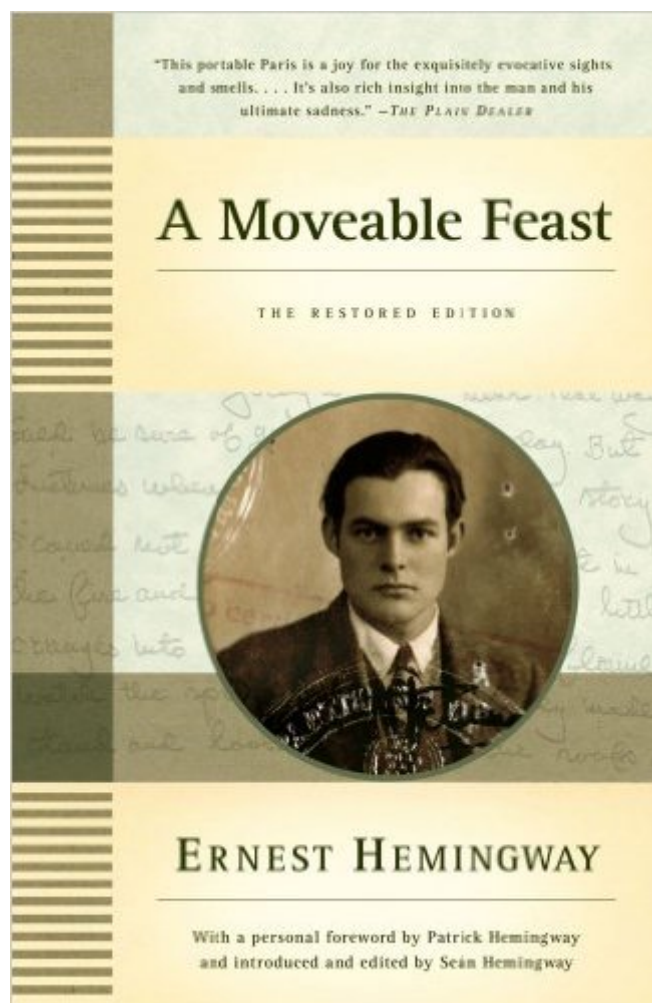


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A Moveable Feast: The Restored Edition



Synopsis

Ernest Hemingway's classic memoir of Paris in the 1920s, now available in a restored edition, includes the original manuscript along with insightful recollections and unfinished sketches. Published posthumously in 1964, *A Moveable Feast* remains one of Ernest Hemingway's most enduring works. Since Hemingway's personal papers were released in 1979, scholars have examined the changes made to the text before publication. Now, this special restored edition presents the original manuscript as the author prepared it to be published. Featuring a personal Foreword by Patrick Hemingway, Ernest's sole surviving son, and an Introduction by grandson of the author, Sean Hemingway, editor of this edition, the book also includes a number of unfinished, never-before-published Paris sketches revealing experiences that Hemingway had with his son, Jack, and his first wife Hadley. Also included are irreverent portraits of literary luminaries, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ford Madox Ford, and insightful recollections of Hemingway's own early experiments with his craft. Widely celebrated and debated by critics and readers everywhere, the restored edition of *A Moveable Feast* brilliantly evokes the exuberant mood of Paris after World War I and the unbridled creativity and unquenchable enthusiasm that Hemingway himself epitomized.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Whenever friends ask me why, at my age, I still love Hemingway, I smile and think about this book. They say "Hemingway" and conjure up familiar visions of the older, bloated and blighted boozier bragging about his macho accomplishments in the world of war and sports, while I consider the

young Hemingway in Paris. I am thinking of a much younger, intellectually virile man, someone far more alert, aware and alive; Hemingway as a 'moveable feast' strolling deliberately through the streets of a rain-swept Paris on a quiet Monday morning, heading to a café for some café au lait to begin his long day's labor. In this single, slim tome Hemingway beautifully and unforgettably evokes a world of beauty and innocence now so utterly lost and irretrievable both to himself, through his fame, alcohol, and dissipation, but also to us, for Paris as she was in the 1920s was a place made to order for the lyrical descriptive songs he sings about her in this remembrance; endlessly interesting, instantly unforgettable, and also accessible to the original "starving young artist types" so well depicted here. As anyone visiting Paris today knows, that magical time and place has utterly vanished. Tragically, Paris is just another city these days. Yet this is a book that unforgettably captures the essence of what the word 'romance' means, and does so in the spare and laconic style that Hemingway developed while sitting in the bistros and watching as the world in all its colors and hues flowed by him. The stories he tells are filled with the kinds of people one usually meets only in novels, yet because of who they were and who they later became in the world of arts and letters, it is hard to doubt the veracity or honesty he uses to such advantage here. This is a portrait of an artist in full possession of his creative powers, full of the vinegary spirit and insight that made him a legend in his own time, and consequently ruined him as an artist and as a human being. There are few books I would endorse for everyone as a lifelong friend. This, however, is a book I can recommend for anyone who wants the reading enjoyment and intellectual experience Hemingway offers in such wonderful abundance in these pages. Take my advice, though. Buy it first in paper, read it until it begins to fray and fall apart (and you will), and then go out and buy yourself a new hardcover edition to adorn your shelf, so on that proverbial rainy afternoon when the house is quiet, the kids are gone, and you just want to escape from the ordinary ennui and humdrum of life, pull "A Moveable Feast" down and hold it close enough to read. A cup of steaming tea by your side, return all by yourself to a marvelous world of blue city skylines, freshly washed cobblestone and unforgettable romance; return once more to Paris in the twenties, when life was simple, basic, and good.

This book is Ernest Hemingway's reminiscence about his life in Paris in the 1920s and the literary figures he knew, such as Gertrude Stein, Ford Madox Ford, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. It was left unfinished at the time of Hemingway's death in 1961 and originally published in 1964, edited by his fourth and last wife, Mary. This new "restored" version presents the same book as re-edited by Hemingway's grandson Sean. The original book is a highly-regarded literary work of art,

leaving open the question of why the world needs a new version. The one and only advantage is the inclusion of new, previously unpublished chapters included after the main text, called "Additional Paris Sketches." Anything new written by Hemingway is always welcome. The problem is Sean Hemingway's editing and the motivation behind it. In his Introduction, he would have us believe Mary somehow wrecked Hemingway's vision of the book and he has now reshuffled the chapters to reflect what his grandfather would have really wanted. Forty-five years after the original publication, Sean writes with what seems to me unusually strong venom at Mary and what he sees as her agenda in making her edits: "The extensive edits Mary Hemingway made to this text seem to have served her own personal relationship with the writer as his fourth and final wife, rather than the interests of the book, or of the author, who comes across in the posthumous first edition as something of an unknowing victim, which he clearly was not." Sean needed to provide some sort of rationale for the new edition, and this is what he would have us believe: the original book reflected Mary's wishes, not Ernest's. But since the manuscript was left unfinished when Hemingway died, no one knows what he really would have wanted. There is no "definitive" edition and never can one be. Even worse, Sean can well be accused of the same sin as he asserts for Mary: his edits are designed specifically to paint his grandmother Pauline Pfeiffer, Hemingway's second wife and his own grandmother, in a far more favorable light. Readers and scholars can compare the two editions and judge for themselves: is Sean protecting his grandfather's true wishes--whatever they were--or is he doing a favor for his own grandmother at the expense of Hemingway's conception? Sean dug around in the archives and found some things that look good for his grandmother, included them, and rejiggered the original contents in her favor as well. The good news surely must be that the various heirs of Hemingway can't destroy his work, no matter what their motivations. The text is still the work of one of the 20th century's greatest and most influential writers. Most readers won't need the new edition, as the original, as literature, hasn't really been improved upon. Scholars and Hemingway fans will want to see the new sketches. Probably 45 years into the future, a "scholar's" edition will be published, sans any input from the various heirs of Hemingway, in an attempt to "set the record straight."

The relative merits of the two versions aside, the restored edition lacks the charm of the original. One can say what one wishes about the editing of the original, but whoever edited it did a beautiful job: an incomplete and at times awkward and rambling manuscript was fashioned into a finished work of art. The spirit of Hemingway's intent is just better conveyed by the original. For example, Sean Hemingway takes issue with the change to the introductory note to the chapter entitled "Scott

Fitzgerald" as it appears in the original. Mr. Hemingway claims that, as edited, it takes an unwarranted swipe at Fitzgerald. But that is exactly what the restored edition does: in not one new portion is Fitzgerald portrayed as anything but a flawed personality - a talented drunk, a bumbler, with silly ideas and habits, dominated by Zelda. Another aspect of the new edition I find unsettling is that the restored portions more often than not reveal a nastier Hemingway. And insofar as it attempting to portray an even more sympathetic Hadley, I disagree. The original quite poetically tells us all we need to know. The restored version merely states the obvious - tediously and at length. I first read the original edition when I was in college and loved it. I still do. I suppose the restored version has its scholarly value, but I would not recommend it to an impressionable young person as a lovely introduction to the world of the Lost Generation.

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