

The old man and the sea by earnest hemmingway, alternate ending

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He took all his pain and what was left of his strength and his long gone pride and he put it against the fishes agony and the fish came over to his side and swam gently on his side, his bill almost touching the planking of the skiff, and started to pass the boat, long, deep, wide, silver and barred with purple and interminable in the water.

The old man dropped the line and put his foot on it and lifted he harpoon high and drove it down with all his remaining strength.

He watched as it passed straight through the side of the great fish, staining the deep blue waters red, leaving swirls of maroon in its wake, little ghost fish sent to mock me he thought.

The great fish swam away with the little rope going straight through the flesh near the base of its tail.

'I feel your pain' the old man spoke out loud to the fish. The harpoon must be jammed against his side and unable to come back through, he thought.

Oh great fish, fine friend, what an ignoble end this will give, why this is worse than bone spurs, it must be. The pressure against his shoulders had lessened, the acute pain from the line cutting his right hand eased.

'So, I have no strength left you, have beaten me worthy adversary, but to do so you will die a long drawn out slow death, like a criminal chained to another' The words hurt his dry lips increasing the depth of the furrows in the flesh.

'I will not bring you in like this' he spoke again to the marlin, not after all that we have been through, he thought, no I will not shame either of us like this. If the fish managed to free itself before he could untie the rope from the bitt the resulting hole left behind would equivalent to a feast for two families.

His head was getting fuzzy again, but the thought to free the fish remained strong. 'I will cut you loose' he said 'yes I have my knife, I will make both my hands work for this'. He took his knife and sawed at the rope, back and forth, back and forth cutting it with the rhythm of the waves. He used his left hand to press down on top of the other as much as it would allow him to. After what felt like an age he broke right through the rope, as the last few strands were severed, his left hand cramped again causing him to drop his knife into the vast waters. But the rope was cleaved in two, he had freed his adversary.

He rested then, dipping his hands one at a time in the healing cleansing salty sea.

Taking time to recover from his efforts, the pressure of the line a constant ache across his shoulders, he pondered the repercussions of sailing the skiff so far out. I shouldn't have gone out so far fish, he thought, aloud he said 'I'm sorry'. As he continued to ponder the wiseness of the distance his head started to clear. The loss of his knife playing on his mind. 'Oh why am I so stupid?' he whispered in a harsh tone. Of course he thought to himself, ESTUPIDO! He silently cursed his foolishness. It was my head, it was unclear, the flying fish I ate was long ago. Why didn't I just untie the rope from the bitt? Why did I cut it? How much energy did I waste sawing? My knife, my

knife, it would be here if I had not been so stupid, the thoughts wound around and around his head. 'Oh great fish I bet you'd of never committed such a stupid act' He said to the moving fin of the fish.

The great fish carried onswimming, slowly but steadily, the phosphorescent trails of its blood faint now, almost gone.

The marlin had slowed, the old man noticed, he thought the lack offoodmust be taking its toll on him as well by now.

He must get some rest, even the great DiMaggio must rest sometimes, even before the bone spurs he must have worn himself out, he must have tired and wanted, no, longed for rest. Longed for rest, just like he did. I bet the wonderful DiMaggio's' father the great fisherman would understand, he said to himself, he must of fought some great battles on the sea, to be able to pass on the great wisdom help Joe to be so great.

Just a few minutes rest, even a few minutes would be good he didn't want to get confused again. Yes he would rest, and then try to catch a fish, a flying fish that would be good; they taste nice even without salt or lime. But first he would rest.

He was disturbed about 15 minutes later. By a tugging on his right hand, an increased pressure cutting into his shoulder blades. The fish was turning! He had started circling; he was on the path to the fisherman's hands now. He adjusted the line drawing it in slowly, he didn't want to break it.

'I must be gentle, I must be smooth,' he thought, 'I can be tricky, I can be clever, I won't let the line snag.' He knew that any sudden tugging on the line could tear the hook from its slender hold in the marlin's mouth.

The fish had circled nearly 360°½ it had taken what seemed like a lifetime to the old man. All the while slowly and carefully drawing the thick line through his useless almost lifeless left hand, across his martyred back and then through his right hand, his strong hand.

'Gentle, I can be gentle, I can be crafty, wily, I am a great fisherman, like father DiMaggio, come to me, my friend, my equal, come to me I am experienced, it will be sure and swift.' He chanted to the fish.

The fish carried on its slow turn all the while, in perfect ignorance of what the old man was telling it. It continued its circle until it had turned another half, and straightened out all the time swimming steadily.

'You tease me' he said to the marlin 'you do not think of me as worthy, I can best you I am not dead yet.'

He settled into the salty planks of the skiff, resting his back but careful of the line running across it. I will rest for a while he thought to himself, then I will try to get a fish. After taking a few sips from his water bottle he felt for the excess coil securing it on his toe, and closed his eyes. The world started spinning, he opened his eyes a feeling of nausea rising in his throat. I am so tired he thought to himself, so tired and weak he closed his eyes again swallowing down the bile that was threatening to come out. Trembling he

tried to rest, many minutes passed before the compulsive swallowing stopped and his breathing steadied.

He dreamt of the lions on the beach again, but it was different this time. The lions came not to gamble and play, but sat quietly and still on the sand, almost as though they were waiting for something.

It was dark again when he awoke, the tendrils of fog dancing and swaying in the moon beams. It took him a few moments to adjust to being awake. He thought for a while that he was in his shack, lying comfy and cosy on his bed of newspapers. Then the pressure of the line filtered through his hazy thoughts. I am in my boat, I am fishing, then the realisation of his fight to snare the marlin rushed towards the surface.

'the fish!' he croaked jumped up, his head spinning around to locate the fish, when he saw it swimming along unconcerned at the private battle aboard the skiff, the relief that washed over him was like a healing balm, a balm that melted away as he fumbled for the line realising that it had slipped from his shoulders. His cold and sleepy hands nearly dropped the line, but he managed to flounder around until his right hand grappled and gripped at the line, then his slower left hand finally found purchase and finished the job of adjusting the line so it was snug against his shoulder blades.

He gazed around at the stars realising that he was heading in the direction of home.

Well my fine friend, we best end this soon or the waters will get too shallow, and you will scrape your fine scales, he chuckled silently casting his gaze around searching for his fish.

He had surfaced again in the night; it must be getting close to an ending the old man thought. It'll soon be time for the home run, where's that water; he reached over feeling for his bottle. Sipping slowly Santiago glimpsed a shape moving around the skiff. 'What's that?' he started, more quietly now he said, 'that's a snub nose, no, no there are two' he said as he spotted a second fin gliding towards the boat. The circled the boat coming at it from different directions, then one changed course heading towards the fish. He must be leaving blood trails calling out to the shark, diner time come and get me, thought the old man. As the snub nose headed towards the fish the old man started beating the surface of the water with an oar.

He screamed at them in a cracked and wasted voice 'here you bastardos, here, leave him alone, you are nothing but unworthy scavengers, brainless useless scum' he continued to beat the ocean erratically , splashing and churning up the expanse of blue, making it turn to darker and lighter blues, vermilion and a lilac that was reminiscent of the marlins stripes. 'He's mine' he screamed at the sharks. One of the came close to the boat, he could see it cold, pitiless eyes. Gathering what little strength he had he lifted the oar above his head, cursing his decrepit left hand, as he brought the oar down in a solid blow between its eyes.

The shark twitched violently lunging at the oar, snapping the blade with his fearsome teeth.

Santiago twisted the shards round and managed to pierce an eye. He watched the shark back off. You are no match for me, he thought, even the boy, as green as he still is could beat you. He continued to beat the water but in a gesture of triumph now, 'get lost, get lost you scum' he shouted as he thrashed his hands around in the water. 'You won't have my fish, it's not for you!'

Suddenly he felt a searing, burning pain, then a wave of blackness threatened to overcome him, but some basic animal instinct took over and he shook his head clearing it. The pain took over again then. What is this, what is happening? He thought to himself, feeling strangely detached from the excruciating pain. I have been bitten, 'I have been bitten!' he shouted in shock, 'the shark has bitten me' he said in a quieter weaker voice, as he saw the partner to the shark he had hit gliding away. He must have sneaked in behind me, he thought getting groggy by now, they were jealous of my fish, my fish that fly's, my fantastic friend. He was swaying but not in time with the ocean now. The old man crumbled gently to the deck of the skiff. Flee, fly my friend, he mumbled as the dark fog enclosed him.

The fish carried on smoothly through the water, appearing impervious to the wound it had sustained.

Manolin was on the beach early, as he had been every day since the old man had been gone. When his father had mentioned it to him, whilst complaining

that he boy was half asleep when fishing, Manolin had replied I will look for him, I will wait for him, I will not abandon him for I believe in him.

As the boy gazes out to see he spots a deeper shadow in the sea, what is that? He thinks squinting his eyes, trying to see clearer. It is too far to be sure but he knows that it is Santiago, returning home.

'Pedrico! Pedrico, it is Santiago, he is returning home, his luck has turned!' he shouted down the beach, thinking to himself, I hope his luck has returned, I so want him to be coming back with a good catch. It is not right that he should have such bad luck; he will not be able to take much more.

Meanwhile Pedrico had gathered more of the locals, they were making their way to the edge of the sand. Chattering and gossiping amongst themselves.

The boat was close enough now to be sure that it was a skiff, but what was that in front of it?

'My god it's a fish', 'no, it's a shark', 'it's not real, it's a demon' 'a fish?', 'it's unnatural' were some of the mutterings that could be heard from the crowd.

The boy just stood with his mouth slightly open and a waxen hue to his face.

It was closer now they could see without a shadow of a doubt, that it was a huge fish in front of the skiff pulling it along, in fact even those that were slow to believe were starting to realise it was a marlin.

The boy started shaking and crying as it got closer and closer, he could hear the intakes of breaths and gasps from the crowd next to him fade into to

silence as they all realised that the fish was not going to stop. Manolin wasn't sure what or even how he was feeling, he had never encountered a situation like this, and it was way beyond anything his emotions had ever strived to cope with before, let alone made sense of.

The whole beach waited agog as the fish reached the edge of the sand still towing the skiff behind.

It seemed to him the only two sounds in the world were the beating of his heart hammering in his ears and the unusually grating sound of the waves breaking on the shore. He tensed as the fish drove himself on to the unnatural environment of the sandy shore; pushing and pushing its ravaged body until it was well and truly grounded.

Before the crowd had recovered enough from the shocking spectacle unfolding in front of them to move, the boy had waded out to the small boat, a true fisherman now perhaps, as even under the strain of what had transpired, a part of his mind noticed and admired the sheer size of the marlin.

The crowd had just began to recover from their collective stupor enough to move when a howling keening sound arose from the boys mouth, 'NOooooooooooooooooo. He can't die, not now look at his catch, SANTIAGO..... Santiago'

The boy trailed off into a soft whimper, shrugging off the hands that appeared to try and pat him with gestures of comfort. Then he jumped up

suddenly shouting 'get off, GET OFF! GET OFF!' as he started to dash towards the fish he pushed the onlookers out of the way, and rounding on a pair of fishermen that had been about to club the fish and screeched ' NO!' He drew a ragged breath before he carried on, 'don't you see Santiago has brought his catch home?' the men nodded shocked. 'Well don't you think that is a special fish, leading him home? If fact grounding itself in the process' before they could reply he continued 'well, don't you think that they must of shared spirits, two so brave and clever, despite bad luck?' with that he turned to the most superstitious member of the village and said 'that is right isn't, it that's what the old stories tell us?'

The old man stared at the boy for a second then said 'yes they will have shared courage therefore their spirits would have mingled' in a slow and halting voice, then stronger 'yes he is right! This great marlin, noble marlin is as Santiago'

The boy turned back towards the fish, 'then we have to save this fish, we should revere such a miracle not haste its passing. Would you club Santiago's body if it were that in front of you?

The crowd denied this as a group; hurt a member of their community? Never.

Right said the boy in a more confident tone 'lets get him to the water, come on, I cant move him on my own' the others started to help, all the while encouraged by the boy who was not a boy anymore 'gently, careful now' 'look at that wound, it is very bad, but one as strong as this will heal' silently to himself, he prayed that it would heal.

They got the fish to the water before they noticed the hole in its lip where the hook had finally ripped away.

The boy checked the unnaturally still fish over for ropes, lines and hooks then trying to get a quick look to assess the condition of the fish. All the while the fish stayed still.

The boy whispered 'goodbye, and thank you, Joe DiMaggio rules'

The fish turned its kingly head towards the boy, and with the flick of a tale was gone, going beneath the surface as soon as it could.

The crowd thinned until it was just the boy watching, alone, his eyes all bleary from unshed tears; just as he turned he thought he saw the glistening body of the majestic fish leaping through the air. But when he turned back to see clearer, there was nothing there.