**THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA**

He was an old man, thin and gaunt, with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck and brown blotches on his cheeks. His hands had deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. Everything about him was old except his eyes, and they were the color of the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. He fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream, and this was the eighty-fourth day he had gone without taking a fish.

Every day is a new day, the old man knew; and long before it was light the next morning, he had his baits out and was drifting with the current. Hours later, watching his lines, he saw one of the projecting green sticks dip sharply. He reached out for the line, unleashed it from the stick, and let it run gently through his fingers without the fish feeling and tension. A marlin, one hundred fathoms down, was eating the sardines that covered the point and the shank of the hand-forged hook.

So began a three-day battle between the old man and the big fish. The old man had to battle thirst and hunger; the loss of sleep; and the pain of cut and bleeding hands and cramped fingers. Pain did not matter--a man could endure; but defeat he could never admit. "Man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated."

The Old Man and the Sea is simple, compelling, magnificent. Every word is right. The old man embodies the essential nobility in human striving. The giant fish is the embodiment of what is noble in animate nature. And the sea--la mar, which is what the people call her in Spanish when they love her--was home of the great fish and the love of the old man.

This is a work of great power. The strong, crisp words tell a moving story and express the basic attitudes the author held toward all life. What one gets from him is not so much a fragment of his art as the totality of his being. He was the best and most natural craftsman of our time. Reading this book is a profound experience. It is like living a tragedy, which, at the last, emerges without grief into beauty.