, “You see, [...] there’s nothing to it” (198).

In many ways, the rest of *Islands in the Stream* concerns Hudson’s coping with the loss of his sons. The deaths of Andrew and David are the initial blow, but years later, Hudson is damaged yet again by young Tom’s death during the war. Several critics position the deaths of Hudson’s sons in a larger pattern of the Hemingway Text. Gajdusek writes, “Again and again in the Hemingway oeuvre there is, in fact or metaphor, a son figure who, to support the father, tries to assume his place, as substitute or usurper. Inevitably this son becomes a sacrifice who must be eliminated or transcended that the true father [...] may be restored to power” (174). Comley

²³ In 1946, all three of Hemingway’s sons took a cross-country road trip with Pauline. Mandler cites a letter in which Hemingway expresses his concern for their safety on the trip; he had grown incredibly worried and agitated when his sons had failed to contact him with updates (109-10). Perhaps Hemingway’s fear for his sons’ safety on this car trip (with Pauline as their chaperon, no less) informed this tragic event in the novel’s plot.

and Scholes also find an underlying power struggle between father and son, writing that “the very birth of the son threatens the life and the father” for both Hemingway and his protagonists; in Comley and Scholes’ reading, the deaths of the sons in *Islands in the Stream* is almost inevitable if Thomas Hudson is going to continue on in the novel (16). However, Thomas Hudson cannot quite fit into the models of Gajdusek and Comley and Scholes because he also dies at the end of the novel.²⁴ He is no victor, and in no way is Hudson triumphant after the deaths of his sons and throughout the rest of the novel. His grief weighs on him, almost smothers him, and throughout the “Cuba” act, it becomes increasingly clearer that for Thomas Hudson, the father-son relationship is doomed. A novel that began with such happiness between father and sons has slowly evolved into a story of a failed father who is completely alone with his memories. Just as Hudson avoided thinking about difficult matters in “Bimini,” so too does he try to ignore his emotions and grief in “Cuba” and “At Sea.” A Cuban deck-hand named Willie calls Hudson a “grief hoarder,” accusing the man of holding in his grief and sharing it with no one to lessen the burden; grief is all that the grief hoarder has left. Willie’s comment seems perfectly applicable to Hudson; he further tells him, “You might as well hoard it so as to have something” (264). In this brief scene, Willie also draws attention to Hudson’s cat companions. They are one thing, no matter how feeble, that Hudson still has left.

In fact, a closer look at Hudson’s cats reveals how important they are to Hudson in his coping process, particularly his cat Boise.²⁵ Importantly, Hudson, “now, for a long time,” has called this cat Boy for short – perhaps this nickname began after the death of his sons. The

²⁴ The conclusion of *Islands in the Stream* is not fully clear on whether or not Hudson’s gunshot wound is fatal –the words “Hudson died” do not appear in the text. Some critics keep this ambiguity in mind, but others (including myself) assume his death from the text’s implications.

²⁵ Cats are predominately featured in Hemingway’s life and fiction. The author famously owned over fifty cats at the Finca, where we find Thomas Hudson now. Carl Eby takes a psychoanalytic approach in investigating cats’ significance in Hemingway’s life, identifying them as a representation of Hemingway’s documented hair fetish. For more, see chapter 4 of *Hemingway’s Fetishism*.

telegram about the car crash at the end of “Bimini” is directly followed by a long passage about Boy at the beginning of “Cuba,” so the two story-lines seem closely linked. Furthermore, the boys had convinced Hudson to keep the cat years ago, and now Hudson is terrified of losing Boy too. Even the car crash itself transfers into Hudson’s relationship with Boy; the narration tells of Hudson spotting a dead cat on the side of the road that looked like Boy, that he felt “sick inside” and had to stop the car to ensure that the cat was not his (203). Elsewhere, the novel reads, “He had thought that he did not know what he would do Boise should be killed [...] He thought, from his actions and his desperations, that the cat felt the same way about the man” (203-04). Throughout the “Cuba” act, Hudson’s deep love for Boise and his sometimes astounding personification of him indicates a man’s desperate attempt to replace the love he once had for his sons onto his new companion.²⁶ Hudson’s unique dealings with non-human objects continues in the “At Sea” chapter; here Hudson talks to his guns and significantly, he and the crew often refer to their weapons as *niños*, the Spanish masculine word for “children.” The father/son-like relationship that Hudson forms with his guns is certainly more subversive than his relationship with Boise, but Hudson and his crew make a big joke out of the *niños*; regardless, their inclusion late in the novel deepens Hudson’s desolation and loss of meaningful human relationships, a loss that has been deepening since the death of his sons and the end of his real paternal role.²⁷

So many struggles weigh on Thomas Hudson throughout *Islands in the Stream* and though his death at the end of the novel may surprise the reader at first, there is much in his struggles that predicts his demise. One night in the “Bimini” act, Hudson and Roger stay up late talking, and Roger tells Hudson about his younger brother that drowned when he was a child.

²⁶ Recall the first instance of Hudson’s misplaced affection, a fondness for driftwood from the beginning pages of the novel.

²⁷ Arnold Sabatelli corroborates this connection between the boys, Boise, and the *niños*. He writes, “Unlike many other images from the three sections which are clearly meant to echo and intensify meaning in a similar manner, this is a case of not only emotive and tonal repetition but of exact linguistic repetition” (178).

Hudson had never heard the story, and Roger tells him, “You never get over it and sooner or later I have to tell it” (78). The dead boy of Roger’s story foreshadows the death of Hudson’s boys, but significantly, Roger’s words also foretell Hudson’s inability to cope with the loss of his sons later in the novel: “you never get over it.” Hudson suggests that Roger write a novel about his brother’s death, but Roger is hesitant to commit the ending of that story on the page. “I don’t like the end,” he says to Hudson, and Hudson replies, “I don’t think any of us do, really [...] But there’s always an end” (80). Hudson voices his awareness that everything comes to an end here, but he can never be prepared for the ending of his son’s lives, the ending of his role as a father, the ending of his own grief, the ending of his own life.

In another early indicator of Hudson’s death at the end of the novel, young Tom asks Hudson in the “Bimini” act why some fish are easier to catch than others. Hudson answers his son, “I think because they get old and fat. Some I think are almost old enough to die. Then, of course, some of the biggest jump themselves to death” (135). David’s fish eventually wins the battle of being caught, but many fish who are worn and exhausted can never overcome what drags them along, what weighs them down. Hudson’s answer to his young son resonates with the character’s own life at the end of the novel – he seems to share the qualities of the fish he describes. By the conclusion of *Islands in the Stream*, Hudson has been carrying the weight of his grief for far too long; he has grown tired and jaded from it. Furthermore, he has been fighting against his emotions, keeping himself from truly coming to terms with his lost children and lost paternity, denying himself true healing. Finally, Hudson loses the battle. When he and his crew catch up with the German soldiers they have been chasing the entire last act, he is shot in the confrontation and dies in his crewmate Willie’s arms. Willie tells Hudson to try to understand that he loves him, and Hudson says, “I think I can understand, Willie.” The novel

ends, though, with Willie's acknowledgment that Hudson can never understand: "'Oh shit,' Willie said. 'You never understand anybody that loves you'" (446). In these last words of the novel, it is clear that Hudson dies tortured and alone; he never overcomes his guilt from being an absentee father, never recovers from his sons' deaths, and never lets go of the grief, and so he too must die with them.

In *Islands in the Stream*, the father is stripped of his paternal duties, both by his own doing and by the inevitable fate of death. In "Fathers and Sons," the father-son relationship cannot survive internal struggles and complex yearnings for the happiness of the past; so too is this the case in *Islands in the Stream*. In the coming chapter, we see the struggles of the father continue in "Everything Reminds You of Something," when Hemingway's fatherly turmoil takes center stage again, this time much more focused on his youngest son, Gregory. We return more explicitly to Hemingway's real-life paternity and see how the author's fatherly role took dark and desperate turns. However, we may surmise that Hemingway's textual fatherhood need not end in quite the same desperation as Thomas Hudson's, for in "Great News from the Mainland," we see a glimmer of hope for healing and reconciliation. Hemingway's lifelong struggles with fatherhood are featured in *Islands in the Stream*, but these next short stories tell us that although the father-son relationship may be troubled, redemption may be possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

“I GUESS EVERYTHING REMINDS YOU OF SOMETHING” & “GREAT NEWS FROM THE MAINLAND”

“I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something” and “Great News from the Mainland” were both written by Ernest Hemingway in the mid 1950s, several years after his work on *Islands in the Stream*.²⁸ Both stories were completed but left unpublished at the time of Hemingway’s death; they were released for the first time in the 1987 Finca Vigía edition of the *Complete Short Stories*. Neither story has received much critical attention, though “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something” is mentioned more frequently by critics than “Great News from the Mainland.” The stories tend to be dismissed for being too biographical and not literary enough to stack up to the rest of Hemingway’s short stories.²⁹ The stories bear great significance, though, because of how they inform a biographical reading of Hemingway’s texts, particularly readings as they pertain to the relationship between Ernest and Gregory. The complexities of the relationship between the author and his youngest son are hinted in *Islands in the Stream*, but they are given much more light in these two previously unpublished stories.

²⁸ Specifically, 1955 is the estimated composition year for “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something.” The narrative is positioned seven years after the son plagiarizes a short story; if this is mapped onto Gregory Hemingway’s plagiarized story, which won him a prize his junior year of high school around 1948, we may assume that Hemingway wrote the story seven years later, around 1955. There do not seem to be concrete clues to figure the year that “Great News from the Mainland” was written, but because it shares similar subject matter with “I Guess,” it may have been written around the same time.

²⁹ Robert Clark helpfully traces the critical history of “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something”: “Perhaps scholars, like many reviewers, have decided that it is not a ‘great’ Hemingway tale and thus deemed it unworthy of a thorough explication. Joseph M. Flora wrote a brief analysis based primarily upon Gregory’s memoir (105-07). Among Hemingway biographers, Baker, Lynn, Mellow, and Reynolds make no mention of ‘I Guess.’ Only Jeffrey Meyers touches on the history behind the work, but he offers little in the way of exegesis (291-292)” (90-91). Based upon my research, even less critical attention has been paid to “Great News from the Mainland.” There are no scholarly articles on the story, and major biographers leave the story unaddressed.

In each, Gregory Hemingway enters the fictional world as Stephen Wheeler, a young man clearly plague by his inner demons, just as young Andrew Hudson was, just as the real Gregory was. In each, Ernest figures as Mr. Wheeler, a man attempting to cope with his son's demons in his past and in his present. He responds at times with anger and at others, deep paternal concern. "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something" is filled with such bitterness from the father; it is unlike anything that we have seen in the previous texts. The story reflects on a son's lies and egoism and ends with an almost total dismissal of the father-son relationship. If *our* story ends here with "I Guess," then there is no hope left for Stephen and Mr. Wheeler, for Andrew and Thomas Hudson, for Nick and Dr. Adams, for Gregory and Hemingway; the relationship has fully disintegrated at the end of this story, and there is nothing but pain left. However, "Great News from the Mainland" redeems the relationship from total destruction. Just as the father-son relationship in "I Guess" is far more bitter than others in the Hemingway Text, the relationship in "Great News from the Mainland" is more tender than usual. The struggles of the relationship still pierce though the pages of the story, but here we see a father truly caring for his son, and truly trying to communicate that caring. Everything may not be "fine" as the characters so desperately try to convince themselves, but overall, their attempt to do so binds them together and lets the relationship continue on, no matter the injured form it may be in. This final chapter takes Hemingway's textual paternity off of the pages and connects it to Hemingway's relationship with Gregory, "the most searing and anguished quarrel of Hemingway's life" (Meyers 482, qtd. in Ashe 89). The pain of these short stories reflect the troubles of Hemingway and Gregory, but because the stories ultimately show that a father's love still remains, perhaps the conclusion of Hemingway's real-life paternity may be redeemed as well.

“I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something” opens with the father praising the son for a short story he wrote at school; it won the boy a prize, and the teacher had sent it to the father, a writer himself. The father says to Stevie, “It’s a very fine story. It reminds me of a story I read a long time ago,” to which Stevie responds with the title line, “I guess everything reminds you of something” (597). The father is amazed by his son’s story and excitedly talks to his son about developing his talent with assigned reading and writing exercises that the two can complete together. Later, he thinks to himself, “I could not write that well when I was his age [...] I never knew anyone else that could either. But I never knew anyone else that could shoot better at ten than this boy could; not just show-off shooting, but shooting in competition with grown men and professionals” (598). This is where the father’s thoughts travel next, to his young son’s performance in a pigeon-shooting competition; the shooting memories flow seamlessly from the short story memories, so the two events seem to be linked. The father remembers Stevie speaking a few words during the competition “in a low, hoarse voice that did not belong to a small boy,” his sneaky way of identifying the traps by their unique release noises, his egoism when he said to his father, “I don’t understand how anyone ever misses a pigeon” (599). The father understands his son’s unique ability, but urges modesty and warns him to never share those feelings with anyone else. He thinks about how his son had taken his ability for granted and forgotten all the practice and diligence that went into developing his shot; his father had “cured” him of his faults, had guided him into becoming the shot that he came to be (600). The narrative then shifts forward seven years, to when the father learns that his son’s prize-winning story had been copied word-for-word from a collection of short stories by an Irish writer. The narrative does not dwell on the discovery, but instead shifts to what the relationship between father and son has become: since the story, “the boy had done everything hateful and

stupid that he could.” The father checks his thoughts and the narration adds, “But it was because he was sick his father had told himself. His vileness came on from a sickness.” Even with this justification, this attempt to explain his son’s behavior, the story ends with a strong dismissal: “Now he knew that boy had never been any good. He had thought so often looking back on things. And it was sad to know that shooting did not mean a thing” (601).

From what critics know of Gregory’s life and his relationship with his father, “I Guess” appears to be a nearly complete mapping of real-life experiences onto the page. Gregory was a child prodigy when it came to shooting, regularly out-shooting grown men at the Club de Cazadores del Cerro shooting club in Havana. In a letter to his first wife Hadley in 1942, Hemingway describes Gig’s success, telling her that Gig “shoots like a little angel” and “killed twenty one straight the other day.” He acquired local fame and the newspapers referred to him as “el joven fenomeno Americano” and “el popularissimo Gigi.” Hemingway tells Hadley that they had fun with his flamboyant new titles, sprinkling it in to everyday conversation: “Go to the post-office and get the mail popularissimo or time for bed, popularissimo” (SL 536). In Gregory’s memoir *Papa*, written in 1976, fifteen years after his father’s death, Gregory himself reflects on his childhood fame with the same fondness and humor. The pigeon-shooting competition of “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something” seems to correspond to the 1942 Cuban Championship that the young boy competed in when he was just eleven years old. Gregory exaggerates his success in the tournament, penning that he tied for first place in the tournament when he actually placed fourth (Hendrickson 395), but he corroborates many details of “I Guess”: he sipped Coca-Cola in between shots as Stevie does and he received the very same shouldering tips from Ernest as Mr. Wheeler gives in the story.³⁰ Stevie’s egoism is also

³⁰ Gregory’s memoir *Papa* is a valuable source for Hemingway critics despite its inaccuracies. At its publication, it was praised for its honesty; in the preface to the memoir, Norman Mailer writes, “For once, you can read a book

grounded in Gregory. In *Papa*, Gregory remembers boasting in public about his shooting abilities before his father pulled him aside to say: “Gig, when you’re truly great at something, and you know it, you would like to brag about it sometimes. But if you do, you’ll feel like shit afterwards. Also, you never remember how a thing really felt if you talk about it too much” (88). This is advice of the Hemingway Code, advice that is condensed but bears the same message in “I Guess.”³¹

Gregory’s pigeon-shooting success is documented in local Havana lore, newspapers, and Hemingway’s letters, but the more private matter of the plagiarism case that steers the plot of “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something” is also based in reality. Here, we simply have Gregory’s memoir as proof. Gregory writes that his two accomplishments that made his father most proud were his performance in the shooting competition and a short story prize that he won in high school. Even in his memoir, where one might assume that Gregory would try to portray himself in the most positive light, he admits to plagiarizing the story. It did not belong to an Irish writer as in “I Guess,” but to Ivan Turgenev, one of Hemingway’s literary influences; Gig believed Papa wouldn’t recognize the story since he found it in a book with “some of the pages [...] still stuck together” (142). Mr. Wheeler senses a familiarity in his son’s story upon first reading it, and we can only assume that Hemingway sensed this too – plagiarizing a story, even a lesser-known one, from one of your writer-father’s idols, is a foolish move. In *Papa*, Gregory makes it seem that his father encouraged him to pursue writing, and that only then did

about Hemingway and not have to decide whether you like him or not. He is there. By God, he exists” (13). On the discrepancies that were later illuminated, Paul Hendrickson writes, “It is a memoir, with a memoir’s faults, and then some. The essence of the story is all there, but it’s clear how [Gregory] elided and omitted and rearranged and misremembered to suit his purposes” (414).

³¹ I have not been able to pinpoint when Gregory might have first read “I Guess.” The story was included in the manuscripts donated to the Kennedy Library by Mary Welsh Hemingway in 1972 (several years before Gregory’s memoir was published); she had written “Not To Be Published” across the top of the manuscript (Clark 92). All three Hemingway sons would later approve the publication of the story in the 1987 *Completed Short Stories* (93). Details from Gregory’s memoir mirror “I Guess” in odd ways, suggesting that these details might be subtle responses to the short story, but presently this cannot be verified.

Gregory, perhaps feeling pressured to succeed, decide to plagiarize the story and submit it at school the next fall; in "I Guess," however, the father's encouragement follows the boy's prize, an indication of his already "established" talent. This may be one case where fiction is truer than professed non-fiction; Gig may have bent the truth in his memoir, for Paul Hendrickson found that Canterbury Prep published an announcement of Gregory's prize the semester before the writing-summer with Papa (398-99). Gregory was aware of the pain he caused his father when Hemingway discovered that the story had been plagiarized years later. He later heard a story of someone asking Hemingway if his son was a writer, with Hemingway's response being, "Yes [...] Gregory writes an occasional bad check" (143). Gig briefly reflects on this anecdote, writing that "Someone in that crowd might have thought, 'What a brutal bastard to make such a callous wisecrack about his son. I guess all those stories I've heard about him being a hard-shelled bully are true.' Hard-shelled, yes, but I helped make that shell" (143).³² Gregory grants his father's much latitude in his public mocking of him and puts the blame on himself.

A son's plagiarism would surely cause a writer-father to be disappointed, but "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something" is not simply a story about plagiarism. There is something else that hovers over the text. Just as Stevie tells his father that "I guess everything reminds you of something" in response to his story's familiarity, the memory of the story reminds the father figure of his son's shooting, and these memories too remind him of his son's tumultuous past and their present relationship. At the end of the story, the father is reminded of his son's stupidity, vileness, and this ambiguous "sickness." When considered alongside Hemingway biography, Paul Hendrickson positions this stupidity around Gregory's dropping out of college and getting his girlfriend pregnant, not to mention his poor spending habits and

³² Gregory's words recall Nick Adams' concern about the "trap" that killed his father in "Fathers and Sons." It was a trap that Dr. Adams "had helped only a little to set," and Nick struggles with his involvement in his father's condition, just as Gregory does here (370).

interest in Dianetics, in the years leading up to 1955 when “I Guess” was written. But again, it is not these things that can cause such disdain in a typical father. Hendrickson writes, “Nothing a youngest son would have done [...] was stupider or more irresponsible, certainly in his father’s mind, than an incident involving a movie theater – because the public incident had led directly to the middle-of-the-night death in a Los Angeles hospital of the youngest son’s mother” (400).

The incident that Hendrickson refers to occurred in late September 1951, the day that Gregory Hemingway was arrested in women’s clothing after entering a women’s restroom in a Los Angeles movie theater. This cross-dressing is the “sickness” of the story, the “sickness” that tore through Hemingway’s relationship with his son.³³ Pauline died just a few days after Gregory’s arrest, and for years it was assumed that she died of a shock-induced heart attack. Hemingway blamed Gregory for Pauline’s death, believing that the shock of his arrest was what caused her death (*Papa* 27). It seems that for years, Gregory believed his culpability. Years later though, as a medical student, Gregory obtained his mother’s autopsy report and discovered that Pauline unknowingly suffered from an adrenal gland tumor called pheochromocytoma; this condition caused her to produce too much adrenaline in her system, thus elevating her blood pressure and rupturing arteries (Hendrickson 412-13). Believing that his mother had not been overly shocked by his arrest, Gregory came to blame his father for her elevated blood pressure. Hours before her death, Hemingway and Pauline had a heated argument on the telephone; this, in Gregory’s mind, was the event that upset his mother’s pheochromocytoma (*Papa* 25-6). An attempt to assign blame seems futile in a situation like this as there can be no way of knowing

³³ Gregory does not once mention cross-dressing in his memoir (for understandable reasons). Critics began to explore the subject more deeply after Gregory’s death in 2001 and much recent criticism connects Gregory’s sexuality to Hemingway’s own struggles with sexual identity. For more information on Gregory’s figuring, see various memorials published after Gregory’s death (tributes in the *Hemingway Review* by Linda Patterson Miller and Gig’s former wife Valerie Hemingway), John Colapinto’s *Rolling Stone* feature article, Fred Ashe’s “‘A Very Attractive Devil’: Gregory Hemingway in *Islands in the Stream*,” and Part IV of Paul Hendrickson’s *Hemingway’s Boat*. There is an enormous subsection of Hemingway criticism that concerns Hemingway’s sexuality – see notably Carl Eby’s *Hemingway’s Fetishism* and Mark Spilka’s *Hemingway’s Quarrel with Androgyny*.

the exact trigger of Pauline's death; what is important in the matter is that Pauline died days after Gregory's public cross-dressing and that this event caused the largest rift of Hemingway's nearly forty years as a father. It seems to be this rift that creates such bitterness in "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something."

Robert Clark notes that "'I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something' is unusual in that it is about a son who disappoints his father; Hemingway more frequently wrote about fathers who fail their sons" (90). It certainly seems this way on the surface, but the iceberg of the story shows that really, "I Guess" is both. The son disappoints the father in so many ways, and because of this, the father is faced with his own paternal failings. Gig was the son who looked most like his father, who most shared his athletic prowess, who showed the most promise. But, he grew to be the son who questioned the masculine integrity that dominated Hemingway's life and fiction and wordlessly demanded that Hemingway address his own struggles with gender performance and identity. Throughout the narrative and its coordinating reality, the stories of these fathers and sons reveal a troubled youth and a father who struggles to understand. Just as in *Islands in the Stream*, this story evolves into the reflections of a man who fails his son and finds himself very far away from him. At the conclusion of this story, Mr. Wheeler tries to nurse his anger by reminding himself that the son's "vileness came on from a sickness" (601). An additional, parenthetical line can be found in a written draft of the story at the Kennedy Library: "(You must always think of him as sick)" (Clark 103, Folder 485b). As Clark describes, there are several ways of viewing this line: it could simply be an additional thought in Mr. Wheeler's reflections; it could be Mr. Wheeler or Hemingway addressing the reader, pleading for their understanding; or it could be Hemingway's personal note while working through an early draft of the story (103). The third option holds a certain appeal, for the parentheses might indicate the

line's tangentiality to the story's narrative and reinforce the difficulty for Hemingway to write such a personal story. Regardless of its true role, the deleted line heightens the father's uncertainty of his own feelings.

Despite the attempt to justify or forgive the son's blatant and secretive wrongdoings, the task proves to be too much for the father of "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something." The final lines of the story are biting: "Now he knew that boy had never been any good. He had thought so often looking back on things. And it was sad to know that shooting did not mean a thing" (601). The present has distorted the past, and now everything that father and son once shared is thrown away as meaningless. His giddy enthusiasm over his son's possible writing talent, his careful instruction on shooting, and presumably over twenty years of raising this boy no longer stand for anything. Even though, this dismissal is strongly colored by nostalgia – in the father's thoughts, it's *sad* that there is no meaning left. This dissatisfaction with the present and longing for the past has occurred again and again in Hemingway's texts of paternity. The words that haunted "Fathers and Sons" loom over this text as well: "Long time ago good. Now no good" (376). His struggles with his sons may be as insignificant as catching a fish or as life-changing as gender identity, but the Hemingway father cannot find peace and purpose in his role. The cycle of paternal struggle manifests itself in the strangest of ways throughout Hemingway's career and life. In "Fathers and Sons," Nick shared nothing with his father after he was fifteen years old, and now here in "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something," it has been five years since the Hemingway figure has shared anything with his own son. "I Guess" may not be the most literary of Hemingway's short stories, but it has such human significance in the decades-long struggle of being a father and being a son in Hemingway's life and fiction.

My research on Hemingway's textual struggles with paternity could end here. It could end with the same feeling of nothingness and meaninglessness that so often characterizes the Hemingway code hero – "Our nada who art in nada, nada by thy name" (CSS 391). In uncovering the identity of Papa, we have been faced with a generational cycle of disintegrating relationships between father and sons. No matter the mastery of athletics and women that the code heroes and Hemingway himself exuded, the relational intricacies of being a father and being a son cannot at this point be mastered. But thankfully, the story of Hemingway's fathers and sons does not end here. The story continues and finds at least an inkling of hope in "Great News From the Mainland." "Thankfully" is intended sincerely; the father and son relationships of "Fathers and Sons," of *Islands in the Stream*, of "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something" bear much significance in our understanding of Papa Hemingway as an author and a man, but they also pertain to each reader who relates to these relationships in some way. The disintegration of these relationships may produce interesting scholarship, but they represent such pain and frustration on a personal level. Not many readers could enjoy the sentiment that a father and a son's rich history together no longer means a thing; there is no satisfaction there, just as there is no satisfaction for Hemingway's characters or presumably Hemingway himself. "Great News from the Mainland" communicates these same messages of pain and frustration and presents to the reader one more instance of a fractured relationship, and yet the characters of this story strive to regain the relationship instead of throwing it away.

"Great News from the Mainland" begins in typical Hemingway fashion with a few paragraphs describing the natural setting in the story before any of the characters are introduced. In this story, the winds have been blowing for five days, drying and killing the palms and mango trees. Without any character set-up, the third-person narration describes "the man" putting in a

call to Dr. Simpson on the mainland. Their phone conversation begins as the doctor identifies the man as Mr. Wheeler, the same father figure from “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something.” The story is mostly comprised of this phone conversation in which the father and doctor discuss the son’s electric shock treatments at what seems to be a psychiatric facility. The doctor is hopeful that the shock treatments are working and attempts to calm Mr. Wheeler’s concerns. He suggests that Mr. Wheeler call back in a few days when his son will be rested enough to talk to him. In the interim, the man muses on the drying and destructive winds that “blew dust through the screens into the house and sifted it into the books and over the pictures” (603). He tries to write, but wants to avoid writing about the wind in clichés like poorer writers had done before. The time comes for the call to his son, and Stephen tries to assure his father: “I’m fine Papa really fine. This is the time. I’ve really got this thing beat now” (604). Stevie tells his father again and again that he is fine, that he’s getting better, and the phone conversation ends. The story concludes with a momentary shift to the first-person and the man – now the speaker – says to the houseboy who had grown up with Stevie: “‘Stevie sent you his best,’ I said to the houseboy. He smiled happily, remembering the old days. ‘That’s nice of him. How is he?’ ‘Fine,’ I said. ‘He says everything is fine’” (604).

The exact time that Hemingway wrote “Great News from the Mainland” is not known, but it certainly seems to have been composed around the mid-1950s when Gregory Hemingway began receiving electric shock therapy. Gig was diagnosed with bi-polar disorder, temporarily treated for schizophrenia, and, as established, questioned his sexual identity throughout his adult life; this struggle eventually led to a sex change operation in 1995 when Gregory was in his sixties (Hendrickson 428, 440). In the 1950s, electric shock treatment would have been a last resort to help relieve psychological stress when other treatment methods had continued to fail.

Valerie Hemingway, one of Gregory's former wives, reports that he one time told her that he received more than fifty electric shock treatments in his lifetime (47); Gig told Paul Hendrickson that he received an even more astonishing 98 treatments (15). Correspondence between Gregory and Ernest in the 1950s is notoriously nasty, rife with personal attacks and coded language about Gregory's "sickness." But in a letter concerning Gig's electric shock treatments from August 1957, Hemingway's tone is gentler and more caring. Hemingway tells his son not to worry, that he will pay the hospital bills, and continues, "We want to do everything that can be done to make you well, Gig [...] Take it as easy as you can and know that for once we are getting something constructive accomplished on these worries that have bothered you for so long" (qtd. in Hendrickson 428). Since we do not know the exact time that "Great News from the Mainland" was written, we cannot know if the story was inspired by this particular stint of Gregory's in a Miami hospital or if it concerned a separate, earlier course of treatment. Regardless of the timeline, Hemingway's caring letter from 1957 informs the story and the concern that a father figure must feel for his ill son, no matter the tormented history that the two share.

The story itself reflects the complications involved in a father caring for a distant son in need – recall "(You must always think of him as sick)" from "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something." In "Great News from the Mainland," the central focus is on the father figure dealing with, or at least attempting to deal with, this sickness. The father in the story is narratively crafted to be guarded; the reader is not made privy to his thoughts during his phone conversations with the doctor and his son. In the first call, for instance, the story includes only eighteen words spoken by Mr. Wheeler to Dr. Simpson. In contrast, there are several paragraphs of what is essentially a monologue, of Dr. Simpson speaking to Wheeler. His monologue indicates a back and forth between the two men – he says "Yes Mr. Wheeler No Mr. Wheeler"

and repeats questions that Mr. Wheeler has presumably asked. The missing elements of this conversation, the absence of most of Wheeler's words, recall the one-sided good-byes from *Islands in the Stream*. There, it seemed that Hudson's un-narrated words represented something too traumatic, something almost too sacred, to include in the text. The good-bye scene was the last time Hudson saw his two young sons and the one-sided dialogue suggested that the emotions of those final good-bye were not yet processed and still far too fresh. Here in "Great News from the Mainland," Wheeler's narrative silence produces a similar effect. In his conversation with Dr. Simpson, Wheeler must confront his son's current psychological issues as well as those from the past. In this difficult talk over a crackling phone line, the father's thoughts and even his words are hidden below the surface.

Wheeler must wait a few days to speak to his son, and in that time he tries to prepare himself for yet another difficult conversation. The winds continue to blow on the island; before it had damaged the trees and the orchards, but now its effects enter the home, "[blowing] dust through the screens into the house and sift[ing] it into the books and over the pictures" (603). Wheeler is no longer protected from the elements and his interior space becomes vulnerable. The dry, lifeless dust settles onto his books and his photos, his work life and his personal memories. Both his mind and his surroundings are covered in an obscuring film. In this paragraph, before Wheeler's conversation with Stephen, he considers writing about the wind; the narration hones in on Wheeler's thoughts at this one point in the story. He tells himself that he must resist writing about the winds in clichés as so many writers have done, just as he has resisted "writing that the palm branches blew forward making a line against the trunk as the hair of young women parts and blows forward when they stand with their backs to a storm" (604).³⁴

³⁴ This image brings to mind Robert Frost's "Birches": the branches "trailing their leaves on the ground / Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair / Before them over their heads to dry in the sun." Hemingway would have

He also resists writing of the scent in the air when “they had walked together on the night before the wind started” (604). This ambiguous “they” may be a product of an incomplete story, but its possible intentionality shows how present Stephen is in Wheeler’s thoughts; though he is ostensibly thinking about the wind, his son is very much on his mind. Recall Nick’s thoughts in “Fathers and Sons.” Nick tries to make himself not think about his father and he is not yet ready to write about his fractured relationship. And yet, it is in these very thoughts and avoidances that the story of “Fathers and Sons” forms as the text in front of us. This exact dynamic is at play in “Great News from the Mainland.” Wheeler’s thoughts on writing in this portion of the story are creating the story that we have right before our eyes. Stuck between conversations with Dr. Simpson and his son, he is trying to figure out how to deal with his son’s current sickness on the page. But, his thoughts are on *our* page. At this late point in the story, Wheeler is trying to decide how to write about the winds to begin a text, but recall that *our* text, “Great News,” begins with a thought-out description of the winds. Wheeler struggles to find the right way to write about the past days’ events and his son’s condition; he wants to avoid clichés, literary images and overt sentimentality so that he can honestly and realistically express the difficult circumstances facing him and his son. If the result is “Great News from the Mainland,” his process creates a self-conscious and alarmingly realistic narrative of a father attempting to cope.

At the end of the story, Mr. Wheeler is both strikingly absent and strikingly present. His silence intensifies with the call to Stephen. In the conversation with Dr. Simpson, the narration shares at least a few words of Wheeler’s responses, but in the conversation with his son, all of his words are missing. We are given Stephen’s answers, but his father’s questions are omitted.

surely been familiar with this, one of Frost’s most famous poems. Frost and Hemingway were acquaintances and briefly corresponded about Ezra Pound’s release from prison in 1957, likely around the time that this story was written (*SL* 878-80). I believe Wheeler wants to avoid images like this not because they are overdone or clichéd, but because they are too lofty in their literariness. Wheeler’s current mood seems to call for something more literal and grounded. I suspect this is more of Hemingway’s homage to Frost’s image rather than a critique of it.

Stephen begins his “monologue” by calling his father Papa and the narration describes his voice as hoarse, twice connecting the character to his younger self at the pigeon-shooting championship in “I Guess.” Stephen desperately tries to convince his father that he’s alright; he repeats the word “fine” five times and “really” seven times in the brief conversation – “I’m fine Papa really fine. [...] Everything’s fine really” (604). He references his years of psychological hardship and tries to put hope in the present by saying, “I’ve really got a grasp of reality now. [...] This time I’ve really got the answer” (604). The contrast between Stephen’s desperate claims and Wheeler’s silence in the conversation is jarring; in this one-sided conversation, Stevie seems alone in his battle for recovery. The phone conversation ends, and then something happens in the story that is not at all common in Hemingway’s fiction – the narration switches from third-person to first. The story reads, “‘Stevie sent you his best,’ I said to the houseboy” (604). Instead of the third-person narrator referring to the father as “the man” or “Mr. Wheeler,” Wheeler becomes the narrator. In his analysis of “I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something,” Clark writes that “because the story is based on Hemingway family history, the distinction between narrator, father, and author is blurred” (90). The lines between Hemingway, the narrator, and Wheeler are certainly blurred in each of these stories, but the haziness is even more relevant in this narrative shift. Again, the fact that Hemingway did not fully prepare this story for publication might mean the text is unfinished or unperfected; to some, this fact might make small discrepancies in the text seem like early-draft mistakes. Hemingway’s true intention can never be known, but what we do know is that the narrative shift to first-person creates a stronger involvement of the father in the story. If “Great News from the Mainland” is the story that Wheeler himself is creating, then he directly and personally inserts himself into the text with this narrative change.

The final words of the story, in their lack of resolution, bring a glimmer of hope to the relationship between this father and son, and on a broader scale, to all the fathers and sons we have encountered in this study. It is important to note that Mr. Wheeler does not make the call to Stevie himself; rather, his houseboy who grew up alongside Stevie prepares the call. It is to this houseboy that Wheeler gives his son's regards, and the boy "smiled happily, remembering the old days" (604). Although barely featured in the story, the houseboy serves as the link between the present and the past. He remembers Stevie for his talent and intelligence, for the boy that he once was and for the person that still must exist despite his troubling experiences. With his smile comes the yearning for the past, the intoxicating nostalgia that dominates the father-son relationships of the Hemingway Text. The houseboy asks Wheeler how Stevie is, and Wheeler mimics the words that his son has just spoken to him: "'Fine,' I said. 'He says everything is fine'" (604). These pain-ridden words speak to all Hemingway fathers and sons. They are an attempt to push through the struggles of the present, to strive for the idealized relationships of the past, to heal from the fractured realities that are so common for Papa and his sons.

In "Fathers and Sons," Nick Adams tries not to think about his father and his lost kinship with him; in *Islands in the Stream*, Thomas Hudson tries not to think of his paternal failings and the loss of his sons; In "I Guess Everything Reminds You of Something," Mr. Wheeler tries to throw away a relationship with his son that has tormented him so greatly. But in "Great News from the Mainland," the Hemingway father attempts to transfer his care and concern for his son onto the page and salvage his relationship with the hope that everything may be fine again. The winds still blow in the text and the future is uncertain, even bleak, but the attempt of the father and the son to maintain their relationship is enough. The real future of Hemingway's relationship with his son Gregory does not appear to have lived up to the promise at the end of

“Great News from the Mainland.” Hemingway committed suicide, just as his father did, in 1961 after years of estrangement from his son. Gregory, after decades of struggling to understand his father and himself, died of heart failure in a Miami women’s prison after being arrested for public nudity (Hendrickson 451). Indeed, the conclusion of Ernest and Gregory’s relationship is rather grim. However, what endures from Ernest Hemingway’s life, even more than his complicated biography, are the words immortalized on the pages of his fiction. These studied texts reflect a father’s desires and limitations in becoming Papa, and here at the conclusion, he has not given up on his journey. Hemingway wrestled with his identity as Papa over and over again in his texts, and Gregory continued that battle of discovering Papa in his life as well. The son’s striking words perhaps best sum up the message of the father’s textual struggles with paternity and the idealized relationship that always remained out of reach: “These horrible mixed up feelings you have, the love and the hate. And you know, I still miss him so much. Isn’t it crazy?” (qtd. in Colapinto 65). Hardship, confusion, and self-doubt are always present in Papa’s relationships with his sons, but Hemingway repeatedly reworked fatherhood in his fiction in the hope that someday, despite the mixed-up feelings, all will be “fine.” All was not fine in Hemingway’s life as a father and a son, but this yearning continues on in his fiction.

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