

**Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research
Tikrit University
Collage of Basic Education/Shirqat
English Department**



“The Old Man and the Sea”
Ernest Hemingway

Second Stage

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By

Asst. Lec. Shakir Hussein Ali

Day Five- Summary:

From Manolin bringing the old man coffee to the old man's return to sleep to dream, once again, about the lions

Early the next morning, Manolin comes to the old man's shack, and the sight of his friend's ravaged hands brings him to tears. He goes to fetch coffee. Fishermen have gathered around Santiago's boat and measured the carcass at eighteen feet. Manolin waits for the old man to wake up, keeping his coffee warm for him so it is ready right away. When the old man wakes, he and Manolin talk warmly. Santiago says that the sharks beat him, and Manolin insists that he will work with the old man again, regardless of what his parents say. He reveals that there had been a search for Santiago involving the coast guard and planes. Santiago is happy to have someone to talk to, and after he and Manolin make plans, the old man sleeps again. Manolin leaves to find food and the newspapers for the old man, and to tell Pedrico that the marlin's head is his. That afternoon two tourists at the terrace café mistake the great skeleton for that of a shark. Manolin continues to watch over the old man as he sleeps and dreams of the lions.

Analysis

Given the depth of Santiago's tragedy—most likely Santiago will never have the opportunity to catch another such fish in his lifetime—*The Old Man and the Sea* ends on a rather optimistic note. Santiago is reunited with Manolin, who desperately wants to complete his training. All of the old man's noble qualities and, more important, the lessons he draws from his experience, will be passed on to the boy, which means that the fisherman's life will continue on, in some form, even after his death. The promise of triumph and regeneration is supported by the closing image of the book. For the third time, Santiago returns to his dream of the lions at play on the African beaches. As an image that recalls the old man's youth, the lions suggest the circularity of life. They also suggest the harmony—the lions are, after all, playing—that exists between the opposing forces of nature.

The hope that Santiago clings to at the novella's close is not the hope that comes from naïveté. It is, rather, a hope that comes from experience, of something new emerging from something old, as a phoenix rises out of the ashes. The novella states as much when Santiago reflects that “a man can be destroyed but not defeated.” The destruction of the marlin is not a defeat for Santiago; rather, it leads to his redemption. Indeed, the fishermen who once mocked him now stand in awe of him. The decimation of the marlin, of course, is a significant loss. The sharks strip Santiago of his greater glory assuredly as they strip the great fish of its flesh. But to view the shark attack as precipitating only loss is to see but half the

picture. When Santiago says, "Fishing kills me exactly as it keeps me alive," he is pointing, once again, to the vast, necessary, and ever-shifting tension that exists between loss and gain, triumph and defeat, life and death.

In the final pages of the novella, Hemingway employs a number of images that link Santiago to Christ, the model of transcendence, who turned loss into gain, defeat into triumph, and even death into new life. Hemingway unabashedly paints the old man as a crucified martyr: as soon as the sharks arrive, the narrator comments that the noise Santiago made resembled the noise one would make "feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood." The narrator's description of Santiago's return to town also recalls the crucifixion. As the old man struggles up the hill with his mast across his shoulders, the reader cannot help but recall Christ's march toward Calvary. Even the position in which he collapses on his bed—he sleeps facedown on the newspapers with his arms out straight and the palms of his hands up—brings to mind the image of Christ suffering on the cross.

Important Questions explained

1- When the novel opens, how many days has it been since the old man last caught a fish?

Although the old man held a previous record of 87 days, at the novel's opening he has gone 84 days without catching a fish. In the first 40 the boy (Manolin) had been with him, but his parents had agreed that the old man was finally "salao," or the worst form of unlucky. They insisted that the boy sail with someone else.

2- Where had the old man gone in his youth that he dreamed about every night?

Africa. When he was young, the old man journeyed to the beaches of Africa and saw lions playing on the beach. Every night, instead of great fish or his long gone wife, he dreams of the lions on the beach.

3- What does the old man call the sea?

La mar. The old man calls the sea "la mar" because he likes to think of it as a woman that gives or withholds great favors.

4- The gigantic marlin that provides the main conflict for the novel is the first thing the old man catches. True or false?

f. The old man actually hooks a tuna before catching the big one.

5- What handicap does Joe DiMaggio, the old man's favorite baseball player and idol of sorts, suffer from?

Bone spurs. Bone spurs are short, painful bony growths from normal bone. The old man doesn't know what they are, but he figures that if "the Great DiMaggio" suffers through them then he can certainly handle this fish.

6- The old man becomes highly embarrassed and humiliated when his hand cramps. True or false?

t. The old man does not even mind being cut on the hand as much as he does his hand cramping. He curses his left hand and feels humiliated when it curls into a claw.

7- What type of sea creature does the old man catch (for food) that has flying fish in its belly?

A dolphin. Knowing he needs nutrition, the old man lowers another one of his lines and manages to catch a dolphin. Inside the dolphin's belly, the old man finds two flying fish.

8- As the conflict between the old man and the fish drags on, how does the old man view the fish?

As a brother. The old man clearly has great respect for nature, and views the fish as an equal and a brother, but that does not stop his determination to kill him.

9- To boost his confidence, the old man remembers a time back in his younger days when he had defeated a very strong man in an arm wrestling match that dragged on for a long time. A rematch was arranged, but why was the old man able to easily defeat him a second time?

He had broken the man's confidence. After defeating the man for the first time, the old man was referred to as "El Campion" or "the Champion." A rematch was arranged, but the old man had already broken the other man's confidence and had easily defeated him.

10- The first time the old man makes a promise to God, how many times does he vow to say both the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" in order to kill the fish?

To ease his suffering and perhaps gain divine intercession, the old man promises to say ten "Our Father"s and ten "Hail Mary"s. The old man remarks that "Our Father"s are easier to say than "Hail Mary"s.

11- Who or what does the old man repeatedly wish were with him?

The boy. The old man constantly wishes that the boy were with him, especially when his trials get particularly tough or when he is just feeling lonely.

12- How does the old man kill the great marlin?

He harpoons it through the heart. The marlin begins to circle the old man's skiff, and when it gets close enough he harpoons it through the heart. The marlin makes one last dramatic jump and then dies.

13- To whom or what does the old man utter the curse "Bad luck to your mother?"

A shark. The old man sees the first of many sharks that attack the bleeding fish carcass. Knowing that bad times are coming, the old man curses the shark's mother then kills it.

14- What type of animal do tourists mistake the skeleton of the marlin for?

A shark. Two tourists see the skeleton of the marlin attached to the old man's skiff and mistake it for a shark's.

15- How does the novel end?

The old man dreaming about his favorite place. The novel fittingly ends with the old man dreaming about the lions in Africa.