

# QUICK CARD: *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*



<b>Reference</b>	<i>The Old Man and the Sea.</i> Hemingway, Ernest. (1952) ISBN: 978-0684801223
<b>Plot</b>	Santiago, an old fisherman who hasn't caught a fish in 85 days, catches the largest marlin of his career while fishing alone in the Gulf; however, he is overcome by sharks, who devour the marlin entirely before he can reach shore.
<b>Setting</b>	Cuba, the Gulf Stream  In a small skiff  In the hurricane months  In the protagonist's old age  During a spurt of really bad luck
<b>Characters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Santiago, the old, unlucky fisherman and the story's protagonist</li> <li>• The Boy, aka Manolin, friend and protégé of Santiago</li> <li>• The Marlin, Santiago's catch whom he honors as his "noble adversary"</li> <li>• The Sharks, thieves who rob him of his catch</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict</b>	Man vs. Nature Man vs. Self Man vs. Fate/God
<b>Theme</b>	Endurance Grace under pressure/Stoicism Human dignity in the face of meaningless catastrophe The inevitability of human suffering

## Literary Devices

Imagery created by comparisons between Santiago and the Marlin. The literary foil.

Allusions: to Joe DiMaggio, famous baseball player who suffered from physical injuries during his career, but played through them. Symbolizes perseverance in the face of setback. Grace under pressure.

Christ imagery: Santiago carrying the mast in the final scene, for example.

Symbolism: The lions on the beach – perhaps the insensitivity or disinterestedness of nature. That these predators sport and play seems to suggest that nature doesn't harbor particular malevolence toward man, but acts unconsciously since it is only matter and not motivated by any kind of reason or will beyond survival. This seems consistent with the naturalism that undergirds Hemingway's work. Others argue these lions represent youth, or paradox, or the struggle for survival. Hemingway cautioned critics from reading too much symbolism into his novella: "There isn't any symbolism. The sea is the sea. The old man is the old man. The boy is a boy and the fish is a fish. The sharks are sharks, no better, no worse." He's either being provocative, or he's reminding his readers of his naturalistic worldview.