

Core 314

American Literature

UNIT 3 :Fiction

'The Old Man And the Sea'

-By Ernest Hemingway

01. About the Author:

Δ Born- July 21, 1899 Oak Park, Illinois, U.S.

Δ Died -July 2, 1961 (aged 61) Ketchum, Idaho, U.S.

Δ ***Ernest Miller Hemingway*** (/ˈɜːrnɪst ˈhɛmɪŋweɪ/; July 21, 1899 – July 2, 1961) was an ***American** novelist, short-story writer, and journalist.*

Δ His economical and understated style—which included his ***iceberg theory***—had a strong influence on 20th-century fiction, while his adventurous lifestyle and public image brought him admiration from later generations.

Δ Hemingway produced most of his work between the mid-1920s and the mid-1950s, and ***he was awarded the 1954 Nobel Prize in Literature.***

Δ He published ***seven novels, six short-story collections, and two nonfiction works.***

Δ ***Three of his novels, four short-story collections, and three nonfiction works*** were published posthumously.

Δ Hemingway was ***raised in Oak Park, Illinois.***

Δ After high school, he was a reporter for a few months for The Kansas City Star before leaving for the Italian Front to enlist as ***an ambulance driver in World War I* .**

Δ In 1918, ***he was seriously wounded and returned home.***

Δ His wartime experiences formed the basis for his novel ***A Farewell to Arms (1929)*.**

Δ ***In 1921, he married Hadley Richardson, the first of four wives.***

Δ ***Hemingway's debut novel The Sun Also Rises was published in 1926.***

Δ Hemingway was ***present with Allied troops as a journalist at the Normandy landings and the liberation of Paris.***

Δ He maintained ***permanent residences in Key West, Florida in the 1930s and in Cuba in the 1940s and 1950s.***

Δ On a ***1954 trip to Africa, he was seriously injured in two plane accidents on successive days,* leaving him in pain and ill health for much of the rest of his life.**

Δ In ***1959, he bought a house in Ketchum, Idaho, where, in mid-1961, he died by suicide.***

Δ Hemingway called his style the ***iceberg theory: the facts float above water; the supporting structure and symbolism operate out of sight.***

Δ Hemingway's ***writing includes themes of love, war, travel, wilderness, and loss.***

Δ ***The Old Man and the Sea was awarded the 1953 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.*** It is Hemingway's ***last major work of fiction*** and remains one of his most famous works.

Δ His Famous Works:

- The Sun Also Rises (1926)

- A Clean Well Lighted Place (1926)

- The Torrents of Spring (1926)

- An Alpine Idyll (1927)

- A Farewell To Arms (1929)

- To Have and Have Not (1937)

- For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940)

- **Across the River and into the Trees (1950)**

- **The Old Man and the Sea (1952)**

****02. About the Text:****

Δ The Old Man and the Sea is a ***1952 novella written by the American author Ernest Hemingway.***

Δ ***Written between December 1950 and February 1951, it tells the story of Santiago, an aging fisherman, and his long struggle to catch a giant marlin.***

Δ The novella was highly anticipated and was released to record sales; the initial critical reception was equally positive, but attitudes have varied significantly since then.

Δ ***Publication date- September 1, 1952.***

Δ ***Awards:-***

- **(1) Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (1953),**
- **(2) Nobel Prize in Literature (1954).**

Δ ***The last major fictional work to be published during Hemingway's lifetime,* The Old Man and the Sea *was begun in Cuba during a tumultuous period in the author's life.***

Δ ***Translated into nine languages by the end of 1952,* The Old Man and the Sea *remained on the New York Times bestseller list for twenty-six weeks.***

Δ The Old Man and the Sea is ***inferior or equal to Hemingway's other works and has since been the subject of scholarly debate.***

Δ The Old Man and the Sea is ***one of Hemingway's most enduring works.***

Δ Told in language of great simplicity and power, ***it is the story of an old Cuban fisherman, down on his luck, and his supreme ordeal – a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream.***

Δ ***Why this work is so famous?***

It succinctly presents a ***challenging question while exploring several themes that provide insight to man's role, suffering without complaint, and humanity's place in the world.***

Δ ***This story cuts right through the bone, delivering a strong yet minimalistic and heart-wrenching narrative.***

****03. Characters:****

(1) Santiago

The old man of the novella's title, Santiago is a Cuban fisherman who has had an extended run of bad luck. Despite his expertise, he has been unable to catch a fish for eighty-four days. He is humble, yet exhibits a justified pride in his abilities. His knowledge of the sea and its creatures, and of his craft, is unparalleled and helps him preserve a sense of hope regardless of circumstance. Throughout his life, Santiago has been presented with contests to test his strength and endurance. The marlin with which he struggles for three days represents his greatest challenge. Paradoxically, although Santiago ultimately loses the fish, the marlin is also his greatest victory.

(2) The Marlin

Santiago hooks the marlin, which we learn at the end of the novella measures eighteen feet, on the first afternoon of his fishing expedition. Because of the marlin's great size, Santiago is unable to pull the fish in, and the two become engaged in a kind of tug-of-war that often seems more like an alliance than a struggle. The fishing line serves as a symbol of the fraternal connection Santiago feels with the fish. When the captured marlin is later destroyed by sharks, Santiago feels destroyed as well. Like Santiago, the marlin is implicitly compared to Christ.

(3) Manolin

A boy presumably in his adolescence, Manolin is Santiago's apprentice and devoted attendant. The old man first took him out on a boat when he was merely five years old. Due to Santiago's recent bad luck, Manolin's parents have forced the boy to go out on a different fishing boat. Manolin, however, still cares

deeply for the old man, to whom he continues to look as a mentor. His love for Santiago is unmistakable as the two discuss baseball and as the young boy recruits help from villagers to improve the old man's impoverished conditions.

(4) Joe DiMaggio

Although DiMaggio never appears in the novel, he plays a significant role nonetheless. Santiago worships him as a model of strength and commitment, and his thoughts turn toward DiMaggio whenever he needs to reassure himself of his own strength. Despite a painful bone spur that might have crippled another player, DiMaggio went on to secure a triumphant career. He was a center fielder for the New York Yankees from 1936 to 1951, and is often considered the best all-around player ever at that position.

(5) Perico

Perico, the reader assumes, owns the bodega in Santiago's village. He never appears in the novel, but he serves an important role in the fisherman's life by providing him with newspapers that report the baseball scores. This act establishes him as a kind man who helps the aging Santiago.

(6) Martin

Like Perico, Martin, a café owner in Santiago's village, does not appear in the story. The reader learns of him through Manolin, who often goes to Martin for Santiago's supper. As the old man says, Martin is a man of frequent kindness who deserves to be repaid.

04. Themes:

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

The themes used in this Novella are - ***The Honor in Struggle, Defeat & Death, Pride as the Source of Greatness & Determination, Kinship & Connection, etc.***

05. Dialogues:

(1) ***_“Fish,” he said softly, aloud, “I’ll stay with you until I am dead.”_***

- Santiago

(2)

“Have faith in the Yankees my son. Think of the great DiMaggio.”

~Santiago, Page 17

(3)

“Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel?”

~ The Narrator, Page 29

06. Setting.

The narrative takes place in the 1940s.

The Old Man and the Sea has ***two—the sea, which is the primary setting, and a small Cuban fishing village, which is the secondary setting.***

The fishing village is located along the Gulf Stream, a current that wraps around Cuba and runs from the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic Ocean.

07. Symbols.

In the novel The Old Man and the Sea the symbols which the researcher considers as individual symbols are

Δ *The old man as a symbol of someone who has an optimistic life,*

Δ *Manolin (the boy) as a symbol of hope,*

Δ *Joe Di Maggio as a symbol of strong desire,*

Δ *Harpoon as a symbol of skill,*

Δ Bird as a symbol of help, etc.

08. Style:

Among all Hemingway's works, *The Old Man and the Sea* is ***the most typical one to his unique language style.***

Its language is ***simple and natural, and has the effect of directness, clarity and freshness.***

09. Critical Appreciation:

There was an old man, Santiago who sailed around the Gulf stream alone with a small boat. His journey went on for 84 days and caught no fish. Early 40 days, he sailed with a young boy whose name is Marlin. However, after 40 days, his parents couldn't trust the old man. They even thought the old man became the worst and unlucky fisher man.

After all, the young boy's parents forced their son to transfer to another boat and he could not reject their instruction. The new boat that the young boy transferred took three heavy fishes for the first week but the old man came back without any fish which really made the young boy heartbroken. The boy always came to meet him and help to arrange the old man's fishing gear like harpoon, rake and sail. The young boy wanted to sail with the old man, but the old man refused it. The young boy bought beer for the old man. Other fishermen made fun of the old man who had caught any fish for 84 days, but the old man never got mad at it. He told the young man about his sailing and various experiences of fishing. They both like baseball. They often talked about baseball and both like Di Magio in the Yankees. The old

man told the young boy that on the next day, he would venture far out into the Gulf to fish, confident that his unlucky streak is near its end.

On the eighty-fifth day, Santiago set out alone. He departed with belief that he would find a big fish. However, he did not find any fish for two days. After three days, finally the old man found a big fish. The fish was so huge that the old man's boat was almost drawn by that fish. The old man fought with that fish, and on the second day, he finally reeled up the fish.

He went back toward home, but on the way home, sharks attacked his boat. He killed the first shark but he lost his weapon so he made a new weapon with his knife. He could not give up the huge fish. He kept trying to come back to the harbor with the fish although more and more sharks crowded around his boat. He killed five sharks but the more sharks came to his boat. After all, only its tail and its head left after attacks from sharks in spite of his efforts. However, the old man was satisfied with himself although he lost almost all of the fish.

At last, he reached the harbor. As soon as he reached, he fell asleep. He was so exhausted by his sailing and fighting with sharks. After he got to his bed, other fishermen were surprised, because the fish was so enormous. They thought it must be a shark. Meanwhile, the young boy was so worried about the old man and he cried after the old man got sleep. The boy brought him newspapers and coffee. The old man woke up and had a conversation with the boy. He promised to fish together. And then again he fell asleep, the boy was next to him and gazed at him. The old man had a dream of a lion.

10. Climax:

The climax in the story occurs when Santiago kills the fish and its blood attracts the eager sharks nearby. His hopes of taking home his huge fish are gone when the sharks attack and eat the fish.

11. Conclusion:

At the end of the story, a group of tourists discover the remains of the fish. They misunderstand a fisherman and think the skeleton is from a shark. The ending uses irony—when expectations do not meet reality. Santiago thinks the fish is a stroke of good luck, but the fish is destroyed.

_ "A man can be destroyed but not defeated. Now there is no time to think of what you do not have." _

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