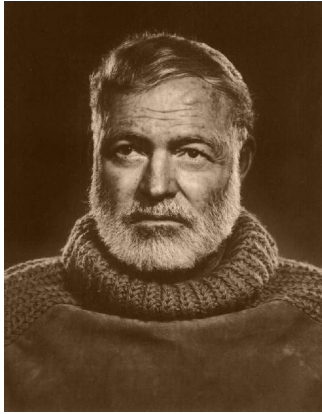


THE SUN ALSO RISES

by Ernest Hemingway



THE AUTHOR

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was born in Oak Park, Illinois, a wealthy suburb of Chicago, the second of six children of a doctor and his wife. He learned early to love hunting and fishing - a love he never lost throughout his long career. After graduation from high school he tried to enlist in World War I, but was rejected because of poor eyesight. He volunteered for service in the Red Cross instead, and served in Italy, gaining firsthand experience that later contributed to his novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929).

His earliest writing experiences came as a newspaper reporter, first for the *Kansas City Star* and then for the *Toronto Daily Star*. These newspapers contributed greatly to his literary style, which was spare, concise, and simple (Hemingway once said that his fiction was like an iceberg - seven-eighths of it unseen, but giving stability and direction to the part that could be seen). The latter sent him to Paris as its European correspondent. It was there he first met such literary luminaries as Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and Gertrude Stein. During this time, he wrote his earliest short stories. The late twenties saw his greatest literary output, including his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, and *A Farewell to Arms*. In 1928 he left Paris and moved to Key West, Florida, where he would live and write for the next twelve years. This era was a period of experimentation and self-promotion - he wrote a bullfighting treatise (*Death in the Afternoon*) and an account of his African safari (*Green Hills of Africa*) that did more to make him a celebrity and to create a public persona than to enhance his reputation as a writer. His best work during these years was his short stories, including *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*. He traveled to Spain in 1937 to cover the Spanish Civil War, and out of that experience came the material for *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. After the publication of this book in 1940, he published no novels for the next decade, during most of which he lived in Cuba, enjoying deep-sea fishing, and even occasionally using his fishing boat to spy on German submarines in the area (he was prepared to drop a bomb down the hatch of one if he had the opportunity, but the chance never arose). He did go to England to report on World War II in 1944, but spent most of his time after the Normandy invasion “liberating” his favorite Paris watering holes.

Hemingway regained the public eye, and won both a Pulitzer Prize for fiction (1953) and the Nobel Prize for Literature (1954), by publishing *The Old Man and the Sea* in 1952. The book not only restored his reputation, but made him wealthy. He used his wealth to travel again to Europe, take in some bullfights, and then return to Africa. It was in Africa that he barely survived two plane crashes, which left him with physical damage from which he never recovered. His health problems made it increasingly difficult for him to write effectively. In 1960, he left Cuba and bought a home in Ketchum, Idaho, where he moved with his fourth wife. A year later, battling worsening depression, he ended his life by putting a shotgun bullet in his brain.

PLOT SUMMARY

The plot of Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, like the prose, is spare. Very little really happens in the story. The narrative begins in Paris, where a group of American and British expatriates, narrator Jake Barnes and his friends, most of whom are writers and artists, are seeking to recover from the Great War. Their days consist of a little work, a lot of sitting around in bars and cafes, and an excessive amount of alcohol consumption.

The second segment of the story concerns a trip that Jake and his friends, tired of the decadence of Paris, decide to take to Spain to fish and see the running of the bulls at Pamplona. The fishing expedition is a relaxing interlude for the men who go, while the fiesta at Pamplona is a sensory overload of the first order. During the fiesta, they meet a young bullfighter named Pedro Romero, who has a brief affair with Lady Brett Ashley, the only woman in the circle.

After the fiesta, the friends disperse; Brett decides to break off her relationship with Romero in order to avoid corrupting him (she had previously had sexual liaisons with almost every male character in the story).

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Jake Barnes - The narrator of the story, Jake is a veteran of World War I, during which he had received an unspecified wound that deprived him of his sexual potency. He met Brett while in the hospital, and they fell in love, but she refuses to marry him because he is incapable of having sex. He remains, nevertheless, her best friend. He is a journalist, and as such is an observer of life rather than a participant. He acts as confidante and mediator, but engages in little of an active nature.
- Lady Brett Ashley - A British aristocrat whose one true love died during the war. After the war, she married Lord Ashley, who abused her and threatened to kill her, making a practice of sleeping with a loaded revolver. She is separated when the novel begins, awaiting a divorce, and engaged to Mike Campbell, with whom she is living. During the course of the novel, she has affairs with Robert Cohn and Pedro Romero. She habitually confides in Jake. At the end of the novel, she leaves Pedro and expresses her intention to return to Mike.
- Robert Cohn - A wealthy Jewish writer and former boxer during his years in Princeton, Cohn is insecure about his Jewishness, his masculinity, and his writing. He was a victim of anti-Semitism at Princeton. When the novel begins, he has divorced his wife, by whom

he had three children, and is living with Frances Coyne, a possessive and manipulative social climber. When his first novel succeeds, he leaves Frances and has a brief affair with Brett, with whom he becomes infatuated. The affair means nothing to her, however, and his continual dogging of her steps becomes pathetic, making him an object of scorn to his friends. As a non-veteran and traditional romantic, Cohn's attitudes are strikingly different from those of the other characters in the story. When he learns of Romero's affair with Brett, he beats him to a pulp, then flees Spain in shame.

- Frances Coyne - Living with Cohn at the beginning of the story, she is a manipulative status-seeker. When Cohn throws her over, she wheedles money out of him and leaves for England.
- Mike Campbell - A Scotsman and war veteran, he is bankrupt, an alcoholic, and engaged to marry Brett. He cannot handle Brett's promiscuity, and unleashes his terrible temper in drunken tirades against easy targets like Robert Cohn.
- Bill Gorton - A writer who lives in New York City, he, like his friends, is an alcoholic war veteran. He comes to France, then joins Jake on his fishing trip to Spain, remaining there to enjoy the fiesta in Pamplona. He is attracted to Brett, but does not act on his attraction.
- Count Mippipopolous - A veteran of seven European wars and four revolutions, the Count, like every other man in the story, is enamored of Brett. Unlike the other characters in the story, he controls his appetites, both for wine and for women, though he may also have had a brief affair with the novel's *femme fatale*.
- Montoya - The innkeeper in Pamplona who develops a special friendship with Jake because of their mutual love of bullfighting. He dislikes Jake's friends as corrupting influences, especially Brett. When Jake sets Brett up with Romero, Montoya distances himself from him.
- Pedro Romero - A nineteen-year-old bullfighter whose technique is as pure as his mind. For him, everything is very simple and graceful. He does not seek to deceive, either in the ring or in the bedroom. Montoya introduces Pedro to Jake, who in turn introduces him to Brett, with whom he has an affair. When Cohn finds out about the affair, he beats Pedro senseless. Brett breaks off the affair because she is afraid she will corrupt Pedro and ruin his career.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

"I could picture it. I have a rotten habit of picturing the bedroom scenes of my friends."
(Jake, p.13)

"We stayed five days at Burguete and had good fishing. The nights were cold and the days were hot, and there was always a breeze even in the heat of the day. It was hot enough so that it felt good to wade in a cold stream, and the sun dried you when you came out and sat on the bank.

We found a stream with a pool deep enough to swim in. In the evenings we played three-handed bridge with an Englishman named Harris, who had walked over from Saint Jean Pied de Port and was stopping at the inn for the fishing. He was very pleasant and went with us twice to the Irati River. There was no word from Robert Cohn nor from Brett and Mike.” (Jake, p.125)

“We often talked about bulls and bull-fighters. I had stopped at the Montoya for several years. We never talked for very long at a time. It was simply the pleasure of discovering what we each felt. Men would come in from distant towns and before they left Pamplona stop and talk for a few minutes with Montoya about bulls. These men were aficionados. Those who were aficionados could always get rooms even when the hotel was full.” (Jake, p.132)

“It was like certain dinners I remember from the war. There was much wine, an ignored tension, and a feeling of things coming that you could not prevent happening. Under the wine I lost the disgusted feeling and was happy. It seemed they were all such nice people.” (Jake, p. 146)

“I thought I had paid for everything. Not like the woman pays and pays and pays. No idea of retribution or punishment. Just exchange of values. You gave up something and got something else. Or you worked for something. You paid some way for everything that was any good. I paid my way into enough things that I liked, so that I had a good time. Either you paid by learning about them, or by experience, or by taking chances, or by money. Enjoying living was learning to get your money’s worth and knowing when you had it. You could get your money’s worth. The world was a good place to buy in. It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I’ve had.” (Jake, p. 148)

“It was a good bull-fight. Bill and I were very excited about Pedro Romero. Montoya was sitting about ten paces away. After Romero killed his first bull Montoya caught my eye and nodded his head. This was a real one. There had not been a real one for a long time.” (Jake, p.164)

“‘Oh, Jake,’ Brett said, ‘we could have had such a ... good time together.’
‘Yes.’ I said. ‘Isn’t it pretty to think so?’” (p.247)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. “The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose” (Ecclesiastes 1:5). Discuss the significance of the title of Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*. Why did he choose this particular passage from the book of Ecclesiastes as the title for his novel? In what ways does the passage express the basic themes of the novel?
2. Compare and contrast Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* in their critiques of the America of the Roaring Twenties. Are there significant differences between the expatriate Americans who lazed away their lives in Europe and those who stayed home and attended Jay Gatsby’s parties?

3. Compare and contrast the roles played by the narrators in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Are Nick Carraway and Jake Barnes observers or actors in the novels they narrate? To what extent do they serve as mouthpieces for the authors of the books? Which is the more reliable raconteur?
4. Compare and contrast the characters of Brett in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Daisy in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Which is more central to the plot and message of the novel in which she plays a role? Which is the more admirable character, and why?
5. Ernest Hemingway once said that his fiction was like an iceberg - seven-eighths of it unseen, but giving stability and direction to the part that could be seen. In what ways do the "unseen" parts of the story give direction to the narrative of *The Sun Also Rises*?
6. Hemingway himself described *The Sun Also Rises* as a tragedy, not a "hollow or bitter satire." What aspects of the story might lend themselves to this interpretation?
7. Discuss the relationship between the setting and the themes in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. How does one complement the other?
8. British writer Wyndham Lewis once described the Hemingway hero as "a dull-witted, bovine, monosyllabic simpleton ... the cannon fodder, the cattle outside the slaughterhouse, serenely chewing the cud - of those to whom things are done, in contrast to those who have executive will and intelligence." Do you agree with Lewis' assessment? Why or why not? Defend your position with specific references to *The Sun Also Rises*.
9. Critics of Hemingway argued that his characters were only interested in four things - hunting, fishing, bullfighting, and war (one might also add drinking as a fifth). D.S. Savage argued that Hemingway's work represented "the proletarianization of literature: the adaptation of the technical artistic conscience to the sub-average human consciousness." Do you think *The Sun Also Rises* justifies these assessments? Why or why not?
10. Ernest Hemingway, in an early draft of *The Sun Also Rises*, described Brett as the subject of the novel and Cohn as its hero. Would you describe the final form of the novel in the same way? If not, who is the principal focus of the work? Does it have a hero? Why or why not?
11. Hemingway once described *The Sun Also Rises* as a "highly moral story." Do you agree? Support your assessment with specifics from the novel.

12. Hemingway biographer and literary critic Sheridan Baker described *The Sun Also Rises* as follows: “Hemingway has written the courtly romance for moderns, tough, dissonant, yet echoing forever the ancient sweetness of being forever lovelorn and forever longing, all underlined by the final knowledge of damnation, knowing that it never could have been, yet doomed to think that it might.” Discuss the idea that *The Sun Also Rises* provides a picture of love in the modern world. Is it an accurate picture? Support your assessment with specific incidents from the novel.
13. The First World War is an unseen presence lying at the heart of, and yet in the background of, the incidents that make up Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*. In what ways was the war the cause of the attitudes reflected by the main characters in the story? Consider especially their attitudes toward middle-class notions of morality and patriotism.
14. Critic Philip Young described Hemingway’s Paris in *The Sun Also Rises* as a place where “spiritual life in general, and Jake’s sexual life in particular, are alike impoverished. Prayer breaks down, ... a knowledge of traditional distinctions between good and evil is largely lost, copulation is morally neutral and, cut off from the past chiefly by the spiritual disaster of the war, life has become mostly meaningless. ‘What shall we do?’ is the same constant question, to which the answer must be, again, ‘Nothing.’” Discuss Young’s belief that the First World War had such a destructive impact on the morals of society. Are there any developments in the last eighty years of the twentieth century that would support the notion that war can make a devastating impression on the very fabric of a society?
15. Hemingway lived in Paris in the nineteen twenties, at the same time as painters such as Picasso and Miro. It was a time of experimentation in art, as people felt cut off from the traditional moorings of society. Cubism was popular among painters of the day. Discuss the stylistic connections that exist between the works being produced by the painters living in Paris and Ernest Hemingway’s first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*.
16. The Hemingway hero is the quintessential macho man - loud, egotistical, and domineering. Hemingway created a public persona for himself that was a caricature of this macho male. Choose a character from *The Sun Also Rises* that comes closest to the stereotype of the Hemingway hero. Does your choice succeed in typifying the true “manly man,” or does he fall short in some key aspect of his character? Be sure to cite specifics from the novel rather than relying on generalities.
17. Discuss the view of love presented in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*. Is true love possible? What weaknesses and failures prevent the main characters from forming loving relationships? Do any characters in the story demonstrate the capacity for true love?
18. Discuss the role of religion in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*. Why have various characters in the story strayed from the faiths in which they were raised? What is Hemingway saying about the meaning of religion in a world torn asunder by war?

19. Compare and contrast the character of Jake Barnes in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* with that of the Fisher King in T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*. In what ways does the poem, written four years before the novel, seem to have influenced it?
20. Compare and contrast the characters of Jake and Romero in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. Relate the detachment and impotence of one and the passion and virility of the other to their life experiences, their occupations, and the countries in which they live.
21. In Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, some have suggested that the bullfight, and the surrounding fiesta, function like a drug in the lives of the expatriates, allowing them to forget the pain and drabness of their lives. What characteristics of the fiesta have this sort of impact? Is that why the expatriates sought it out?
22. In Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, the author makes frequent use of descriptions of sensory stimuli. In combination with his spare writing style, this enables the reader to feel what is happening more than simply understanding it. Discuss, using specific passages from the novel, the effectiveness of this technique.
23. Compare the bullfighting technique of Pedro Romeo to the writing technique of Ernest Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises*. In what sense can it be said that, when Hemingway praises the former, he is really celebrating his own aesthetic theories?
24. Evaluate the credibility of Jake Barnes, the narrator of Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. To what extent may he be trusted as he relates the facts of the story? In what ways do his personal prejudices appear in his evaluations of the other characters?
25. Ernest Hemingway believed that *The Sun Also Rises* was a highly moral tale. Is there any action in the story that you would describe as moral? Discuss the extent to which any character in the narrative experiences redemption.
26. Jens Bjorneboe traces the ongoing fascination with bullfighting to the ancient pagan cult of Mithra, where the conquest over the bull through the symbolic baptism in bull's blood pictured the subjugation of the bestial nature in man. He goes on to say, "I know of no other writer who evokes the mood of the decadent world of antiquity so strongly as Hemingway does; an infinity of darkness, passion and suffering forms a sounding board behind practically everything he has written. All of *The Sun Also Rises* could have taken place during the last days of Pompeii. And no one else shows a stronger need to escape from it." In your opinion, do the bullfighting scenes in *The Sun Also Rises* represent the triumph *over* or the triumph *of* the bestial part of man? How do they fit into the overall themes of the novel?
27. One way to assess the impact of the First World War on European and American societies is to compare the characters of Jake Barnes, a veteran, and Robert Cohn, who never fought in the war, in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. How do the differences in the sets of values held by the two men illustrate the devastation wrought by the Great War?