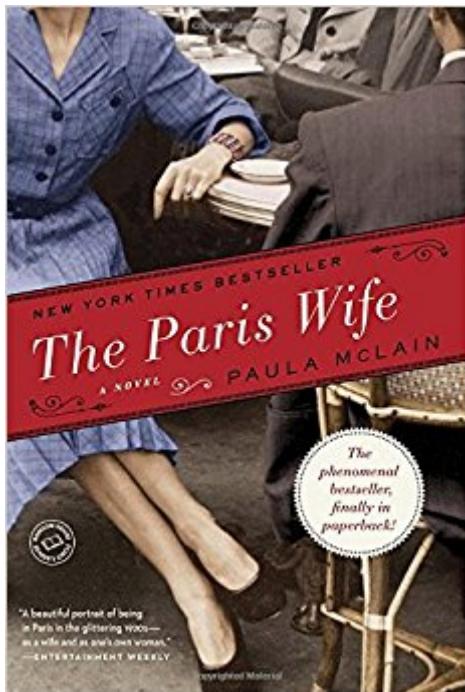


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# The Paris Wife



## Synopsis

A deeply evocative story of ambition and betrayal, *The Paris Wife* captures the love affair between two unforgettable people: Ernest Hemingway and his wife Hadley. In Chicago, 1920: Hadley Richardson is a quiet twenty-eight-year-old who has all but given up on love and happiness "until she meets Ernest Hemingway. Following a whirlwind courtship and wedding, the pair set sail for Paris, where they become the golden couple in a lively and volatile group "the fabled "Lost Generation" that includes Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Though deeply in love, the Hemingways are ill prepared for the hard-drinking, fast-living, and free-loving life of Jazz Age Paris. As Ernest struggles to find the voice that will earn him a place in history and pours himself into the novel that will become *The Sun Also Rises*, Hadley strives to hold on to her sense of self as her roles as wife, friend, and muse become more challenging. Eventually they find themselves facing the ultimate crisis of their marriage "a deception that will lead to the unraveling of everything they've fought so hard for. A heartbreakingly honest portrayal of love and torn loyalty, *The Paris Wife* is all the more poignant because we know that, in the end, Hemingway wrote that he would rather have died than fallen in love with anyone but Hadley.

NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLER WINNER "BEST HISTORICAL FICTION" GOODREADS CHOICE AWARDS  
NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY People, Chicago Tribune, NPR, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Kirkus Reviews, The Toronto Sun, BookPage. Look for special features inside. Join the Circle for author chats and more.

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## Customer Reviews

Author Paula McLain on The Paris Wife

Most of us know or think we know who Ernest

Hemingway was -- a brilliant writer full of macho swagger, driven to take on huge feats of bravery and a pitcher or two of martinis -- before lunch. But beneath this man or myth, or some combination of the two, is another Hemingway, one we've never seen before. Hadley Richardson, Hemingway's first wife, is the perfect person to reveal him to us -- and also to immerse us in the incredibly exciting and volatile world of Jazz-age Paris. The idea to write in Hadley's voice came to me as I was reading Hemingway's memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, about his early years in Paris. In the final pages, he writes of Hadley, "I wished I had died before I ever loved anyone but her." • That line, and his portrayal of their marriage -- so tender and poignant and steeped in regret -- inspired me to search out biographies of Hadley, and then to research their brief and intense courtship and letters -- they wrote hundreds and hundreds of pages of delicious pages to another! I couldn't help but fall in love with Hadley, and through her eyes, with the young Ernest Hemingway. He was just twenty when they met, handsome and magnetic, passionate and sensitive and full of dreams. I was surprised at how much I liked and admired him -- and before I knew it, I was entirely swept away by their gripping love story. I hope you will be as captivated by this remarkable couple as I am -- and by the fascinating world of Paris in the 20s, the fast-living, ardent and tremendously driven Lost Generation.

**A Look Inside The Paris Wife**

**Ernest and Hadley Hemingway, Chamby, Switzerland, winter 1922**

**Ernest and Hadley Hemingway, Bumby, Schruns, Austria, 1925**

**The Hemingways and friends at a cafe in Pamplona, Spain**

**Guest Reviewer: Helen Simonson on The Paris Wife**

Helen Simonson is the New York Times bestselling author of *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand*. She was born in England and spent her teenage years in a small village in East Sussex. A graduate of the London School of Economics and former travel advertising executive, she has lived in America for the past two decades. After many years in Brooklyn, she now lives with her husband and two sons in the Washington, D.C., area. Paula McLain has taken on the task of writing a story most of us probably think we already know--that of a doomed starter wife. To make life more difficult, McLain proposes to tell us about Ernest Hemingway's first wife, Hadley Richardson, who is a twenty-eight-year-old Midwestern spinster when she marries the twenty-one-year-old unpublished, (but already cocksure) writer and runs off to Paris with him. The talent and joy of this novel is that McLain does a startling job of making us understand this as a great love story and seducing us into caring deeply, about both Ernest and Hadley, as their marriage eventually comes apart. This novel moves beyond the dry bones of biography or skewed personal vision of memoir, and takes a leap into the emotional lives of these characters. It is a leap of faith for those readers who think they

know Hemingway, but McLainâ™s voice sticks close enough to historical material, and to the words and tone of Hemingwayâ™s own writing, to be convincing. She had me at the description of young Hadleyâ™s father committing suicide. âœThe carpets had been cleaned but not changed out for new, the revolver had been emptied and polished and placed back in his desk.â• Hadley is also crippled by a childhood fall and trapped into spinsterhood by her motherâ™s declining health and eventual death. By the time she meets Hemingway, we are rooting for her to make a break for foreign shores--even as we understand the danger of marrying a tempestuous man. Hemingway is all nervous purpose, ambition and charisma as he meets Hadley and is drawn to her quiet strength and ordinary American sweetness. In his youth and uncertainty, she is his rock and yet we already suspect that as he grows in artistic power, she will become an unwanted anchor. Through Hadleyâ™s eyes and plain-speaking voice, we see all of twenties Paris and the larger-than-life artists who gather in the cafes. We drink tea with Gertrude Stein and champagne with Fitzgerald and Zelda. We run with the bulls in Pamplona and spend winters in alpine chalets. And we see, through her love for him, the young writer becoming the Hemingway of legend. Perhaps it is the nature of all great artists to be completely selfish and obnoxious, but Hadleyâ™s voice is always one of compassion. Even as Hemingway leaves her completely out of *The Sun also Rises*, even as Hemingway publicly flirts with other women, she continues to explain and defend him. It is a testament to Paula McLain that the reader is slow to dislike Hemingway, even as he slowly and inexorably betrays Hadleyâ™s trust. I loved this novel for its depiction of two passionate, yet humanly-flawed people struggling against impossible odds--poverty, artistic fervor, destructive friendships--to cling on to each other. I raise a toast to Paula McLainâ™s sure talent. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

History is sadly neglectful of the supporting players in the lives of great artists. Fortunately, fiction provides ample opportunity to bring these often fascinating personalities out into the limelight. Gaynor Arnold successfully resurrected the much-maligned Mrs. Charles Dickens in *Girl in a Blue Dress* (2009), now Paula McLain brings Hadley Richardson Hemingway out from the formidable shadow cast by her famous husband. Though doomed, the Hemingway marriage had its giddy high points, including a whirlwind courtship and a few fast and furious years of the expatriate lifestyle in 1920s Paris. Hadley and Ernest traveled in heady company during this gin-soaked and jazz-infused time, and readers are treated to intimate glimpses of many of the literary giants of the era, including Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. But the real star of the story is Hadley, as this time around, Ernest is firmly relegated to the background as he almost never was

during their years together. Though eventually a woman scorned, Hadley is able to acknowledge without rancor or bitterness that "Hem had helped me to see what I really was and what I could do." Much more than a woman-behind-the-man homage, this beautifully crafted tale is an unsentimental tribute to a woman who acted with grace and strength as her marriage crumbled. --Margaret Flanagan --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This is an incredibly well written, moving book. Years ago, I read a biography of Hemingway and felt that Hadley was his true love. The other women were his distractions, his ego needing more. Apparently, at the end of his life he felt that way when he wrote *A Movable Feast*. We are so naive when we're young, we sometimes throw away the most precious relationships. Women were always throwing themselves at Hemingway, especially after he became famous. I am glad that Hadley found another happy marriage. She had such fine character.

I read this story for my book club and was totally blown away by it. I got so involved with the characters lives, doing exactly what the author said at the end, Googling everything I could about them. I loved the triangle between Hadley, Ernest and Pauline even though it was one of the saddest I have ever read!

I'm a Hemmingway fan always have been .He goes in he, goes out, but I'm still here. The *Paris Wife* is wonderfully written from the point of Hadley's experience it feels very real and has some delicious insights into Fitzgerald, and others of the time and what it was like to be considered a 'little below the salt.' I'm fascinated by the entire period . This book if you loved the Woody Allen movie about Paris is for you. In a deeper vein I don't think I've ever read anything about Hadley .I don't know what's truth or just really good writing but I believed in the " essence" of their life together as portrayed by the Author. I don't care for any of the choices of description of the plot. Perhaps this is a book that would be of more interest to female readers and what's wrong with that? How many men are American Lit majors or wannabe's? I read this in the original printing.

Immediately after finishing this book, I went back to and ordered two more copies to give as gifts. I thought it was a beautiful portrait of a marriage between non-equals. Look at a photo of the two of them from the early 1920s, and you see what Hadley was up against, with her midwestern face, plain wool skirts, and unfashionable shoes, 8 years older than her husband, competing against young women fresh out of a Fitzgerald novel, with their beads, silky flapper dresses, and

promiscuous mores. "Hem," who was living off his his wife's meager \$2,000/year trust fund throughout their marriage, by the way, strictly forbid his wife to accept "charity" from their rich friends, even though many were willing and eager to take her shopping and buy her some more fashionable duds. This became so bitterly ironic at the end of the book, in their last love scene, as she is gathering the strength to leave him..."I buried my face in his lap, breathing in the coarse fabric of his new trousers--ones he'd bought with Pauline's help, so she wouldn't be embarrassed to parade him in front of her Right Bank friends." Themes of marriage, infidelity and loss are timeless, and I would recommend this book even if it weren't about famous people.

Enjoyed every moment of this tour-de-force book. The excellent and historically accurate completely immersed me in the life of Hemingway's "Paris Wife." I have read another historical novel by this author, and her skill only becomes greater. I had the rewarding, yet seldom-felt experience by the end of having made a friend in Hadley Hemingway. I hated to say goodbye.

I did not expect to like this book as much as I did . Love the narrative style that added depth to the story. Besides exposing the early years of Hemingway life it also was so much a reflection of the times and generation. The author was non judgemental in her approach to their lives but exposed all the aspects of their characters .,By choosing this vantage point .enables the reader to see the greatness of each individuals along with their ,in this case ,fatal flaws

Excellent book describing the first of Hemingway' s four marriages. Early Paris at a time when free spirited people spread their wings and lived without restrictions. Well written. Enjoyed the people in this time of life. Traveling was frequent despite financial limitations.

I was only able to take this book in during snippets of my time on commutes or before crashing in the late evenings, however I often found myself looking forward to those fifteen minutes to see just where the story might move next. With such a well-known name as Hemingway, you feel that you know him from the beginning but then learn that neither you nor his wife knew what he was capable of. My heart is twisted in every direction after reading this and the writing style is as much responsible for that as the story itself.

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