

The old man and the sea

Ernest Hemingway

Review by:
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This book tells the story of a poor old fisherman that has spent the last 84 days without taking home a single fish. The first forty days he was accompanied by his beloved friend. A boy, who has fished with him since he was 4 years old and with whom he shares his knowledge about the sea with whom he always talks about baseball and the lions he saw when he was sailing near the African's shore. Unfortunately, the boy was removed from his side by his parents due to the lack of preys. The eighty-fifth day, they both had thought it was going to be a lucky day for fishing and it was indeed. That day the old man gaffed the largest fish he has ever seen a great marlin eighteen feet long. It was just the beginning of a battle for surviving between the marlin and the fisherman. This battle ends with the dead of the marlin, but the old fisherman also ends up in a very poor condition. After days and nights of fighting, his hands, shoulders and back were torn by the fishing line, he had barely drunk water and he had feed himself with some raw fishes that he managed to capture. But it was not the end of the story, the old fisherman is really tired, trying to take home his prey when a shark claims part of the huge fish. He managed to kill him but then some others came, he tried to fight them but the sunlight went out and he was not able to do anything else anymore. Finally, he arrives home, with no more than the skeleton of what was the best prey ever fished in that coast.

This book is a story of endurance, courage, and pain. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated", if there is a phase in the book that can summarize it, the latter will be it. Through the book, Ernest Hemingway presents to us all the obstacles that the fisherman had to overcome to achieve his goal, he persisted 84 days waiting for his opportunity, and when he finally found it, he is not willing to let it go. He submerges the reader into the fight, into the thoughts of the fisherman, who is talking to himself, but at the same time is talking to the reader, he is telling us his thoughts, his fears his pain. We are there in the small skiff seeing the old man lying on the planks, holding onto the line, eating raw fish, talking to the birds and trying to conserve his strength for the final fight that he knows will be decisive. Hemingway takes us there and keeps us expecting the outcome of the journey. At the end of the book, Hemingway shows us again the dimension of the wounds of the old man with the crying of the boy, and the sadness and admiration of the other fishers caused by the capture and later lost of such a fish.

In 1953, Ernest Hemingway was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for this book. A year later, he received the Nobel Prize in Literature and this book was cited by the Nobel Committee as contributing to their decision.