

The Old Man and The Sea : An Introduction

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Date _____

Page _____

Ernest Miller Hemingway (July 21, 1899 - July 2, 1961) was an American novelist, short story writer and Journalist. His economical and understated style had a strong influence on 20th century fiction, while his life of adventure and his public image influenced later generations. Hemingway produced most of his work between the mid-1920s and the mid 1950s, and won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. He published seven novels, six short story collections, and two non-fiction works. Additional works, including three novels, four short story collections and three non-fiction works, were published posthumously. Many of his works are considered classics of American literature.

Hemingway was raised in Oak Park, Illinois. After high school, he reported for a few months for The Kansas City Star, before leaving for the Italian front to enlist with the World War I ambulance drivers. In 1918, he was seriously wounded and returned home. His wartime experiences formed the basis for his novel 'A Farewell to Arms' (1929).

In 1921, he married Hadley Richardson, the first of his four wives. The couple moved to Paris where he worked as a Foreign Correspondent and fell under the influence of the modernist writers and

artists of the 1920s "Lost Generation" expatriate community. He published his debut novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, in 1926. After returning from Spanish civil war, Hemingway wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). His most famous novel was *The Old Man and the Sea* which was published in 1952. After the publication of this novel, Hemingway went on safari to Africa, where he was almost killed in two successive plane crashes that left him in pain or ill health for much of his remaining life. Hemingway maintained permanent residences in Key West, Florida (1930s) and Cuba (1940s and 1950s) and in 1959, he bought a house in Ketchum, Idaho, where he killed himself in mid-1961.

The Old man and The Sea

The Old man and the Sea, 1952, was one of the last major fictional works of Hemingway. It tells the story of Santiago, an aging fisherman, and his long struggle to catch a giant marlin. Santiago is an elderly fisherman who has not caught a fish in eighty-four days and is considered *Salao* (very unlucky). Manolin, a boy trained by Santiago, has been forced by his parents to work on a different luckier boat. Manolin still helps Santiago prepare his gear every morning and evening and brings

him food. On the eighty-fifth day of his streak, Santiago takes his skiff out early, intending to row far in to the Gulf Stream. He catches nothing except a small albacore in the morning before hooking a huge marlin. The fish is too heavy to haul in and begins to tow the skiff farther out to sea. Santiago holds on through the night, eating the albacore after sunrise. He sees the marlin for the first time - it is longer than the boat. Santiago harpoons it. He lashes the fish to his boat.

A mako shark smells blood in the water and takes a forty pound bite of the marlin. Killing the shark but losing his harpoon, Santiago lashes his knife to an oar as a makeshift spear and kills three more sharks before the knife blade snaps. Cursing himself for going out too far, he apologises to the mutilated carcass of the marlin. He clubs two more sharks at sunset, but the marlin is now half-eaten. In the third night, the sharks come as a pack and leave only bones behind them. Santiago reaches shore and sleeps in his shack, leaving the skeleton tied to his skiff.

In the morning, Manolin cries when he sees Santiago's state. He brings coffee and sits with Santiago until he wakes. He insists on accompanying

classmate

Date _____

Page _____

Santiago in the future. A fisherman measures the marlin at eighteen feet long and a pair of tourists mistake its skeleton for that of a shark. Santiago goes back to sleep and dreams of lions on an African beach.

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