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Analysis of theme - Friendship as the Core of Resilience

At the outset of *The Old Man and the Sea* I see Santiago and the boy and the relationship between them is already strong. The first passage I have from the start of the story shows the old man and the boy talking about when the boy was very young and first went fishing with him

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"How old was I when you first took me in a boat?"

"Five and you nearly were killed when I brought the fish in too green and he nearly tore the boat to pieces. Can you remember?"

"I can remember the tail slapping and banging and the thwart breaking and the noise of the clubbing. I can remember you throwing me into the bow where the wet coiled lines were and feeling the whole boat shiver and the noise of you clubbing him like chopping a tree down and the sweet blood smell all over me."

[12] "Can you really remember that or did I just tell it to you?"

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The Old Man and the Sea

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"I remember everything from when we first went together."

The old man looked at him with his sun-burned, confident loving eyes.

This shows how long their friendship goes back and how it started very early. The boy was only five and the old man took him fishing so I see that their bond began long ago. They share memories of hardship and danger but also care and trust. The old man looks at the boy with loving eyes. The way they remember their first fishing experience shows that friendship is a big theme right from the start. Friendship here is connected to teaching passing knowledge from older to younger and sharing life lessons. The old man and boy form a strong bond and it does not depend on success. They remember a difficult situation with a fish that nearly destroyed the boat but that memory is precious because it belongs to them together. This theme of friendship also connects to resilience and dignity which are central to the story. Santiago and the boy support each other emotionally and that friendship gives Santiago strength even when the boy is not with him physically. The beginning sets the theme that human dignity and hope often come from connections between people.

In the middle of the story Santiago is out alone at sea. He hooks a great marlin and struggles with it for days.

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"I wish I had the boy" the old man said aloud. "I'm being towed by a fish and I'm the towing bitt. I could make the line fast. But then he could break it. I must hold him all I can and give him line when he must have it. Thank God he is travelling and not going down."

What I will do if he decides to go down, I don't know. What I'll do if he sounds and dies I don't know. But I'll do something. There are plenty of things I can do.

Here Santiago is alone but he thinks about the boy. He wishes he had the boy with him. This tells us that the friendship theme is so important that even when the boy is absent Santiago feels his presence in memory. He wants the boy not only for physical help but also for moral support. The friendship gives him mental strength. When he says I wish I had the boy it shows that human bonds give courage and comfort. He is not just an old man fighting a fish. He is also a teacher and a friend and in remembering the boy he finds strength to keep going. His will to keep fighting is partly inspired by the boy who believes in him. This shows that friendship is a source of hope in isolation.

And, at the end of story the old man returns defeated in a material sense because the sharks have eaten the big marlin. He brings home only the skeleton. He is exhausted.

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He was asleep when the boy looked in the door in the morning. It was blowing so hard that the drifting-boats would not be going out and the boy had slept late and then come to the old man's shack as he had come each morning. The boy saw that the old man was breathing and then he saw the old man's hands and he started to cry. He went out very quietly to go to bring some coffee and all the way down the road he was crying.

At the end the boy still cares deeply about the old man. His tears show the depth of their friendship. The boy cries because he understands the old man's suffering and struggle. He sees the old man's wounded hands and realizes what the old man has gone through. The friendship does not end with the loss of the fish. In fact it grows stronger because now the boy understands the price Santiago paid. The boy will bring him coffee and comfort and they will remain close. This final passage shows that even in loss the friendship endures and that human dignity grows from love and understanding between friends. The boy is moved by the old man's effort and is proud of him. This makes the theme of friendship central to understanding the old man's struggle. He never truly fights alone. The memory of the boy in the middle sustained him and at the end the boy returns to weep for him and help him. This theme is linked to resilience and dignity.

because Santiago never surrenders his honor and his friendship is not based on success but on mutual respect and care.

When I look at the three passages in the story, I see how the theme of friendship grows and changes. At the start, the bond between Santiago and the boy is already strong. It began long ago when the boy was very young, and the old man taught him how to fish. It starts as a long established bond built from early childhood experiences. In the middle of the story, Santiago is alone at sea. But even when he is alone, he thinks about the boy. He remembers the boy's kindness and wishes he was there with him. This shows that the friendship is not just about being together physically. It continues as a memory and source of strength at sea and in the end it is reaffirmed by the boy's compassion and devotion. Friendship here is not just a side note. It is a core part of why Santiago can face hardship with dignity and resilience. At the end of the story, the boy is there for Santiago again. He sees the old man's struggle and understands his pain. The boy shows his love and respect by caring for Santiago. This proves that their friendship does not depend on success or catching a fish. It grows stronger because it is built on understanding and compassion. Santiago's dignity and resilience come from this connection. Friendship is not just part of the story, it is what helps Santiago face challenges and find hope. It shows how human connections are more important than winning or losing.

Analysis of character

Santiago's Strength : a Testament to the Unbreakable Spirit

Now focusing on Santiago as a character ,

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He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy. He never dreamed about the boy. He simply woke, looked out the open door at the moon and unrolled his trousers and put them on. He urinated

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outside the shack and then went up the road to wake the boy. He was shivering with the morning cold. But he knew he would shiver himself warm and that soon he would be rowing.

This shows Santiago as a simple man who holds his dignity in quiet ways. He no longer chases big dreams of glory or heroism. He dreams only of lions which symbolize youth strength and freedom. He loves the lions like he loves the boy. This is key here. The lions remind him of something pure and eternal inside him. He does not dream of the boy which may seem odd but in fact he lives the friendship with the boy in real life. He does not need to dream it because it is reality. The lions in his dreams stand for a deeper spiritual strength that he carries from his youth.

He accepts his old age his humble life and his routine. He is connected to nature. To wake before dawn and go fishing is part of who he is. He trusts that he can warm himself by his own effort. This shows resilience and dignity. He does not complain and faces cold and hunger with calm acceptance. Also, he is practical and self-reliant. This character detail connects to the theme of friendship and resilience because even though he is old and unlucky he has the boy. He has love and care and the boy admires him. He admires the lions and the memory of his youth. He is not broken by hardship. He lives a life guided by a quiet inner strength. Santiago as a character is defined by perseverance, humility, and a deep moral code. His dreams and actions show that he draws power from nature and memory. This supports the theme of dignity and resilience and the importance of friendship because the boy is always near him in reality and he cherishes that bond quietly. Character is shown here as someone who stands firm in a harsh world without losing grace or heart.

Analysis of atmosphere and setting

The Sea: A Reflection of Struggle and Connection

Now analysing at how atmosphere and setting reflect Santiago's isolation and connection to nature.

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In the dark the old man could feel the morning coming and as he rowed he heard the trembling sound as flying fish left the water and the hissing that their stiff set wings made as they soared away in the darkness. He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends on the ocean. He was sorry for the birds, especially the small delicate dark terns that were always flying and looking and almost never finding, and he thought, the birds have a harder life than we do except for the robber birds and the heavy strong ones. Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel and it comes so suddenly and such birds that fly, dipping and hunting, with their small sad voices are made too delicately for the sea.

Here the setting is the ocean at dawn and its creatures. The old man feels the coming of morning in the dark. He moves quietly in a world that is both beautiful and dangerous. The flying fish and the birds show how life in the sea is full of struggle and delicate balance. The old man calls the flying fish his friends. This is important because it shows that his sense of friendship goes beyond just human relationships. He feels connected to other creatures. He cares about the delicate terns. He wonders why they are made so fragile in a cruel sea. This thought process shows that he respects life around him and understands hardship in a broad sense. The atmosphere is calm and mysterious. The darkness, the soft sounds of flying fish, the quiet hissing of their wings all create a setting where the old man feels both alone and yet not alone. He is isolated but among friends of a different kind. The cruelty and sudden danger of the ocean remind us that the old man lives at the mercy of nature. He respects that. He does not curse it. He admires its beauty and accepts its cruelty. He is kind toward the animals. He shares a bond of sympathy with them. This atmosphere makes us see that Santiago's dignity comes from understanding his place in nature. He does not fight nature blindly. He lives within it and respects it. The atmosphere and setting help show that he is never truly alone because he carries empathy and respect for other creatures. The ocean is both a challenge and a friend and that shapes his moral code.

This setting shows that dignity can exist even in a dangerous world if one approaches it with respect and understanding.

The Cycle of Struggle and Hope: A Narrative of Human Dignity

For narrative structure, I consider how the story comes whole circle and how friendship and resilience shape the conclusion. The questions given to consider are about the theme of friendship and how it is related to the fish and what brings the old man and the boy together and how it remains central even when the boy is missing at sea also what is unique about their friendship. At the end the old man returns with the marlin's skeleton. He has lost the fish but proven himself. The boy cries at his wounded hands and brings him coffee. The narrative starts with them talking about fishing and ends with them reunited. The cycle of going out and coming back shows that the friendship does not depend on catching a fish. It depends on understanding and caring.

The way the story is told shows clearly that friendship is a central theme. The relationship between the old man and the boy is not based on luck or material success. Instead, it is built on respect, trust, and deep care for each other. From the start of the story, I see their bond through their conversations and shared memories. The boy looks up to the old man, and the old man treasures the boy's loyalty and kindness. This relationship gives meaning to their lives and helps them face hardships. The old man and boy share a bond formed long ago when the old man taught the boy how to fish. This bond was not broken even though the boy's parents made the boy go with a luckier boat. They were brought together by fishing but what keeps them together is deeper than just fishing, it is respect, love and shared experiences. The old man might be old and unlucky but the boy admires him greatly because he is courageous, honest and full of skill. The uniqueness of their friendship comes from the difference in their ages and from the fact that the old man is like a mentor and father figure to the boy. While at sea alone Santiago misses the boy and wishes for his presence. This shows that even in isolation friendship is present in his mind. Also, when the old man returns and is sleeping the boy comes and sees him and cries. This shows that the narrative structure returns to the human connection that started the story. The fish they caught or lost does not really define their bond. The really treasure is the understanding they share. The old man might have lost the fish but he has gained a stronger confirmation of his dignity and the boy's devotion. The narrative structure is shaped so that I start with their friendship and I see it tested by separation and hardship and in the end I return to that friendship renewed and more profound. The old man and boy stand together again planning future fishing trips. The cycle shows that life goes on. The struggle was not for nothing. It strengthened their bond and proved what is important in life.

The story begins and ends with their relationship making friendship one of the main pillars that support the old man's dignity and resilience.