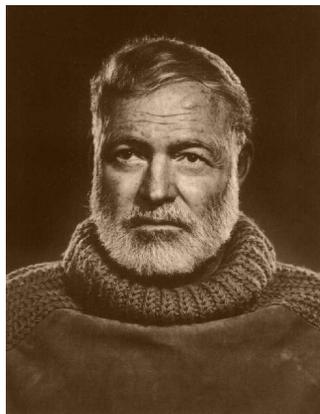


# FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

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.

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* reflects Hemingway's personal experiences in the Spanish Civil War, which lasted from 1936 to 1939. The war broke out when the Popular Front, a leftist coalition consisting of Communists, Socialists, and various anarchist factions, gained control of the Spanish government and instituted radical changes of an anticlerical nature. As a result, an alliance of military and religious leaders and other rightist groups, led by the fascist Generalissimo Francisco Franco, sought to overthrow the government. Not surprisingly, foreign states became involved, supporting their own interests; the Soviet Union supported the republican government, while Germany and Italy supported the fascist insurgents. The war quickly became "batting practice" - an opportunity for nations that would become belligerents in World War II to try out their military technology and tactics at the expense of the suffering Spanish. Meanwhile, the United States, Britain, and France remained neutral, influenced by the dominant pacifism of their populations. Some left-leaning intellectuals such as Hemingway, however, saw this neutrality as a betrayal of a people crying out for freedom and blissfully ignorant of the atrocities being carried out by the leadership of the Soviet Union against their own people, chose to involve themselves as volunteers on the republican side (Hemingway did not actually fight, but supported the republican cause with his writing). Robert Jordan represents such men as he struggles to maintain his personal code of honor in the face of atrocities on both sides and incompetence among the leaders of the republican forces. Other characters in the novel also find echoes in Hemingway's experiences; some have suggested that expatriate American writer Gertrude Stein was the model for Pilar, a mother-figure for Jordan, and that Maria Sans, a Spanish nurse whom Hemingway met during the war, was the basis for Jordan's great love.

The title of the novel is taken from John Donne's Meditation XVII (1624). In it he says, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. . . . Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." Donne, an Anglican pastor, draws the conclusion that any death should remind us of our own mortality and cause us to consider our eternal destiny and relationship to God. Hemingway, needless to say, made a different application of Donne's famous words, seeing in them the responsibility of each man for his fellow men, especially in being willing to fight and even die for their freedom despite the ultimate futility of any such endeavor in a material universe from which God is absent.

## **PLOT SUMMARY**

The story takes place during the Spanish Civil War. A young American, Robert Jordan, and an old Spaniard, Anselmo, are in a pine forest high on a mountain in Spain overlooking a gorge. They are plotting to blow up a bridge over the river that runs through the gorge. Jordan thinks that blowing the bridge will be easy, but knows that the timing will be crucial, as impressed upon him in his conversation the night before with General Golz, his commanding officer, who is Russian,

providing leadership for the republican forces against Franco and the Fascists. The bridge must be destroyed after the attack begins but before reinforcements can be sent. The old man climbs further up the mountain, and soon return with a guerilla leader named Pablo, who is clearly suspicious of Jordan and his load of dynamite. He cannot read, so ignores Jordan's credentials, but leads the men to a group of horses he has stolen. Pablo is mollified somewhat when Jordan shows his knowledge of horses, but Jordan still entertains doubts about the guerilla leader's reliability.

Pablo takes Jordan and Anselmo to his camp, where they meet a gypsy named Rafael and a girl named Maria. She had been rescued from a train recently blown up by the republican forces. Maria is beautiful despite the fact that her hair was cut off in prison, and Jordan begins gently flirting with her. Pablo's woman, who is wise and strong, sees the effect this has on the girl and warns Jordan that she has been seriously damaged by life. She makes Jordan promise to take Maria to the coast where she can receive care after he blows up the bridge. She also looks at his palm, but refuses to tell him what she sees there.

On the reconnaissance trip to the bridge, Jordan draws diagrams and figures out where the charges should be placed and what amounts of explosives should be used, along with the optimal timing of the blasts. On the way back from the bridge, Jordan and Anselmo discuss hunting; the former dislikes killing animals but is willing to kill men when the cause demands it, while the latter enjoys hunting animals but has no desire to kill men. Anselmo admits that he has killed men and will do so again, but desires forgiveness, though since Communists no longer believe in God, he is uncertain from whom the forgiveness should be sought. Jordan, meanwhile, tries to hide his resentment at the orders given by Golz, which will make the task of blowing the bridge both more difficult and more dangerous. On the way back to camp, they meet a bored sentry who warns them to guard their explosives, particularly against Pablo, who cannot be trusted.

When he arrives at the cave, Jordan immediately checks his packs and takes them inside with him in order to guard them more diligently. When he begins to speak of the bridge, Pablo suddenly proclaims that neither he nor his people will have anything to do with the project. Surprisingly, his wife speaks out against him and all the others follow her lead, agreeing to help blow the bridge. Pablo fears that his people will be hunted down if they blow the bridge, but his wife argues that they will find no safety in any case and goes on to challenge her husband's authority directly. She sends Maria out of the cave, fearing that violence is about to break out, but Pablo gives in. Jordan then begins to explain the destruction of the bridge while Maria gets their dinner.

Later Jordan goes outside the cave for some air and is soon joined by the gypsy Rafael, who rebukes him for not killing Pablo when he had the chance. He encourages him to go back in and do it immediately, but Jordan refuses. Soon Pablo joins them. He speaks to Jordan in a friendly manner, then goes to check on the horses. Rafael fears that he will run off and betray them, so he goes to warn the sentry while Jordan goes down to the meadow to see what Pablo is doing. He finds him talking quietly to the horse. Convinced that nothing is amiss, he returns to camp. His affection for Maria is becoming increasingly evident to old Pilar, Pablo's woman, and she seems to approve. Soon Jordan asks Maria to leave, and asks Pilar about the gypsy's comment. She tells him that he was right not to kill Pablo despite his weakness and the danger it creates.

Jordan then leaves the cave to sleep on the ground outside. In the middle of the night, Maria comes to him and climbs into his sleeping robe. They profess their love for one another and Maria asks to be his woman. He says that cannot be in the light of his task in the war, but she insists. She tells him that she had never willingly been with a man before but had been raped, but he assures her that true love wipes away all such misfortunes. They then joyfully make love.

Jordan is wakened in the morning by the drone, and then the roar, of fascist planes passing overhead. Far more planes pass over than had ever been seen in the region before. Jordan sends Anselmo to watch the road and Rafael to keep an eye on the guard post by the bridge. Soon another guerilla arrives and tells them that the fascists are expecting an attack on the bridge by republican forces. As they finish their breakfast, they hear the sound of the planes returning from dropping their bombs.

After the planes pass overhead, Jordan and Pilar speak of many things. She wonders what will happen if Maria gets pregnant, and Jordan insists that he cannot take her with him given the nature of his work for the war effort. He then asks Pilar why she is with Pablo. She says that he was once strong, but now he is weak and no longer able to lead; in fact, he has ceded leadership of the guerillas to her. She then discusses with the other men the need to rely on Pablo for a safe escape after Jordan blows the bridge.

The next day Jordan, Pilar, and Maria go to see El Sordo. As they rest on the way, Pilar speaks of her ugliness and the difficulty of being ugly on the outside while feeling oneself to be beautiful within. The other two insist that she is not ugly, but they speak from their hearts rather than from their eyes. Pilar then tells them of the early days of the civil war, when Pablo was an aggressive leader rather than a mere shell of a man. She speaks of how the partisans subdued a barracks and murdered the guards in cold blood, then Pablo had twenty more fascists arrested. They were led out into the square one by one, forced to pass between two lines of men and beaten, after which they were thrown over a cliff, alive or dead. After a few were murdered this way, the mob descended into drunken violence, stormed the town hall, and butchered the rest, including the priest who was trying to confess them and give them absolution. Pilar was ashamed, but Pablo was pleased with everything about the day. Pilar tells Jordan that the day was the worst of her life until three days later when the fascists retook the town. Maria, having heard enough of gore and bloodshed, begs her not to tell about that day, but Jordan insists that he wants to hear about it at a later date.

As Jordan and the women approach the camp of the guerilla commander, they meet Joaquin, a sentry who helped to carry the wounded Maria away from the train wreck. The two banter and Joaquin speaks of the deaths of his family members at the hands of the fascists. This causes Jordan to muse on the fact that both sides committed atrocities, but those committed by his own side were more vivid because of the way Pilar had told her story. After the other three try to comfort Joaquin for his loss, they arrive at the camp of El Sordo, the deaf guerilla chieftain. He sends the two young people away while he, Jordan, and Pilar discuss the coming campaign. El Sordo cannot supply the needed number of men or horses, so Jordan will have to work with what is available. They then debate the best way of organizing a retreat after the bridge is blown, but realize that the fact that General Golz insisted on dynamiting the bridge at sunrise rather than at night will make a safe retreat much more difficult.

After leaving El Sordo, Pilar grows weary on the way back to camp. After a brief rest in which she speaks of her love for Maria, she leaves the two young lovers alone and continues onward by herself. After they make love in the heather, Jordan becomes preoccupied with the problem of the bridge. He doubts that they will live through the war, but fantasizes about marrying Maria and taking her back to the States, where she could become the demure wife of a university professor of Spanish. Knowing such a thing could never happen, he resigns himself to a passionate but brief romance with the love of his life, even if “till death do us part” means only two days. Maria then begins chattering about all the ways she will care for him – everything from preparing his food to washing his clothing to nursing him if he is sick or wounded to shooting him if the need arises. Soon they arrive at camp and find Pilar sleeping. When she wakes, she insists that Maria tell her about

their lovemaking. Maria at first refuses, but then admits that the earth moved. Pilar then tells her that such a thing happens no more than three times in one's entire life. Suddenly the skies become overcast and Pilar tells them that it is going to snow.

The snow comes fast and hard, further complicating the task of blowing up the bridge. As they wait in the cave, Pilar tells them the story of her former lover, a bullfighter who was fatally wounded while killing his last bull. He was brave despite his fear of the bulls, in contrast to Pablo, who in his drunken state refused to participate in the attack on the bridge. Soon Rafael arrives from guard duty and tells them that the fascists have not changed their guard rotations despite the snow.

Anselmo, on lookout duty, counts cars as they pass and records the number on a sheet of paper. He knows that tomorrow the fascists in the outpost below will be killed when the bridge is dynamited, but he takes no pleasure in this. He debates whether or not to return to the cave to avoid freezing in the snow, but decided that orders are orders and settles in to wait for Jordan to relieve him, hoping that he will not have to kill anyone during the coming attack. He regrets the refusal of the general to blow the bridge during the night and wishes that he had a God to whom he could pray. Then Jordan arrives and they return to camp, with Jordan very impressed that the old man had stayed at his post even in the snow.

When Jordan and Anselmo return to the cave, they find that El Sordo has gone to look for horses. Maria fusses over Jordan, drying his shoes and coat and fetching fresh socks. Pablo, in a drunken stupor, taunts Jordan to try to make him angry, but others intervene, asking Jordan about life in Montana in the United States of America. Pablo then pours out his regrets over the fascists he slaughtered in his village. Wanting to change the subject, the others ask Jordan how he came to Spain, and he explains that he came to study the language and the people because he teaches Spanish in an American university. Pablo continues to taunt him, arguing that he cannot possibly be a professor because he has no beard. Jordan suspects that he is not really drunk, but considers him a danger to the enterprise and wonders whether he can afford to dispose of him. He tries to get a rise out of Pablo, as does Agustin, but Pablo remains calm, even when Agustin strikes him repeatedly. He then goes out to check on the horses, calling back over his shoulder that the American has come to lead them to their destruction. After Pablo leaves, the others, fearing that he will do something violent, encourage Jordan to kill him, and he agrees to do so that night. When Pablo returns, he has changed his tune. He says that the snow is tapering off, and he now favors the attack on the bridge. The others quickly realize that he has been eavesdropping and heard the discussion about killing him.

Jordan feels like he is on a constantly-turning Ferris wheel and can't get off. He decides that he will no longer be involved with the problem of Pablo and he turns his attention to writing out detailed plans for the demolition of the bridge. He muses briefly about what he will do after the bridge demolition is completed; he plans to go to Madrid for a few days to buy some books and relax, taking Maria with him. He thinks of dinner at Gaylord's, a hotel taken over by the Russians, where he expects to pick up all sorts of gossip about the war. He thinks back about his initial disillusionment, when he found that all of the republican commanders, who had suddenly appeared from nowhere without prior military experience, spoke Russian. Those who passed themselves off as peasant commanders weren't peasants at all, and Jordan has come to believe that the deception, which he initially hated, was really for the best. He also muses that the Spanish Civil War is very different from the American Civil War. His war has no Grant or Sherman or Stonewall Jackson, but plenty of McClellans on both sides. He remembers the idealism of the early days of fighting, now all but drained by the brutality and corruption of both sides, and a long conversation he had enjoyed with the Russian official Karkov at Gaylord's.

In the cave, the conversation turns to premonitions of death. Jordan denies that such a thing is possible, but Pilar relates several incidents where she heard of it or saw it, most notably in the face of the Russian Kashkin whom Jordan shot at his own request after he had been severely wounded. She describes the smell of death that lies upon a person who is not long for this world in great and disgusting detail. By the time she has finished, the storm is over. Jordan goes outside the cave to prepare a soft pile of pine branches on which to place his sleeping bag. He says goodnight to everyone, then gets into his bed, impatiently awaiting Maria's arrival. Soon she comes to him, and again they make love, then fall asleep in one another's arms.

As dawn breaks, a fascist cavalry patrolman rides into camp and sees Jordan, who quickly puts a bullet in his chest. This awakens the others. With a patrol in the area, they know they need to move quickly. Pablo takes the dead man's horse back through the forest so it leaves tracks coming out as well as going in while the others prepare for possible action. Jordan supervises the placement of their machine gun, which Agustin will operate. Soon Rafael wanders toward them carrying two dead hares. The gypsy had left his post to pursue the hares, which is why the cavalryman had been able to approach them undetected. Jordan instructs Agustin about the operation of the automatic rifle while at the same time hoping that a conflict can be avoided that day. After all, the next day is the important one – the day when the bridge is to be blown.

Such is not to be however, for soon four cavalry patrolmen ride through the trees in their direction. Jordan can see their faces clearly through the gun sights. He prepares to fire if necessary, but the riders follow the tracks left by Pablo, turning back into the forest. Soon they are followed by the full patrol – twenty men – who also come into the clearing and then turn away. Agustin had been eager to mow down the four fascists who rode in first, but Jordan now reminds him that had they done so, they would have had to deal with the twenty that followed – an encounter for which they are ill-equipped. After they leave, Agustin speaks of his desire to kill all fascists, but Anselmo argues that a just Republic would reeducate rather than murder. Jordan then muses about his own attitude toward killing, admitting to himself that he enjoys it far more than he should when in the heat of battle.

Over breakfast Agustin and Jordan speak of Maria. Agustin says that he cares for her very much, and Jordan assures him that he intends to marry her. Then they speak of their band, noting that almost all are reliable men with the exception of Pablo and the gypsy Rafael. Suddenly they hear automatic rifle fire in the distance and realize that El Sordo's camp is under attack. The fascists apparently had followed their tracks when they had gone out early to steal horses. Agustin wants to go to their aid, but Jordan insists they stay where they are, since the blowing of the bridge the following day is their greatest priority. Primitivo, the lookout, also wants to help El Sordo, but Jordan assures them anything they could do would be futile.

The snow melts by noon, and in the afternoon Jordan reads the documents from the pouch of the man he shot. No useful military intelligence is contained in them; they are all personal letters. Jordan truly regrets having to shoot the young man, only twenty-one years old, but believes the killing to have been necessary. He once again struggles in his own mind, knowing that killing is wrong but at the same time believing the cause of the Republic to be just. Realizing that such thoughts are counterproductive, he turns his mind to Maria. He loves her in a way that he has never experienced before. According to the materialist philosophy of Marxism, love does not exist, but he is not a true Marxist; he merely fights in this war to prevent the fascists from imposing their tyranny on free men.

Sordo, meanwhile, has retreated with the last of his men to a hilltop. Once there he shoots his wounded horse and sets up his machine gun behind the carcass. Of the five men who remain,

three are wounded, Sordo included. Their position is surrounded by more than 150 men, and he knows that if the fascists bring a mortar, or worse yet if they send in planes, they have no hope of survival. He then begins to contemplate death, which at this point appears inevitable. Soon the fascists call for the men on the hilltop to surrender, but Sordo orders his men to be silent, hoping to draw the besiegers into a renewed assault. Better yet, if they believe all the guerillas to be dead, they might come out into the open where they would be easy targets. The captain of the fascist troops, convinced that the defenders are dead, orders his sniper to go to the top of the hill, but the man refuses, fearing a trick. Finally the captain climbs the hill himself, and Sordo waits until he is too close to miss, then fires three rounds into his chest. His pleasure is short-lived, however, because then the planes arrive. They bomb and strafe the hilltop until all is quiet. When the lieutenant of the fascist troops reaches the hilltop, only a badly-wounded boy remains alive, and he shoots him in the back of the head. He then orders his men to remove the heads of the defenders of the hill and put them in sacks.

Jordan and his men listen to the sounds of battle on the nearby hill, and when the shooting stops they know that all is finished, that El Sordo and his men are dead. Pilar has made a stew from the hares and some mushrooms, and Maria brings some to the men. From their vantage point, they watch the horsemen leave with the spoils of battle, including the heads of the vanquished. Later Anselmo climbs the hill where the battle occurred and sees the horrors left behind. Ironically, the boy who was shot in the head, the lieutenant who shot him, and Anselmo all utter prayers to the Virgin in the midst of their calamity. When Anselmo returns to the cave, he tells Jordan and Pablo what he found on the hilltop, then gives his report about the traffic on the road below, including heavy artillery and cavalry. Jordan then writes out a dispatch to be sent to General Golz warning of the strength of the opposition and advising that the attack on the bridge be postponed. Pablo, drunk as usual, tells Jordan he has confidence in his leadership and judgment.

The hours of the night before the attack pass, and Jordan has little hope of postponement. As he waits, he remembers his grandfather, who had fought in the Civil War and the Indian wars that followed. He remembers his grandfather's gun, which his father had used to shoot himself; when the gun was given to him, he had taken it to a lake high in the mountains and cast it into the depths. Now he wishes that he could seek his grandfather's advice for the coming battle. He even wishes that he could believe in life after death so he could see his grandfather again, though he has no desire to see his father, whom he considers a coward who was bullied by his mother to the point of suicide.

Later, as he and Maria lie together in the sleeping bag, she tells him that they cannot make love because of the pain she feels from when she was raped after the fascist assault on her village. He reassures her, though inwardly he is disappointed and considers it a bad omen on the last night before battle. Then they talk about what they will do in Madrid after the battle is over. He promises her that they will marry, but she fears what Pilar told her - that they would all be killed in the battle and none of their hopes would ever come to pass; Jordan fears the same thing, but says nothing other than that Pilar is a superstitious old woman. Eventually Maria pours out her story, telling of the shooting of her parents before her eyes, how she was taken into a barbershop, her braids were cut off and used to gag her while the rest of her head was shaved, then she was gang-raped on the couch in her father the mayor's office. After the telling of the tale, both are filled with hatred for the perpetrators of such an evil deed. Maria wants to help kill the Falangist fascists, while Jordan knows that hatred can only cloud his judgment, which is something he can ill afford. Meanwhile, back in Madrid, the Russian officers are exchanging gossip. The latest word is that the fascists are fighting one another and bombing their own troops, but Karkov doesn't believe. He turns in early, knowing that he will have to rise the next morning to join Golz at the front. At the same hour, Andres is

carrying Jordan's message to General Golz through the fascist lines. When he encounters the republican outpost, they challenge him and waste a lot of time trying to make sure he is genuine.

At two o'clock in the morning Pilar shakes Jordan awake. Pablo has run off, taking with him the detonators, fuses, and caps - everything needed to make the dynamite explode - along with two of the horses. Pilar is ashamed because she was supposed to guard the sacks, but Jordan realizes that anger at this point will accomplish nothing. Nonetheless he lies in the sleeping bag fuming, cursing Pablo and all fools and traitors. After getting the anger out of his system, he formulates a new plan - one that should succeed in blowing the bridge, but which will in all likelihood cost them all their lives. Then, pain or no pain, he and Maria make love in the sleeping bag.

When morning approaches, Jordan understands the impossibility of the task he has been given. He might be able to destroy one outpost guarding the bridge, but not both, especially without El Sordo and his men, since Pablo has run off with vital equipment. But Pilar volunteers to carry out Pablo's job, insisting that Maria can handle the horses alone. She also reminds Jordan that they have the element of surprise on their side. To the astonishment of all, Pablo appears in the entrance of the cave. He regrets what he has done, though the equipment cannot be recovered because he threw it into the gorge. To make up for his betrayal, however, he has recruited five men from other guerilla bands to help in the attack. Jordan and the rest feel their confidence restored. Andres, however, is encountering delay after pointless delay at the hands of self-important but incompetent army officials in his attempt to deliver Jordan's message to General Golz.

After going over the plan one more time, Jordan and the others head for the bridge. Pablo and his men are to attack the outpost, Jordan along with Anselmo and Agustin are deal with the sentries on both sides and blow the bridge, while Maria and Rafael watch the horses. Before sunrise everyone is in position. Andres, however, continues to encounter delays, including a traffic jam caused by a truck accident in the mountains. Finally he gets within a mile or two of Golz, but is apprehended by Andre Marty, a French officer in the International Brigades. Marty is a revolutionary hero, but has become insane and paranoid. He takes Andres for a traitor, and because his message is for Golz, he believes the general to be a traitor as well. At this point Karkov, the Russian journalist, intervenes, forcing Marty to give the dispatch and safe-conduct papers back to Andres and send him to General Golz. When Golz finally gets the dispatch it is too late to call off the bombardment. All he can do is curse the incompetence of fools and traitors and imagine how the battle might have gone had everything not been fouled up, at the same time realizing that the enemy will be waiting, expecting what was supposed to be a surprise attack.

As Jordan waits for the bombardment that will signal the beginning of the attack, he watches the sentry through his binoculars, but soon stops because he is too much absorbed with the man's simple humanity. When the bombs begin to fall, Jordan and Anselmo quickly dispatch the sentries and Pablo's mounted men and Pilar's group deal with the outposts. Jordan then takes the dynamite and goes down to the bridge. He sets the charges with Anselmo's help, but the sustained gunfire indicates that the battles at the outposts are not going smoothly. Pilar returns with her group; Fernando is mortally wounded and Eladio is dead. When Jordan finishes placing the charges, he climbs up the mountain. Soon the enemy column appears and he and Anselmo pull their wires, setting off a huge explosion. When the dust settles, the entire center section of the bridge has fallen into the river below, but Anselmo has been killed by a piece of flying steel. Soon Pablo appears, firing at something behind him; he is the sole survivor of his band. In a few moments a small tank rounds the bend. Jordan fires, forcing the tank to take cover, then the remaining guerillas flee up the mountainside. Agustin soon realizes that Pablo has shot his own men so he would be sure to have enough horses to escape. Then Maria appears, and she and Jordan embrace. As they mount and ride

away, they must cross the road. As they do so, the tank begins firing at them. Jordan is the last to cross, and the gunfire kills his horse, which falls on him and breaks his leg. He is too badly hurt to ride, so he insists that the others leave him. The hardest to convince is Maria, but he tells her that wherever she is, he will be with her. After the others leave, Jordan maneuvers himself into a position to fire his machine gun when the fascist troops come down the road. As he waits, the pain becomes worse, and he debates whether or not to kill himself to prevent capture, torture, and interrogation. He doesn't want to be a coward like his father, but he also wonders what holds him back, since he doesn't believe in life after death. Then the fascists appear, and the novel ends with his machine gun aimed at the officer leading the troops.

## MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Robert Jordan – An American college professor fighting for the republican side in the Spanish Civil War, he is the protagonist of the novel. Jordan is a demolitions expert and is sent to assist a guerilla band in destroying an important bridge. He is mortally wounded when his horse falls on him after he blows the bridge.
- General Golz – A Russian Communist who heads the Republican forces, he orders a dangerous daybreak demolition of the bridge.
- Karkov - A Russian correspondent for *Pravda*, he is one of the most powerful men in Spain because of his influence as a journalist. He befriends Jordan and helps Andres get his message to General Golz.
- Andre Marty - A French revolutionary hero who is now Commissar of the International Brigades, he is paranoid and full of his own importance. He plays a major role in keeping Andres from delivering his message to Golz on time.
- Pablo – The drunken leader of a guerilla band, he is emotional and undependable and in the end betrays Jordan and the rest of the guerilla band by stealing their detonators and fuses, though he eventually returns to help in the battle.
- Pilar – Pablo's woman, she is strong and stable, the real leader of the group. She and Jordan become close friends, and she encourages the romance between Jordan and Maria.
- Maria – A nineteen-year-old girl who was brutalized by the fascists and narrowly escaped an attack on a train. She is beautiful but emotionally damaged. She and Jordan fall in love and draw strength from one another in the days before the blowing of the bridge. They intend to marry, though Jordan knows they are unlikely to survive the war.
- Anselmo – An elderly member of the guerilla band hiding out in the mountains, he is the first one Jordan encounters as he enters the region and becomes his most faithful friend. He is a crack shot but hates killing people; he also misses the religion that he has been forced by the communists to abandon.

- Agustin - Another one of the guerillas, he is entrusted with the machine gun and covers Jordan while he blows the bridge. He is also in love with Maria, though she has no interest in him.
- Fernando - Another member of the guerilla band, he is stiff and formal and has absolutely no sense of humor, making him the frequent butt of the others' jokes.
- Rafael – A gypsy member of Pablo's band, he is considered unstable and unreliable by the others. He has no interest whatsoever in politics.
- Andres - A young guerilla who is chosen to carry Jordan's message to General Golz. His encounters with the bureaucracy cause him to arrive too late, though he is actually relieved not to have to get involved in the fighting.
- El Sordo – The leader of another guerilla band, he is almost totally deaf, but is nonetheless a shrewd leader of men. He is killed in an attack by the fascists.

### NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“To me it is a sin to kill a man. Even Fascists whom we must kill. To me there is a great difference between the bear and the man and I do not believe the wizardry of the gypsies about the brotherhood with animals. No, I am against all killing of men.” (Anselmo, ch.3, p.41)

“She said that nothing is done to oneself that one does not accept and that if I loved some one it would take it all away.” (Maria, ch.7, p.73)

“There probably still is God after all, though we have abolished Him.” (Pilar, ch.9, p.88)

“We thresh fascists today, and out of the chaff comes the freedom of this pueblo.” (Townsmen, ch.10, p.107)

“If you had three together, two would unite against one, and then the two would start to betray each other.” (Jordan, ch.11, p.135)

“I suppose it is possible to live as full a life in seventy hours as in seventy years; granted that your life has been full up to the time that the seventy hours start and that you have reached a certain age.” (Jordan, ch.13, p.166)

“There is nothing else than now. There is neither yesterday, certainly, nor is there any tomorrow. How old must you be before you know that? There is only now, and if now is only two days, then two days is your life and everything in it will be in proportion.” (Jordan, ch.13, p.169)

“If we no longer have religion after the war then I think there must be some form of civic penance organized that all may be cleansed from the killing or else we will never have a true and human basis for living.” (Anselmo, ch.15, p.196)

“You learned the dry-mouthed, fear-purged, purging ecstasy of battle and you fought that summer and that fall for all the poor in the world, against all tyranny, for all the things that you believed and for the new world you had been educated into.” (Jordan, ch.18, p.236)

“That we should win this war and shoot nobody. That we should govern justly and that all should participate in the benefits according as they have striven for them. And that those who have fought against us should be educated to see their error.” (Anselmo, ch.23, p.285)

“He is a Christian. Something very rare in Catholic countries.” (Jordan, ch.23, p.287)

“What you have with Maria, whether it lasts just through today and a part of tomorrow, or whether it lasts for a long life is the most important thing that can happen to a human being. There will always be people who say it does not exist because they cannot have it. But I tell you it is true and that you have it and that you are lucky even if you die tomorrow.” (Jordan, ch.26, p.305)

“I love thee as I love all that we have fought for. I love thee as I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry.” (Jordan, ch.31, p.348)

“Forgiveness is a Christian idea and Spain has never been a Christian country. It has always had its own special idol worship within the Church.” (Jordan, ch.31, p.355)

“But your plan stinks. It stinks, I tell you. It was a night plan and it’s morning now. Night plans aren’t any good in the morning.” (Jordan, ch.38, p.386)

“Today is only one day in all the days that will ever be. But what will happen in all the other days that ever come can depend on what you do today.” (Jordan, ch.43, p.432)

“To shoot a man gives a feeling as though one had struck one’s own brother when you are grown men.” (Anselmo, ch.43, p.442)

“Dying is only bad when it takes a long time and hurts so much that it humiliates you.” (Jordan, ch.43, p.468)

## **ESSAY QUESTIONS**

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. The title of Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is taken from John Donne’s Meditation XVII (1624). In it Donne says, “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. . . . Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” Donne, an Anglican pastor, draws the conclusion that any death should remind us of our own mortality and cause us to consider our eternal destiny and relationship to God. What do you think Hemingway intended in choosing Donne’s famous words for the title of his novel? Support your argument with specific incidents and quotations from the book.

2. One possible interpretation of the title of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is that all mankind is one and the death of any man somehow lessens those who are still alive. Discuss the extent to which the novel makes this point. Consider particularly the times in the novel when the author puts the guerillas in a position that enables them to identify with the fighters on the fascist side.
3. One possible interpretation of the title of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is that the suffering and death of any should be a matter of concern for all. Robert Jordan, the protagonist, is an American volunteering to fight for the republican cause in the Spanish Civil War. People like Hemingway were terribly frustrated when free nations like the United States and Britain refused to assist the Spanish republicans in their fight against fascism. Is he saying that no man has the right to remain uninvolved when others are fighting and dying in an effort to secure their freedom? Use details from the novel to support or refute this interpretation.
4. Many novels about war are actually antiwar novels. Is this true of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*? Why or why not? Use specific incidents and quotations to support your conclusion.
5. At the end of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the protagonist contemplates suicide, but decides against it because he doesn't want to be a coward like his father. Twenty-one years after writing the book, the author did what Robert Jordan refused to do. Evaluate Jordan's arguments against suicide and discuss why such arguments may have been insufficient to prevent their author from taking such a drastic step.
6. Consider the way in which communists are portrayed in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. How accurate is the picture Hemingway paints? Be sure to keep in mind that the leftist republicans of the novel were by no means ideologically unified, that the Russians and the Spanish had differing understandings of communism, and that those in the West were largely ignorant of the atrocities being carried out at the time by Stalin against his own people.
7. Consider the way in which fascists are portrayed in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. How accurate is the picture Hemingway paints? Be sure to keep in mind that the novel dwells largely on Spanish fascists, who were supported by the Catholic Church and the military, and little on their German and Italian allies. How similar was the Spanish brand of fascism to that found in Italy under Mussolini and Germany under Hitler?
8. In Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the author draws a distinction between Christianity and the Catholic Church. As Jordan says of Anselmo in chapter 23, "He is a Christian. Something very rare in Catholic countries." What does Hemingway see as the difference? What, for him, is true Christianity, and how is it betrayed by Spanish Catholicism? Support your arguments with specifics from the novel.

9. In Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the peasant guerillas fighting for the republican cause appear to be reluctant atheists. As Pilar says in chapter 9, "There probably still is God after all, though we have abolished Him." They speak somewhat wistfully of the time when they had a God to worship, and in the midst of crisis reflexively turn to prayer. What do you believe Hemingway is saying about Christianity and its role in people's lives through this portrayal? Does he see it as a reality that no political dogma can deny or as a persistent superstition from which the ignorant can never purge themselves? Support your argument with specifics from the novel.
10. Compare and contrast the ideas about the ultimate meaning of human existence found in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Did the author's views change in the fourteen years between the two novels, or did they remain essentially the same? Why or why not? Support your conclusions with quotations and incidents from both novels.
11. Is Robert Jordan, the protagonist of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a moral man? Why or why not? Defend your answer, both from the novel and from Scripture.
12. In Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the author presents the protagonist as a moral man. What does this tell us about Hemingway's view of morality? Describe his beliefs as revealed in the novel and evaluate them on the basis of Scripture.
13. In Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the author resists the temptation to picture the two sides in the war as black and white. This may be seen, both in the portrayal of viciousness, cowardice, and incompetence among the republican forces, but also through a few glimpses of humanity and decency in the ranks of the fascists. Cite and discuss three examples supporting the latter. What is Hemingway attempting to communicate by these portrayals?
14. Discuss the view of love presented in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Be sure not to focus only on the relationship between Jordan and Maria; consider other relationships as well that have nothing to do with sex. What are the characteristics of true love as portrayed in the novel? Be sure to include specific examples from the story. Evaluate Hemingway's view of love in the light of Scripture.
15. Evaluate the ending of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Does it represent redemption or resolution for the protagonist? Why or why not? What is the nature of the resolution that Robert Jordan finds, or what kind of resolution does he seek if you believe that he fails to find it? Support your conclusion with specific quotations from the novel.
16. Because Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* pictures a world in which God has been rejected, people seek peace and fulfillment in political ideology. Do they generally succeed in finding what they seek? Why or why not? What indications do you find in the novel that manmade ideologies are not enough to satisfy the deepest longings of mankind?

17. Because Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* pictures a world in which God has been rejected, people seek peace and fulfillment in the realm of the purely personal. For the protagonist, his love for Maria and getting to the point where he is at peace with himself are vital. Are these sufficient replacements for religion and political ideology? Does Jordan eventually find meaning, or do these, too, fail him in the face of the ultimate crisis? Defend your answer with specifics from the novel.
18. Some critics of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* have argued that Maria, Robert Jordan's love interest, symbolizes Spain itself, ravaged yet beautiful. Discuss the validity of this interpretation. Support your conclusion with specific quotations from the novel.
19. The typical Ernest Hemingway hero is often described as a man of action rather than a man of thought. Does the protagonist of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* fit this pattern? Support your conclusion using details from the novel.
20. Compare and contrast the views of war portrayed in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Do the two authors arrive at the same conclusions about the nature and morality of war? Why or why not? Support your conclusions with details from both novels.
21. Compare and contrast the views of war portrayed in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*. Do the two authors arrive at the same conclusions about the nature and morality of war? Why or why not? Support your conclusions with details from both novels.
22. What does Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* conclude about the value of human life? The issue is much debated among the fighters who must kill in order to survive or to support their causes, yet many struggle with the issue. Choose three characters who experience internal conflict regarding killing other human beings and draw conclusions about Hemingway's view of this issue. To what extent does the author's view correspond to that of Scripture?
23. Discuss the use of animal imagery in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Be sure to include images used repeatedly for specific characters (e.g., Jordan using Rabbit as a term of endearment for Maria) as well as broader images used to characterize groups of people in the story. What is the significance of these images? What do they tell us about the individuals and groups of people they describe?
24. In Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the author often uses Spanish diction and sentence structure despite the fact that the book is written in English. Why do you think Hemingway made this choice? How does it affect the reader? Does the language of the novel draw the reader into its environment more fully, or does it serve to distance him from the events and people being described? Use details from the novel to support your conclusions.

25. Discuss the use of foreshadowing in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Choose three specific examples of this technique and discuss ways in which they prepare the reader for what is to happen later. What is the overall effect of the author's use of foreshadowing? What does it say about the immutability of human character and human destiny?
26. In Sigmund Freud's view of human nature, he pictured the Id as the seat of primitive instinctual drives, primarily involving sex and violence. Both of these are fundamental to the struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest that Darwin saw as the driving force behind evolution. Discuss the relationship between sex and violence in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. In what ways are the two seen as parallel? Be sure to include both events and imagery in your arguments.
27. How does the protagonist Robert Jordan change and develop in the course of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*? What are the chief qualities that he acquires in the course of the three days during which the story takes place? What do these things tell you about the values most espoused by the author?
28. The two major female figures in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Pilar and Maria, serve as foils for one another - the former is dominant while the latter is submissive, the first is strong and stable while the second is weak and dependent. What do these contrasts indicate about Hemingway's view of women? His portrayals have often been criticized by feminists. Are these criticisms legitimate? Why or why not?
29. On many occasions in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the protagonist admits cynicism with regard to the republican cause, yet he continues to fight for the Republic. Why does he do this? If he is not a communist, what is he? Discuss the principal motives that drive him, being sure to cite specific incidents and quotations from the novel.
30. Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* contains many passages in which the characters recall incidents from their pasts. What is the function of these stories? What do they tell us about the characters involved, about the war, about Spain, and about human life in general?
31. Novelist Robert Stone has suggested that Robert Jordan, the protagonist of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), served as the prototype for the stoic anti-fascist hero portrayed by Humphrey Bogart in the classic movie *Casablanca* (1942). In what ways is Rick Blaine like Robert Jordan, and in what ways are they different? Be sure to concentrate more on character and attitudes than on plot elements in your analysis.
32. In chapter 13 of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan says, "There is nothing else than now. There is neither yesterday, certainly, nor is there any tomorrow. How old must you be before you know that? There is only now, and if now is only two days, then two days is your life and everything in it will be in proportion." Is this *carpe diem* philosophy supported throughout the novel, or does Jordan eventually change his mind? Be sure to cite specific incidents and quotations as you develop your argument.

33. In chapter 13 of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan says, "I suppose it is possible to live as full a life in seventy hours as in seventy years; granted that your life has been full up to the time that the seventy hours start and that you have reached a certain age." The statement is one example of foreshadowing in the novel, but it also says something about the author's understanding of a full and meaningful life. Did Jordan succeed in fulfilling his own prophecy, living as full a life in the seventy hours during which the novel takes place as he would have had he survived the war? Why or why not? Support your answer with specifics from the novel.
34. Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and his *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are both antiwar novels about the realities of war. Compare and contrast the two works, noting how each moves the reader to hate war as much as the characters in the stories do. Which do you consider the more effective critique of war? Support your arguments with specifics from both novels.
35. The typical hero in the novels of Ernest Hemingway is a man in isolation, struggling against the forces of man and nature and often failing in his quest. Compare and contrast Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea* and Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in the ways in which they illustrate the kind of man with whom Hemingway identified. Give attention to their characters, the nature of their isolation, and the ways in which they deal with their circumstances.