

Hemingway's lady brett ashley

Profession, Writer



"A Woman's Torn Asunder" The eighteenth century novelist Laurence Stern wrote, "no body, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man's mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time."

Hemingway's Lady Brett Ashley, a divorced socialite, experienced conflicting desires, prompting her to lead an unhappy and confused life. Brett desired to be a self-reliant woman who had complete control over her own life but others were required to meet her physical and emotional needs.

Throughout the entire novel, Brett Ashley pushes people away when they get too close in order to insure her freedom and power. This conflict alone illuminates Hemingway's idea that no one can be entirely independent, occasionally people have to let themselves become vulnerable and let others in. The two painful marriages Brett had already experienced force her in the controlling and independent mindset depicted in the novel; one spouse treated her terribly and the other died tragically. Lord Ashley, which Brett was in the process of divorcing in the story, treated her horribly.

After the war he became crazy, slept with a gun underneath his pillow and threatened to kill her. Her other husband died dreadfully and painfully from dysentery, scaring her forever. Brett realized in order to never feel the pain and inferiority again she would never be able to depend on another man, nor could she get close enough to let him hurt her! But still, the want for love, physical satisfaction, and emotional fulfillment still lingered in her mind, creating her clashing outlook.

Moving on from her prior marriages, Brett Ashley meets Jake Barnes, the protagonist in *The Sun Also Rises*. Although Brett loves Jake (as much as she

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could love anybody), she clearly manipulates him and uses him throughout the story. She plays upon his deep, obvious feelings for her to gain sympathy, unconditional love, and emotional support while still keeping complete control over their relationship. With Jake, she is emotionally fulfilled and still feels independent because she knows she can be with someone else whenever she wants. But still, whenever she starts to feel stronger feelings for Jake, she separates herself and has sex with someone else. For example, when Jake confesses his love for her she dismisses him, and exclaims that he should hook her up with another man, Pedro Romero the beautiful bullfighter. She refuses to let herself recognize the true emotions she feels for Jake since that would make her defenseless. She also denies Jake because of his casualty of the war; Jake was left impotent. Because of this, Jake and Brett cannot be "lovers," and all attempts at a sexually fulfilling relationship are futile.

Brett is a passionate, lustful woman who is driven by physical pleasures, something that Jake cannot provide her with. She indulges in her passion for sex and control but still seeks true love, with emotional and physical fulfillment. Unconditional love involves putting another being's needs before your own, and not always having control. Brett cannot fulfill her dreams of true love because of her equal need for control and independence. Again, proving Hemingway's thought that no one can be completely self-sufficient and still fulfilled (physically and emotionally).