

Brief Questions in “The Old Man and the Sea”

Writer: Ernest Hemingway | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

The Old Man and the Sea

- **What was Hemingway’s peculiar habit of reading?**

Ans:

He used to read at night under a kerosene lantern in his tent.

- **When did Hemingway win the Nobel Prize?**

Ans:

He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.

- **When did Hemingway survive a plane crash?**

Ans

: He survived a plane crash in Africa in 1954.

- **What kind of novel is The Old Man and the Sea?**

Ans:

It is a novella, a long short story without chapters.

- **What is the main theme of The Old Man and the Sea?**

Ans:

It shows man’s struggle with nature and his courage to endure.

- **What is the meaning of Santiago?**

Ans:

Santiago means Saint James, a fisherman in Christian tradition.

- **How many days does Santiago fail to catch fish?**

Ans:

He fails to catch fish for eighty-four days.

- **Who is Joe DiMaggio?**

Ans:

Joe DiMaggio was a famous American baseball player.

- **How does Santiago set his lines on the eighty-fifth day?**

Ans:

He sets his lines at different depths with fresh bait.

- **When does the marlin nibble at the sardines?**

Ans:

At noon on the eighty-fifth day of fishing.

- **How does Santiago know the marlin is hooked?**

Ans:

He feels a strong pull on the line and knows it is hooked.

- **What is meant by “the rapier bill”?**

Ans:

It means the marlin’s long, sword-like upper jaw.

- **What does Santiago accuse himself of?**

Ans:

He accuses himself of treachery for making the fish suffer.

- **What is the choice of the old fisherman?**

Ans:

He chooses to go far out to find a great fish.

- **How does Santiago first see the marlin?**

Ans:

He sees it bright in the sun, two feet longer than his boat.

- **How does Santiago capture the great marlin?**

Ans:

He drives his harpoon into the marlin's heart and kills it.

- **How does Santiago reflect upon sin?**

Ans:

He wonders if killing the fish is a sin, but accepts it as his work.

- **What weapons does Santiago use against the sharks?**

Ans:

He uses a harpoon, knife, oars, club, and tiller.

- **What does the marlin's skeleton symbolize for Santiago?**

Ans:

It symbolizes his heroic effort and true manhood.

- **How does Santiago resemble Christ?**

Ans:

He falls five times carrying his mast, like Christ carrying the cross.

- **How does Manolin console Santiago after his defeat?**

Ans:

He says he will fish again with Santiago and bring new tools.

- **In what sense is Santiago seen as triumphant?**

Ans:

The villagers admire his courage, and Manolin calls him a victor.

- **How long is the marlin and who measures it?**

Ans:

A fisherman measures it, and it is eighteen feet long.

- **What does the sea symbolize in the story?**

Ans:

The sea symbolizes life, struggle, and Santiago's loneliness.

- **What is the boat made of?**

Ans:

The boat is made of wood.

- **Which prize did Hemingway win for this book?**

Ans:

He won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

- **How does Santiago kill the Mako shark?**

Ans:

He strikes it with his harpoon, and it sinks with it.

- **Who is the protagonist of the novel?**

Ans:

Santiago, the old Cuban fisherman, is the protagonist.

- **What is the most tragic moment of Santiago's life?**

Ans:

When he sees his marlin reduced to a skeleton by sharks.

- **What is "The Virgin of Cobre"?**

Ans:

It is a holy figure worshipped in Cuba.

- **What is the Gulf Stream?**

Ans:

It is a strong sea current near the north coast of Cuba.

- **What does the sea stand for in the novel?**

Ans:

It stands for human life and its endless challenges.

- **What was the length of the fish Marlin?**

Ans:

The marlin was eighteen feet long from head to tail.

- **Who is Manolin?**

Ans:

Manolin is a young boy and Santiago's devoted helper.

- **What does Santiago dream of?**

Ans:

He dreams of lions playing on the beaches of Africa.