

# Main themes in a farewell to arms

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Main Themes in A Farewell to Arms Written in 1929 by Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms has always been considered a classic piece of literature. A major source of the novel's success is how its themes tied into real life experiences during the First World War. While soldiers of the war fought for their country, they searched for love to escape total chaos and destruction. The two main themes in A Farewell to Arms are the gruesome reality of war and the relationship between love and pain. The first main theme of A Farewell to Arms is the devastation that war brings. Just as the title explains, A Farewell to Arms deals primarily with the process by which the protagonist, Frederic Henry, disconnects himself from the war and leaves it behind. While there are a few characters in the novel who actually support the effort, such as Ettore Moretti, a majority of the characters remain uncertain about the war, angry of the complete devastation it causes, and unconvinced of the splendor it supposedly brings. For example, while Henry and Passini discuss the war, Henry says, " I believe we should get the war over... It would not finish if one side stopped fighting. It would only be worse if we stopped fighting" (Chapter 9, Page 49). The second main theme of the novel is the connection between love and pain. While the war takes place, Hemingway depicts the true, mysterious behavior of love. Although Catherine mourns for her dead fiancé, she quickly begins to seduce Henry. Her intentions for courting Henry are obvious, that is she wants to separate herself from the pain of losing her fiancé by finding a new love to fill the void. Likewise, Henry attempts to distance himself from the war as much as possible. By doing so, Henry and Catherine find comfort within each other from the dilemmas that surround them. Just like they fell in love with each other, Henry's feelings for

Catherine pass just as quickly as he witnesses her death. As he gives farewell to Catherine's body, Henry says, " But after I got them to leave and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-by to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain" (Chapter 41, Page 332). Although Henry and Catherine genuinely loved each other, Henry's heart is now void without the companionship of Catherine. The tragedy of A Farewell to Arms is that their love, although authentic, can never be more than temporary. In my opinion, I enjoyed this novel for a few reasons. First, A Farewell to Arms is a semi-autobiography about Hemingway and his time fighting in the Italian campaigns during World War I. Secondly, the novel is able to give perspective of the troubles and triumphs of those soldiers that fought during the war. Finally, the mysterious love that Henry and Catherine have for each other proved to be interesting and unusual. In conclusion, A Farewell to Arms proved to be a masterpiece in my opinion. While addressing the struggles and feats of those soldiers who fought during World War I, we are able to dive into the conscious of a unique fighter who parts himself from the war as much as possible while trying to find true love, even though the reasoning behind finding love was only to help escape from the war.