

The Old Man and the Sea

By Ernest Hemingway

1952

Part Five

More sharks attacked the skiff and ate the big fish. The old man was now defenseless and had decided to not to fight anymore, letting the sharks eat all the flesh till only the spine was left. He arrived at the village at night. He left the skiff and the carcass of the fish still tided along its side, and walked back to his shack. He met no one on his way home, and fell asleep immediately. When he woke up, Manolin understood the old man was back and brought him some coffee. He sat by his bed, waiting for him to wake up...

Finally the old man woke.

"Don't sit up," the boy said. "Drink this."

He poured some of the coffee in a glass.

The old man took it and drank it.

5 "They beat me, Manolin," he said. "They truly beat me."

"He didn't beat you. Not the fish."

"No. Truly. It was afterwards."

"Pedrico is looking after the skiff and the gear. What do you want done with the head?"

10 "Let Pedrico chop it up to use in fish traps."

"And the spear?"

"You keep it if you want it."

"I want it," the boy said. "Now we must make our plans about the other things."

"Did they search for me?"

15 "Of course. With coast guard and with planes."

"The ocean is very big and a skiff is small and hard to see," the old man said. He noticed how pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead of speaking only to himself and to the sea. "I missed you," he said. "What did you catch?"

"One the first day. One the second and two the third."

20 "Very good."

"Now we fish together again."

"No. I am not lucky. I am not lucky anymore."

"The hell with luck," the boy said. "I'll bring the luck with me."

"What will your family say?"

25 "I do not care. I caught two yesterday. But we will fish together now for I still have much to learn."

"We must get a good killing lance and always have it on board. You can make the blade from a spring leaf from an old Ford. We can grind it in *Guanabacoa*. It should be sharp and not tempered so it will break. My knife broke."

30 "I'll get another knife and have the spring ground. How many days of heavy brisa have we?"

"Maybe three. Maybe more."

"I will have everything in order," the boy said. "You get your hands well old man."

"I know how to care for them. In the night I spat something strange and felt

35 something in my chest was broken."

"Get that well too," the boy said. "Lie down, old man, and I will bring you your clean shirt. And something to eat."

“Bring any of the papers of the time that I was gone,” the old man said.
“You must get well fast for there is much that I can learn and you can teach me
40 everything. How much did you suffer?”
“Plenty,” the old man said.
“I’ll bring the food and the papers,” the boy said. “Rest well, old man. I will bring
stuff from the drugstore for your hands.”
“Don’t forget to tell Pedrico the head is his.”
45 “No. I will remember.”
As the boy went out the door and down the worn coral rock road he was crying again.

That afternoon there was a party of tourists at the Terrace and looking down in the
water among the empty beer cans and dead barracudas a woman saw a great long
white spine with a huge tail at the end that lifted and swung with the tide while the east
50 wind blew a heavy steady sea outside the entrance to the harbour.
“What’s that?” she asked a waiter and pointed to the long backbone of the great fish
that was now just garbage waiting to go out with the tide.
“*Tiburón*,” the waiter said. “Shark.” He was meaning to explain what had happened.
“I didn’t know sharks had such handsome, beautifully formed tails.”
55 “I didn’t either,” her male companion said.

Up the road, in his shack, the old man was sleeping again. He was still sleeping on
his face and the boy was sitting by him watching him. The old man was dreaming about
the lions.

THE END.

Stage 5 : “The Return”

How far has the old man learned or gained anything from his experience?
Would you say he has been fundamentally changed, or was it just a dream?

What about the boy? Has this experience changed something for him?

Develop your answers by referring to this part of the novel as well as to the others.