

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway
Discussion Questions

I. The Preparation

1. In what ways are the negative qualities of Santiago emphasized?
2. How is luck important to Santiago and Manolin?
3. How is Santiago set off from the other fishermen?
4. How can Santiago be proud and humble at the same time?
5. What in Santiago's character makes him a hero?
6. What do the details of Santiago's house reveal about him?
7. Describe Santiago's and Manolin's different reactions to the Yankees' defeat.

II. The Voyage

1. What are Santiago's feelings toward creatures of the sea?
2. Describe ways in which Santiago demonstrates his fishing skill.
3. Why is this important to a "Hemingway hero"?
4. How does Santiago know that he has hooked a Marlin?
5. How does Santiago feel about the Marlin?
6. How does Santiago's comment about the fish's pain help to portray his own physical condition?
7. Explain how the old man can love the fish and wish to kill it at the same time.
8. In what ways are the fisherman and the fish alike.
9. What two things does Santiago think of while the fish pulls? What do these thoughts have in common?
10. How does Hemingway stress the endurance of Santiago?
11. How does the last battle suggest Santiago's respect for the fish? Hemingway's?
12. How does the description of his arrival home continue the religious imagery of the story?
13. Why does Santiago continue even when things are hopeless?

III. The Return

1. How has the attitude of the other fishermen toward Santiago changed?
2. What premonitions of Santiago's death are there?
3. Is the ending hopeful or discouraging?

IV. The Hemingway Hero - (Code Hero)

1. Describe Santiago's relationship to the fishing village society.
2. What is the relationship between the hero's pride and his humility?
3. Why does the code hero follow rules?
4. Is Santiago's struggle ultimately a victory or a defeat?)