

# Overcoming obstacles



Overcoming Obstacles Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* has the recurring theme of overcoming of obstacles, not only physical, but mental as well. Being able to conquer different barriers proved an important trait in Santiago's journey, and that attribute equally important in our lives today. Overcoming obstacles are an essential part of maturing as a person. By the end of the novel, Santiago has obviously become a much stronger person. Throughout his three-day battle with the marlin, Santiago had to dig deep inside himself to make it through all his hardships. When he begins his journey, his mindset is to capture the fish and use it to feed himself and make money for him to survive on. He has not an iota of respect for the marlin. When the fish takes the bait, Santiago is thinking, "Eat it so that the point of the hook goes into your heart and kills you" (Hemingway 44). Simply hooking the fish proved a difficult task and the first of countless obstacles Santiago endures. As the fish takes Santiago out further to sea, he takes on a more reverent attitude toward it. He begins to feel pity for the marlin and is sorry for what he eventually must do. He starts to mature in his mind at this point. Before, he merely desired to kill the fish and take it home, while now he realizes what he wants to accomplish. After this, Santiago endures a long time without much food or water, and then, after he kills the marlin, he must bear the greatest physical task of his voyage, getting back home with the fish. Unfortunately, he does not do this, but he triumphs over several sharks before they can get to the fish. When his trek home is coming to an end without any meat on the fish, he spits in the water and says, "Eat that, galanos. And make a dream you've killed a man" (Hemingway 119). Santiago is extremely angry he did not catch the marlin, and Santiago becomes entranced from this point until the end of the book. To everyone else, this is

simply another day he didn't catch a fish, but Santiago is in some ways proud he actually caught the fish, even with all he had to go through.

Throughout our lives, we will encounter numerous barriers, and while it would be easier to take the uncomplicated path, taking the higher road will help us mentally and emotionally develop. The people who succeed at what they do have been brought up taking the more difficult path, and this helps them through their whole lifetime. This applies to our lives as well, taking the easy way out can only help us in that particular moment, while making taking the more complex road pays us dividends forever, and greatly helps us mature into an adult. Part of the maturation process involves going through hardship, and this process goes on throughout your entire life. There's always something useful that can be learned from suffering and always, people will surface stronger than before