***English II Honors***

***The Old Man and the Sea*** **– Socratic Seminar**

1. Explain what Hemingway means when he writes the curious statement, “A man can be destroyed but not defeated.” Considering the text, what is Hemingway’s definition of defeat? Is Santiago’s excursion a moment of defeat of success?

2. Explain the significance of Santiago’s posture as he sleeps facedown with arms out and palms up.

3. Why did Santiago consistently reference baseball great Joe DiMaggio?

4. Why did Santiago express such deep-seeded reverence and kinship for the marlin and nature? Who was Santiago truly battling during these days on the boat?

5. Explain how both fraternalism and paternalism are evident concepts in this novella?

6. Referring back to the characteristics of the Hemingway Hero, consider how Santiago both represents and refutes the definition prescribed by Hemingway. What is your final determination of Santiago given these criteria?

7. Why is Santiago able to dream as the novella closes? Why does he dream of lions?

8. What religious imagery can be identified throughout this work and why would Hemingway include such an aspect to his writing, considering his aforementioned atheistic stance?

9. Is Santiago a tragic hero with a tragic flaw (pride/hubris)? Does his pride ultimately lead him to defeat or triumph?

10. What is the role of the sea and all its inhabitants? Does the sea, with all its elements of life and challenges, represent or symbolize the nature of society in general, and Santiago's fishing village in particular?

11. What role do the sharks play in the novel? Are they Santiago's sole antagonists?

12. In what way does the presence of Manolin help to define Santiago?

13. What is the significance of Santiago's recollection of the arm-wrestling match?

14. What is the difference between humiliation and humility? Explain which characterizes the old man at the conclusion of this story, and how does this contribute to an evident theme in the novella?

15. Given your knowledge of Ernest Hemingway’s life at the time he wrote this novella, how is Santiago a reflection of both the author’s greatness and declining nature? This novella was published in 1952, and Hemingway committed suicide in 1961.

16. The hero is the central character in a work of literature. The traditional hero possesses positive qualities which help him triumph in the novel’s main conflict. A tragic hero is a protagonist who possesses a character flaw which ultimately causes his downfall. An anti-hero is a protagonist who does not possess the positive qualities of the traditional hero. According to these definitions, which type of hero is Santiago?

17. At least four times Santiago expresses that he wishes catching the marlin had only been a dream. The question he raises is perhaps the central question of the novel: Is it better to have achieved something only to have it taken away or to have never achieved it at all? What do you think? Which response would Hemingway support?

18. By killing the fish, Santiago becomes one with it as the ambiguous “half of him had been destroyed.” It is not just that he has taken life, but also that he has experienced what it is like to die. Is it more painful to die or is it more painful to live?

19. The hero in Hemingway’s pieces can often be described as “simple, loyal, [and] a never troublesome breed of common man” that produces men like Santiago. Does Santiago’s humble background inhibit or strengthen him as a man?

20. In Hemingway’s *Farewell to Arms*, he writes the following: “If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.” Does the world break everyone? Has Santiago been broken by the world?

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