

Hemingway used his experiences as a reporter during the civil war in Spain as the background for his most ambitious novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Among his later works, the most outstanding is the short novel, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), the story of an old fisherman's journey, and his long, lonely struggle with a fish and the sea, and his victory in defeat.

Hemingway, himself a great sportsman, liked to portray soldiers, hunters, bullfighters - tough, at times primitive people whose courage and honesty are set against the brutal ways of modern society, and who in this confrontation lose hope and faith. His straightforward prose, his spare dialogue, and his predilection for understatement are particularly effective in his short stories, some of which are collected in *Men Without Women* (1927) and *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories* (1938). Hemingway died in Idaho in 1961.

--NobelPrize.org

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS begins and ends in a pine-scented forest, somewhere in Spain. The year is 1937 and the Spanish Civil War is in full swing. Robert Jordan, a demolitions expert attached to the International Brigades, lies "flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees." The sylvan setting, however, is at sharp odds with the reason Jordan is there: he has come to blow up a bridge on behalf of the antifascist guerrilla forces. He hopes he'll be able to rely on their local leader, Pablo, to help carry out the mission, but upon meeting him, Jordan has his doubts: "I don't like that sadness, he thought. That sadness is bad. That's the sadness they get before they quit or before they betray. That is the sadness that comes before the sell-out." For Pablo, it seems, has had enough of the war. He has amassed for himself a small herd of horses and wants only to stay quietly in the hills and attract as little attention as possible. Jordan's arrival--and his mission--have seriously alarmed him.

"I am tired of being hunted. Here we are all right. Now if you blow a bridge here, we will be hunted. If they know we are here and hunt for us with planes, they will find us. If they send Moors to hunt us out, they will find us and we must go. I am tired of all this. You hear?" He turned to Robert Jordan. "What right have you, a foreigner, to come to me and tell me what I must do?"

In one short chapter Hemingway lays out the blueprint for what is to come: Jordan's sense of duty versus Pablo's dangerous self-interest and weariness with the war. Complicating matters even more are two members of the guerrilla leader's small band: his "woman" Pilar, and Maria, a young woman whom Pablo rescued from a Republican prison train. Unlike her man, Pilar is still fiercely devoted to the cause and as Pablo's loyalty wanes, she becomes the moral center of the group. Soon Jordan finds himself caught between the two, even as his own resolve is tested by his growing feelings for Maria.

For Whom the Bell Tolls combines two of the author's recurring obsessions: war and personal honor. The pivotal battle scene involving El Sordo's last stand is a showcase for Hemingway's narrative powers, but the quieter, ongoing conflict within Robert Jordan as he struggles to fulfill his mission perhaps at the cost of his own life is a testament to his creator's psychological acuity. By turns brutal and compassionate, it is arguably Hemingway's most mature work and one of the best war novels of the 20th century. --Alix Wilber, Amazon.com

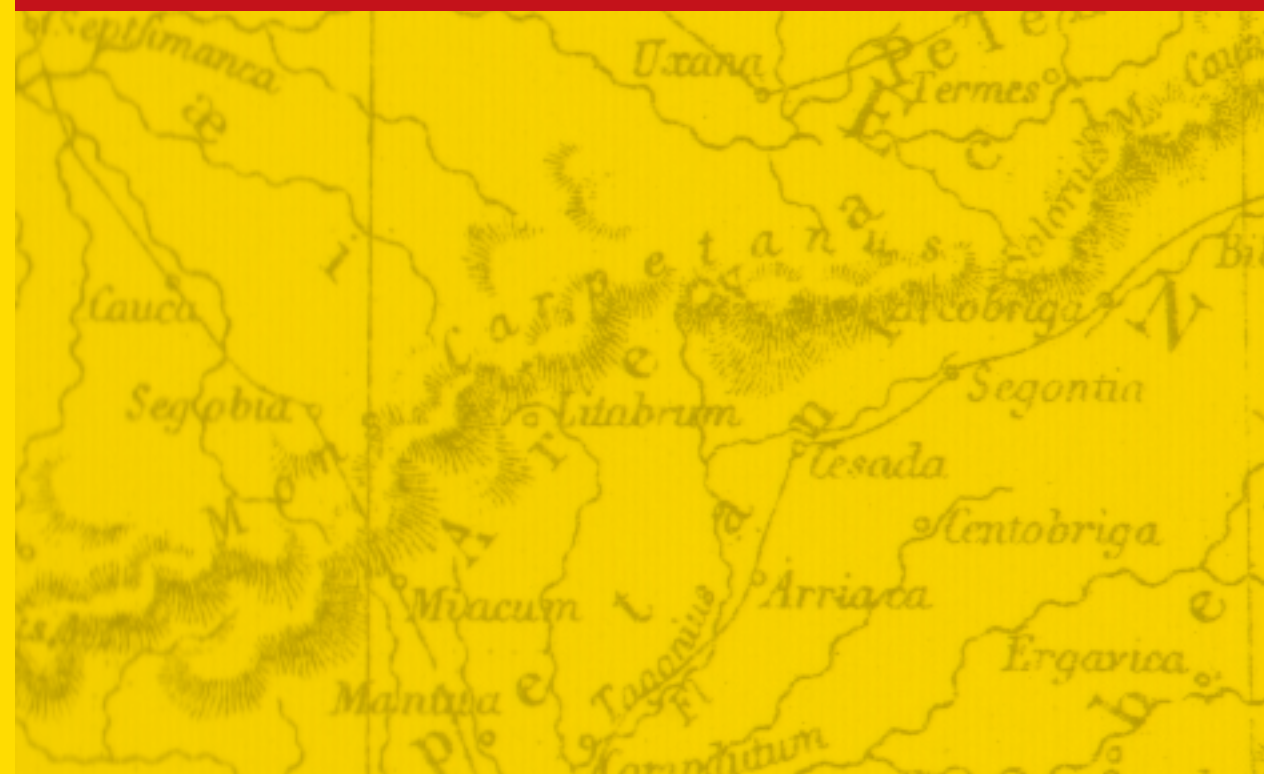


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HEMINGWAY

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ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), born in Oak Park, Illinois, started his career as a writer in a newspaper office in Kansas City at the age of seventeen. After the United States entered the First World War, he joined a volunteer ambulance unit in the Italian army. Serving at the front, he was wounded, was decorated by the Italian Government, and spent considerable time in hospitals. After his return to the United States, he became a reporter for Canadian and American newspapers and was soon sent back to Europe to cover such events as the Greek Revolution.

During the twenties, Hemingway became a member of the group of expatriate Americans in Paris, which he described in his first important work, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). Equally successful was *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), the study of an American ambulance officer's disillusionment in the war and his role as a deserter.

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