

Ernest Hemingway

Alan Haffa

Please Silence Cell Phones

Biography (1899-1961)

- Father was a physician and outdoorsman; committed suicide
- At 17, began career as a journalist for KC Star
- Married four times
- Joined the Ambulance Corp for WW I and went to Italy; injured
- Paris in the 20s: Stein, Joyce, Fitzgerald, Picasso
- 1925, collection of short stories, including "Big Two Hearted River"
- 1926, *The Sun Also Rises*
- 1929, *A Farewell to Arms*
- 1930s, Moved to Key West, FL
- 1940, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
- WW II, war correspondent
- 1952, *The Old Man and the Sea*; won the Pulitzer and Nobel



Style

- Minimalist: "ice berg principle"—key omissions
- Understatement: whatever "point" his stories have are subtle and implied, rather than explicit
- Masculine themes: hunting, fishing, drinking, bull fighting, war and fighting
- Simple grammar and vocabulary
- Short, declarative sentences
- Simple descriptions



Code Hero

- Name given by Philip Young to a hero who struggles with death and destruction
- Knows he will lose the struggle
- Lives according to a code that helps him endure
- Enjoys sensual pleasures of food, sex, drink



Background to For Whom the Bell Tolls

- Spanish Revolution, 1932
- Republican Government
- Fascists and Catholic Church versus Republican Loyalists and Communists on Left
- Setting is the spring of 1937; war was at a standstill, a month after German troops razed the Spanish town of Guernica
- Explores how individuals are affected by war and whether idealism can survive in wartime



Epigraph from John Donne

- "No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of a Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod be washed away by the Sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a Promontory were, as well as if a Manor of they friends or of thine owne were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee."
- Two themes: **Individual as part of Community**—Anti-Isolationist
- The **value of each human life**

Plot of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

- 1937, American Robert Jordan goes to Spain to fight for Republic; he is to blow up a Fascist bridge
- Jordan needs help from peasant militia led by Pablo and Pilar
- Pablo's loyalty is questioned and Jordan prepares to kill him
- Jordan makes love to Maria, a woman raped by the Fascists
- Fascists discover the plan and attack Republican camp
- Jordan cancels plans and writes General Golz; the letter reaches him too late; the offensive has begun and the bridge must be blown
- The bridge is blown but most of the group is killed
- A bullet strikes Jordan's horse, falling on his leg, which is broken. Pilar and Pablo leave with Maria
- He contemplates suicide, but decides to fight to the last and shoots a Fascist as he is approached

Idealism Dies During War

- Maria loses her physical innocence through rape
- Robert Jordan came to the war with the idealism of the Republican cause, but came to question the Republican leadership
- During war, winning is all that matters, and principles go out the window—willingness to kill Pablo for example
- War is seen to be subjective and immoral; there is no clear cut good and bad side

Morality: When is it right to Kill?

- Characters kill each other with seeming ease
- Pablo kills his own men for their horses!
- Several characters including Jordan admit to an exhilaration while killing
- The moral question is never clearly answered
- Jordan acknowledges that war does not absolve him of guilt, but that it is his duty to do so in war and to think about it too much is pointless

The Death of the Fascists in Pablo's Hometown

- Chapter 10, Pilar describes how Pablo orchestrated the death of Fascists and Priest
- She compares it to Bull Baiting—ritualistic and brutal
- Beaten by flails and then thrown off a cliff; the Priest ripped apart by a mob
- This reminds Jordan of a lynching of a Black man he witnessed as a child
- This exchange shows how war is; it is brutal and ugly and inhumane. Idealism and virtue disappeared from the very start of the war

Obedience in War, but Independence of Thought

- Chapter 11: Jordan reflects on uncertain loyalty of Spanish comrades: "This was no way to think; but who censored his thinking? No body but himself. He would not think himself into any defeatism. The first thing was to win the war...he was serving in a war and he gave absolute loyalty...while he was serving. But nobody owned his mind, nor his faculties for seeing and hearing, and if he were going to form judgments he would form them afterwards. And there would be plenty of material to draw them from. There was plenty already. There was a little too much sometimes."

Jordan agrees to kill Pablo

- Fear of Pablo betraying them
- Fernando: "Since it is impractical to hold Pablo as a prisoner, and since it is repugnant to offer him—"
- Pilar: "For the love of God, finish."
- "—in any class of negotiation," Fernando proceeded calmly, "I am agreed that it is perhaps best that he should be eliminated in order that the operation projected should be insured of the maximum possibility of success."
- Robert Jordan says: "Estoy listo," I am ready to do it. Since you are all decided that it should be done it is a service that I can do."

Romantic Love

- In the midst of the chaos and violence of war, Maria and Jordan experience real, romantic love
- Maria tells Pillar that “the earth moved” when she was with Jordan, and Pillar remarks that that happens only two or three times in a lifetime
- His love of Maria, more than the failed Republican cause, keeps Jordan fighting



Jordan's Death Sanctified by Love

- Dying Jordan affirms his unity with Maria:
- "Listen to this well, rabbit," he said. He knew that there was a great hurry and he was sweating very much, but this had to be said and understood.
"Though wilt go now, rabbit. But I go with thee. As long as there is one of us there is both of us. Do you understand?"
- Maria: "But you don't understand, Roberto. What about me? It is worse for me to go."
- "Surely," he said. "It is harder for thee. But I am thee also now."

Jordan's Stoicism in face of Death

- He considers suicide but prefers to make his death count by killing Fascists and giving his comrades more time to escape
- Reflecting on his life: "I hate to leave it, is all. I hate to leave it very much and I hope I have done some good in it...I have fought for what I believed in for a year now. If we win here we will win everywhere. The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it."

Summary

- Ernest Hemingway's style is unique and modern by virtue of its minimalist plots, simplistic language, and Code Heroes
- Robert Jordan is a good example of a Code Hero: Foreshadowing indicates he has little chance of success, but he does his duty
- Fatalism is balanced by a faith in Love and the values of Republicanism
- Above all, his style is masculine and confident and adventuresome—like America in the early 20th century