



BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY

HEMINGWAY LIBRARY EDITIONS

The Sun Also Rises
A Farewell to Arms
For Whom the Bell Tolls
The Old Man and the Sea
Green Hills of Africa

NOVELS

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The Sun Also Rises
A Farewell to Arms
To Have and Have Not
For Whom the Bell Tolls
*Across the River and
into the Trees*
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Ernest Hemingway



THE OLD MAN
AND THE SEA

THE HEMINGWAY LIBRARY EDITION

Foreword by PATRICK HEMINGWAY

Edited with an introduction by SEÁN HEMINGWAY

SCRIBNER

New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi



Scribner

An Imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

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This Scribner trade paperback edition July 2022

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Manufactured in Italy

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for.

ISBN 978-1-4767-8784-8
ISBN 978-1-4767-8785-5 (pbk)
ISBN 978-1-4767-8786-2 (ebook)

To Charlie Scribner
and
Max Perkins

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Foreword

In his treatise *On the Nature of Things*, the ancient Roman philosopher Lucretius once wrote: “Life is one long struggle in the dark.” What I think he meant by that is there is so much that we do not know. My own education began in many ways during the summers of my youth in Key West, Bimini, and Cuba, especially at Finca Vigía, with my father, who was a wonderful teacher. Cuba and the Gulf Stream then were like an Eden for me, and returning to boarding school always felt like being sent into exile from paradise. Fishing trips with Papa aboard the *Pilar* in pursuit of marlin, exploring the sea by snorkeling with some of the first single-lens goggle glasses, and the trove of natural history books in my father’s library awakened me to the world in all of its beauty and complexity. In *The Old Man and the Sea*, Santiago knows about life’s struggle—he has fished for eighty-four days without a catch. He is not, however, entirely in the dark. In my view, a great achievement of this novel is how my father, drawing on his own formidable experience and talent, managed to create for us the world of the Gulf Stream so completely. It is a powerful evocation of a precious ecosystem, one sadly undergoing terrible changes today due to human intervention, and one very much worth protecting.

X • FOREWORD

In a fascinating twist of history, the Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger and Ernest Hemingway died in the same year. Over the course of their lives both men made great contributions to their chosen professions, each achieving a Nobel Prize, one in physics, the other in literature. Perhaps the most memorable of the Austrian physicist's thought experiments was "Schrödinger's cat"—a creature both dead and alive at the same time. It was a way for him to explain the duality of conditions that can coexist in quantum physics. Schrödinger imagined a cat in a closed box with a deadly poison—one would not know if the cat was dead or alive and so it would, in a sense, be both. Part of the mythic power of *The Old Man and the Sea* is something that I would call "Hemingway's cat." A seemingly impossible feat is made possible through my father's storytelling: an old man alone in a skiff on the sea manages to bring in a fish weighing over a thousand pounds.

Patrick Hemingway

Introduction

The Old Man and the Sea is arguably the greatest fishing story of all time. It ranks, in my opinion, above Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* as the most marvelous piscatorial contribution of American literature. It is a timeless story—mythic, archetypal—but it is also of its time. Like the whaling industry of nineteenth-century America captured so poignantly in *Moby-Dick*, the practice of Cuban commercial fishermen setting out in small sailing skiffs for large billfish, using only hand tackle, is now largely a thing of the past with the advent of motorboats and modern fishing equipment.¹

Fishing has been a part of human experience for thousands of years and this story reminds us of its importance.² Part of the joy of reading *The Old Man and the Sea* is the portrayal of the act of fishing itself, as anyone who has held a hand line or a rod with a fish tugging on it will understand. Fishing, for those of us who practice it, is one of life's great pleasures. I am forever grateful to my father for introducing me at a young age to the wonders of fishing, as his father had done for him. The notion of passing on this knowledge from generation to generation, which is expressed so beautifully in the novella through the friendship of Santiago and the young boy, is an important aspect of the story.

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How did Ernest Hemingway come to write this masterpiece? *The Old Man and the Sea* had a long period of gestation. In 1936 Hemingway described the essence of the story in an article he wrote for *Esquire* magazine entitled “On the Blue Water: A Gulf Stream Letter,” included as the first appendix to this book. It was a tale told to him by Carlos Gutiérrez, a Cuban fisherman who taught my grandfather much about big-game fishing (see figs. 1–3). Hemingway’s passion for deep-sea fishing began much earlier, though, and it was through his determination to master the sport that he acquired a wealth of detailed knowledge enabling him to write the novella many years later.

Hemingway first became interested in deep-sea fishing when he lived in Key West in the late 1920s, which is also when he began to visit Cuba. The personal fishing logs he kept for more than ten years are preserved in the Ernest Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston. They document everything from the numerous fishing trips and catches he made to the weather conditions.³ In a log from 1932 there are notes from conversations with Carlos Gutiérrez that record fascinating tips about fishing for marlin, as well as the fish’s behavior and characteristics (see fig. 2). In the spring of 1934, upon returning from the safari that he immortalized in *Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway custom-ordered his own deep-sea fishing boat. The *Pilar*, a forty-two-foot wooden motor cruiser from the Wheeler Shipyard in Brooklyn, was to become his home on the sea (see figs. 3–5). By the following year my grandfather had caught more than one hundred marlin (see fig. 6) and was considered enough of an expert to write authoritative articles about the sport.⁴ He was approached by scientists from the Academy of Nat-

ural Sciences of Philadelphia and the American Museum of Natural History in New York to help gather information about the large game fish of the Gulf Stream—their classifications, life histories, diets, migratory patterns, and mating habits.⁵ The ichthyologist Henry Fowler even recognized his contributions by naming a new species of sculpin after him, *Neomerinthe hemingwayi*.⁶ One of the largest marlin that Ernest Hemingway ever fought, which was arguably nine hundred pounds, was hooked by his friend Henry Strater on the *Pilar* in 1935. As Hemingway describes in a letter just after the event (appendix II), the fish was savagely attacked by sharks while they reeled it in and lost nearly half of its meat. It is clear that my grandfather drew on this real-life experience when he wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Hemingway had a great number of encounters with sharks and caught several large makos, one of which, hooked near Bimini, was 786 pounds. This Hemingway Library Edition includes as appendix III a previously unpublished list by my grandfather of principal sharks in Cuban waters (see fig. 10). It features his own observations about the different species and how dangerous they become when they smell blood in the water. Hemingway even pioneered a technique for quickly landing large fish to avoid their being attacked by sharks. In the summer of 1935 in Bimini, he was the first angler to bring in a bluefin tuna unscathed by sharks.

A particularly exciting feature of this Hemingway Library Edition of *The Old Man and the Sea* is the inclusion of a previously unpublished short story by my grandfather (see appendix IV, fig. 11), which Patrick Hemingway has aptly entitled “Pursuit As Happiness.” The story makes

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a marvelous counterpart to *The Old Man and the Sea* and gives a vivid sense of what it was like for Hemingway when he went deep-sea fishing for marlin in those early days. Set in 1933, the story describes Hemingway's passionate pursuit of a huge marlin while aboard the *Anita*, a ship captained by my grandfather's friend Josie Russell, who owned both the *Anita* (see fig. 1) and Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West. The story uses nonfictional characters like my grandfather and his longtime first mate Carlos Gutiérrez (see figs. 1 and 3). It is difficult to say how much of it is based on fact and how much was embellished by the storyteller. Certain elements, such as the reference to outriggers, which were added to the *Pilar* in April 1935, indicate that the story was written much later than 1933.⁷ Will Watson in his careful study of my grandfather's fishing logs notes how he became disappointed with the aging Gutiérrez in 1936, as his first mate made more and more mistakes on the *Pilar* resulting in many lost fish. These later experiences may have inspired Hemingway's fictional account of Carlos's error in the short story.⁸ Other details suggest the autobiographical nature of the story. The main character resides at the Ambos Mundos Hotel, where Hemingway first stayed in Havana, and eats and drinks at the Floridita, which was one of his favorite hangouts. He also mentions his own record of catching seven white marlin in one day off the north coast of Cuba, a record Hemingway held alone until 1936.⁹ The heroic notion of giving all of the meat away to the locals is a happy and generous way to ensure that none of the meat from their fishing adventures went to waste. However, what happens in the story contrasts with the reality in Bimini during the 1930s, when massive quantities of trophy fish meat went unused.

It was a common occurrence that deeply bothered my grandfather.¹⁰

Hemingway periodically returned to the idea of writing *The Old Man and the Sea*. In a letter to his editor Max Perkins in 1939, he mentions that it would make a great addition to a forthcoming book of short stories:

... And three very long ones I want to write now. One about Teruel called Fatigue. One about the old commercial fisherman who fought the swordfish all alone in his skiff for 4 days and four nights and the sharks finally eating it after he had it alongside and could not get it into the boat. That's a wonderful story of the Cuban coast. I'm going out with old Carlos in his skiff so as to get it all right. Everything he does and everything he thinks in all that long fight with the boat out of sight of all the other boats all alone on the sea. It's a great story if I can get it right. One that would make the book.¹¹

No other record of that trip with Carlos Gutiérrez exists, but Hemingway's personal collection of photographs, many taken by the author himself, show Cuban fishermen at work in their small wooden sailing boats with typically two men aboard (see figs. 7 and 8). A photo of a Cuban fishing boat with a large marlin nearly the length of the skiff gives a powerful sense of the heroic nature of these fishermen and their quarry (see fig. 9).¹²

The onsets of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and World War II (1939–1945) led my grandfather to other writing projects, and it was not until the end of 1950 that he was finally able to write the story of the old fisherman.

At that time he had completed the first draft of a novel that would be posthumously published as *Islands in the Stream*.¹³ Hemingway had envisioned this manuscript as the first book of a major trilogy that he was composing on “The Sea, The Air and The Land.”¹⁴ As Hemingway wrote *The Old Man and the Sea*, he thought it could serve as a coda to the sea book.¹⁵ By February 17, 1951, he had completed the first draft (26,531 words) of *The Old Man and the Sea* at Finca Vigía. Preferring to rise early in the morning and work until lunchtime, he claimed to have written 1,000 words per day for a sixteen-day period that month, much more than his usual output.¹⁶

During this time the young, beautiful Adriana Ivancich, who was the model for the female heroine in *Across the River and Into the Trees*, was visiting the Finca with her mother, and she once again provided inspiration for my grandfather’s writing.¹⁷ Hemingway even suggested that Adriana illustrate the story. Her artwork, drawn from visits to the little fishing village of Cojímar, was used for the cover of the book (see fig. 15). In a moment of generosity before the book was even published, Hemingway gave the original manuscript to Adriana’s brother Gianfranco Ivancich.¹⁸ Unfortunately, that manuscript has never been found. Hemingway’s final typescript with quite a number of pencil corrections in the author’s hand is preserved in the Ernest Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. It illustrates some of the last editorial changes that Hemingway made to *The Old Man and the Sea*. For the most part, these changes are minor additions that clarify or reinforce his existing statements. For example, in the first paragraph of page 1, he adds the words “now definitely and finally” before “*salao*, which is the