CHAPTER - I
Introduction

HEMINGWAY AND THE IMPERILED HUMAN SITUATION
INTRODUCTION:—

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John O'Hara once referred to Ernest Hemingway as "the most important author since the death of Shakespeare." It is true that Shakespeare's canvas was larger and wider than that used by Hemingway. The similarity arises and is nowhere more prominent than in their treatment and portrayal of the tragic sense of life. Hemingway does not wallow in the quagmire of despair, but like Shakespeare sings of the dignity and splendour of life and living. Life has its inescapable tragic dimensions, but they are to be treated unflinchingly. What was of utmost importance to him was that life was to be lived fully and meaningfully, regardless of the stumbling blocks that might be encountered on the way in the journey through life.

In order to portray man's terrible predicament, his grit, courage, and nobility in the face of insurmountable odds, Hemingway chose the best suited and only medium open to him —— Tragedy. Almost all of Hemingway's major novels are stories of the terrible and terrifying predicament of man. Man is pitted again

1. Ernest Hemingway — Carlos Baker; Penguin Books; p 741
and again against the hostile unknown which is continually at work to stifle and suffocate him and destroy his every design and aspiration. The titanic struggle engaged in by his heroes and the fluctuating fortunes they undergo, arouse our admiration, sympathy, pity and fear—the emotions appropriate to tragedy. That he chose tragedy as his medium of expression was simply because tragedy is the best medium which directly appeals to our deeper instincts and susceptibilities. Thus a proper appreciation of Hemingway's tragic vision would seem to call for a careful look at the various theories of tragedy set forth by philosophers down the ages.

Tragedy and Aristotle are synonymous. One of the earliest of the philosophers, Aristotle defined tragedy as "the imitation of an action, serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude, in a language beautified in different parts with different kinds of embellishment, through action and not narration, and through scenes of pity and fear bringing about the 'Catharsis' of these (or such like) emotions."2 It can be defined as a story of collision or conflict. The conflict may be a conflict of feelings, of modes of thought, of desires, wills or purposes. It may also be a conflict of persons with one another, or with circumstances or with themselves;-----------------------------------------------

one, several or all of these kinds of conflict as the case may be. Originating in a fatal error of judgement, tragedy is a tale of reversal and suffering, leading to self-knowledge and arousing the emotions of pity and terror.

Aristotle's theory of the tragic is aptly portrayed in the dramas of Sophocles. King Oedipus was noble and well-beloved by his people. But in attempting to purge his kingdom of a pervading evil, he himself falls prey to a terrifying destiny he so vainly tries to escape. The evil that swamped his kingdom and for which he was in search was none other than himself, — condemned unawares to slay the father who begot him and marry the woman who mothered him and be both a father and a brother to the children he begot. This unimaginably horrifying knowledge leads Jocasta, both his mother and wife, to death. Shamed, guilt-ridden and in terror he blinds himself and goes into self-banishment from the kingdom he ruled.

No less catastrophic is the story of Antigone, the daughter of King Oedipus. After Cedipus's banishment, Antigone's uncle, Creon becomes the new ruler. But soon thereafter trouble brews in the kingdom
and in the ensuing battle, Antigone's brother, Polynices is killed. Since he had fought against the State, Creon passes an edict forbidding the burial of the traitor Polynices. Antigone, on her part is, however, determined to do her duty towards her dead brother. The intentions of both Antigone and Creon are good, but the demands made by them are incompatible with each other. The family (Antigone) claims what the State (Creon) refuses; honour requires what the law forbids. The forces at conflict (i.e. Antigone and Creon) are both in themselves rightful, and the claim of each is equally justified; but the right of each is pushed into a wrong because it ignores the right of the other, and demands that absolute sway which belongs to neither alone.

Creon is determined to do his duty as a King and carry out the law to the last word even if it means the death of a member of the family. For he says ---

"This girl's proud spirit
Was first in evidence when she broke the law;
And now, to add insult to her injury,
She gloats over her deed. But, as I live,
She shall not flout my orders with impunity.
My sister's child — ay, were she even nearer,
Nearest and dearest, she should not escape Full punishment --- ".
Antigone, on her part, is also determined to do her duty towards her dead brother, Polynices. She knew very well that the law forbade the burial of Polynices and also that the penalty had to be paid for disobeying the order. And yet she breaks the law. When Creon questions her as to whether she knew of the order forbidding such an act, she replies, " I knew it naturally. It was plain enough ". And when Creon asks, " And you dared to contravene it? ", she simply replies, " Yes ".

The end of the tragic conflict is the denial of both the exclusive claims.

One reason why the conflict arises lies in the nature of the principal characters themselves. It is the nature of the tragic hero at once his greatness and his doom, that he knows no shirking or half-heartedness, but identifies himself wholly with the power that moves him, and will admit the justification of no other power. However varied and rich his inner life and character may be, in the conflict it is all concentrated in one point. Creon is determined to do his duty as a King. No less resolute is Antigone to do her duty as a sister towards her dead brother. Similar is the case with King Oedipus. They all behave in a manner that contributes to
their own downfall.

Aristotle's views on tragedy were, however, brought into better focus by Shakespeare. In Shakespeare, as with the ancient Greeks, tragedy is concerned always with persons of 'high degree'; often with Kings or Princes; if not, with leaders in the State like Coriolanus, Brutus, Antony; at the least, as in Romeo and Juliet, with members of great houses whose quarrels are of public moment. Even Othello is no mere private person; he is the General of the Republic. A man of standing was chosen because, the story of the Prince, the triumvir, or the General, has a greatness and dignity of its own. His fate affects the welfare of a whole nation or empire; and when he falls suddenly from the height of earthly greatness to the dust, his fall produces a sense of contrast, of the powerlessness of man, and of the omnipotence - perhaps the caprice - of Fortune or Fate, which no tale of private life can possibly rival.

Another characteristic conspicuous in Shakespeare is "Hamartia" or the tragic flaw which refers to the error of judgement on the part of the protagonist.

3. Shakespearean Tragedy - A.C. Bradley; p 18
4. Ibid. p 19
A good example (incidentally, applicable to all of Shakespeare's tragic heroes) of hamartia is Othello. Hopelessly in love with his beautiful wife Desdemona, Othello falls a victim to his own unwarranted jealousy. The wicked Iago is easily able to mislead Othello into thinking that his wife is guilty of infidelity. Despite being a great General and an able administrator, Othello cannot suppress his inherent dormant jealousy. Iago's cruel insinuations find fertile ground in Othello's imagination, and it is only a matter of time before calamity strikes and the catastrophe occurs.

To the characteristics already mentioned, we can add yet another, namely the element of chance, or fate or accident. It was an act of fate that Romeo never got the Friar's message about the potion and that Juliet did not awake from her long sleep a minute sooner; it was fate again that Edgar arrived at the prison too late to save Cordelia's life and it was the same force at work yet again, that made Desdemona drop her handkerchief at the most fatal of moments. Now, these particular turns of events though not calculated, do occur and are a part of human life. Indeed, man may unwittingly be the cause of starting a chain of events which he can neither calculate nor comprehend nor control.
And that is a tragic fact, very ably put in the words of Jocasta, when she tells her husband King Oedipus, -

"Do not concern yourself about this matter; listen to me and learn that human beings have no part in the craft of prophecy." 5

Another philosopher, Schopenhauer, defined tragedy as a clash of 'wills'. 'Will' may be defined as "that which in self-consciousness and hence subjectively, is the intellect, presents itself in the consciousness of other things, and hence objectively, as the brain; and that which in self-consciousness, and hence subjectively, is the will, presents itself in the consciousness of other things, and hence objectively, as the entire organism". 6 According to Schopenhauer's theory, all energy is accumulated in a universal soul which he refers to as the Will. This universal soul being composed of energy feels the need every now and then to express itself and it does so assuming different and various forms, - "it concerns merely the individual which for a short time is my bearer, and which, like everything else, is my representation." 7 These forms were not

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5. Oedipus the King: p. 141; Lines 707-709


7. Ibid. p 18
separate entities but only a part or expression of the central universal soul. Conflict arose because these different forms of expressions of the universal soul tried or attempted to dominate or assert their separate wills against one another. The resultant conflict and consequent tragedy that is bound to occur, brings about a resolution to the conflict and the conflict now being resolved, the various wills which were at conflict now return to the central universal soul till such time when the entire process is repeated again. It is evident therefore that Schopenhauer is of the opinion that tragedy belongs to a vicious circle. The conflict occurs; it is resolved and re-occurs again, perhaps and more likely in different shapes or forms. From this premise we can safely venture to say that Oedipus, Othello, Romeo, Juliet, Frederick Henry, Robert Jordan and even the old fisherman Santiago are all personified expressions of the Will or universal soul. They all belong to the same core but assume different shapes and sizes. They also behave differently according to the needs of the situation and the parts they were pre-determined to play. This argument necessarily leads to the implication that life itself is pre-determined; in which case it would automatically follow that tragedy too is pre-determined. A likely question now would be that, if life and tragedy is
predetermined, why then does tragedy move us in the way it does? The answer is simple. Because it appeals to our deeper instincts and susceptibilities and continually reminds us and drives home to us the fact that encased in a frail shell of flesh and bone, man is essentially alone; doomed to a life where his only escape lies in death. Tragedy brings us face to face with the very questions of our existence. It also shows us that despite man's limitations, he does not surrender meekly but is spurred on to battle heroically against the forces threatening him and thus purge his soul. As Hemingway would have put it, - the idea was to go down in a blaze of glory.

Nietzsche, yet another German philosopher, has more or less similar views to propagate. But unlike Schopenhauer, Nietzsche defined tragedy as a conflict between the Apollonian and the Dionysian elements culminating in the victory of the former over the latter. But it is Nietzsche himself who says that it is the Dionysian element which is responsible for the birth of the Apollonian order, "out of the original Titanic divine order of terror, the Olympian divine order of joy gradually evolved through the Apollonian impulse toward beauty, just as roses burst from thorny bushes --- "

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thereby once again asserting what has already been suggested that, tragedy is inherent in the forces of life. Tragic emotions are aroused in us only because the principal characters, caught unawares in their terrible predicament, vainly struggle to escape their fate they have brought upon themselves by a flawed perception and an irresistible will. We sympathise with them in their lot and feel pity in their doom. But even in their fall they attract our admiration by their resolute and raw courage against the unbeatable odds. Their futile but valiant struggle hold us in awe because we too are but puppets in the scheme of the awesome unknown. And this is precisely what Hemingway attempts to bring to our notice in his novels, — man's commitment, love, raw courage against hostile odds, his defeat and fall and his ultimate moral victory.

No study of tragedy would be complete without taking a glance at Hegel, another German, and in all probability the greatest theoretician after Aristotle. " For to Hegel belongs the credit of demonstrating afresh that not the flower and fruit but the entire and living root of our philosophy is still the thought of Plato and Aristotle --- ".9 Hegel accepted the

9. An Introduction to Hegel — G.R.G. Mure
p ix ( Preface )
general Aristotelian principle of development. " He strove to close the chasm between the absolutely real and the relatively potential by recasting and absorbing within the absolutely real the whole succession of stages which in the Aristotelian system had led up to but failed to reach it; and he endeavoured in so doing to dominate the residue of contingency which Aristotle had abandoned as intractable.

For Hegel Aristotle's supreme achievement was his identification of fully substantial being with spirit ( Geist ), and his firmly grasped conception of spirit as in its essence activity; i.e., as that which has activity and is active, but as that which is activity."\textsuperscript{10}

We are already aware that a tragedy is a story of suffering; but Hegel maintains that mere suffering is not tragic but only that suffering which comes of a special kind of action. Pity for mere misfortune, like fear of it, is not tragic pity or fear. These are due to the spectacle of the conflict and its attendant suffering, which appeal not only to our sensibilities or our instincts of self-preservation, but also to our mind and spirit, which Hegel refers to as the " Geist ".

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid. pp 22,53.
Hegel argues that the reason why the tragic conflict thus appeals to the spirit is that it is itself a conflict of the spirit (one may note the similarity with Schopenhauer's theory). It is a conflict between powers that rule the world of man's will and constitute his "ethical substance".

The family and the State, the bond of parent and child, of brother and sister, of husband and wife, of citizen and ruler, or citizen and citizen, with the obligations and feelings appropriate to these bonds; and again the powers of personal love and honour, or of devotion to a great cause or an ideal interest like religion or science or some kind of social welfare, such are the forces exhibited in tragic action; not indeed alone, not without other less affirmative and perhaps even evil forces but always in compulsive ascendance. And they form the substance of man, are common to all civilised men, and are acknowledged as powers rightfully claiming human allegiance; their exhibition in tragedy has that interest, at once deep and universal, which is essential to a great work of art.

In many a work of art, in many a statue, picture, tale or song, such powers are shown in solitary peace
or harmonious co-operation. Tragedy shows them in collision. Their nature is divine, and in religion they appear as gods; but, as seen in the world of tragic action, they have left the repose of Olympus, have entered into human wills and now meet as foes. And this spectacle, if sublime, is also terrible. The essentially tragic fact is the self-division and intestinal warfare of the ethical substance; not so much the war of good with evil as the war of good with good (Antigone and Creon in Antigone). Two of these isolated powers face each other, making incompatible demands. The family claims what the State refuses (Antigone), individual love requires what the family forbids (Romeo and Juliet). The competing forces are both in themselves rightful, and so far the claim of each is equally justified; but the right of each is pushed into a wrong. (Here one may consider the case of Santiago. Santiago was wrong in venturing too far out into the sea. On the other hand, the sharks did wrong to have robbed the old man of his victory.) because it ignores the right of the other, and demands that absolute sway which belongs to neither alone but to the whole of which each is but a part.
And one reason why this happens lies in the nature of the characters through whom these claims are made. It is the nature of the tragic hero, at once his greatness and his doom, that he knows no shirking or half-heartedness but identifies himself wholly with the power that drives him and will not admit the justification of any other power. However varied and rich his inner life and character may be, in the conflict it is all concentrated at one point. Antigone is determined to do her duty towards her dead brother, and so is Creon to do his duty to the State; Romeo is not only a son or a citizen but a lover, pure and simple, and his love is the whole of him. Robert Jordan, unlike Romeo, is first and foremost a loyalist then only a lover. Frederick Henry is first a lover, next a soldier. Even the old fisherman Santiago is not merely a fisherman but "El Campeón", the best in the field and determined to prove himself yet again not withstanding the fact that he had proved it many times before.

The end of the tragic conflict is the denial of both the exclusive claims. It is not the work of chance or blank fate; it is the act of the ethical substance itself, asserting its absoluteness against the excessive
pretensions of its particular powers. In that sense as proceeding from an absolute right which cancels claims based on right but pushed into a wrong, it may be called the act of 'eternal justice'. Sometimes it can end the conflict peacefully, and the tragedy closes with a solution. Appearing as a divine being, the spiritual unity reconciles by some adjustment the claims of the contending powers; or at its bidding one of them softens its demand, or again, as in the more beautiful solution of Oedipus at Colonus* the hero by his own self-condemnation and inward purification reconciles himself with the supreme justice, and is accepted by it. Sometimes, however, the quarrel is pushed to extremes; the denial of the one-sided claims involves the death of one or more of the persons concerned; and we have a catastrophe as in Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra and so on.

The ultimate power thus appears as a destructive force. Yet, even here, as Hegel insists, the end is not without an aspect of reconciliation. For that which is denied is not rightful powers with which the combatants have identified themselves. On the contrary, those powers, and with them the only thing for which
the combatants cared are affirmed. What is denied is the exclusive and therefore wrongful assertion of their right.

Having taken a look at some of the theories of tragedy of the early philosophers, we can now take a look at Hemingway's tragic insight. Ernest Hemingway had no intention either to show us or to preach to us what was right or wrong, but fairly in keeping with the tragic insights expounded earlier, what he does express through his novels is that right and wrong, good and evil, co-exist side by side both being an irrevocable factor of life. Frederick Henry in *A Farewell to Arms* deserts the army in order to be close to his beloved Catherine and even consummates his love for Catherine. That is the happy beginning of the story; but in the throes and convulsions of childbirth, both mother and child perish leaving him exactly where he was before --- alone. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan for the first time realises the power and meaning of love but his realisation comes too late---he dies. The old fisherman Santiago in *The Old Man And The Sea*, is victorious over his fish but even he too loses out to the predatory sharks. But the old man at least understands his fall and he does admit that "I should'nt
have gone so far, fish ". " Neither for you nor for me. I'm sorry fish ". " And again, " Half-fish, fish that you were, I am sorry that I went too far out. I ruined us both ". " Talking to himself he says, " You violated your luck when you went too far outside ". " But in the case of Robert Jordan and Frederick Henry, and especially Frederick Henry, they do not accept what has hit them and they remain confused, stunned and helpless.

Through his novels Hemingway brought his art to bear upon the menace he perceived in nature and upon the horrors of the war which he had personally experienced and which besides leaving an indelible scar were also fresh in his mind. Perhaps it was his way of explaining the unexplainable and unsavoury truth. Whatever might be the case, he certainly has succeeded in his portrayal of man's eternal struggle against the natural and man-made forces at work against him. It is true that his heroes succumb to the constant pressures they undergo but they succeed in retaining their pride and self-respect which for Hemingway is the hallmark of man and which he took special care to bring out again and again. As Laurence Lerner says " There is nothing reassuring in the new situation, no promise that a new chain of evil

11. The Old Man and The Sea - Ernest Hemingway
12. Ibid. p 104
13. Ibid. p 105
will not quickly ensue, no lesson that men or the Gods have learned. No message of hope for the future has been brought. The tragic situation, it is implied, is recurrent in human life: that is why we feel terror; because we have seen men like ourselves yet stronger than we could expect to be, we feel also pride."14

Hemingway's tragic vision however deviates in some respects from the vision of the earlier theorists of tragedy. The ancients deemed it proper that the hero must be a person of high rank or status. He should be a King, a General or a nobleman. At the least he should be a person of some public import. The reason why the ancients chose a person of social standing and status as a hero was that the society was conceived of in hierarchical terms and that the fate of the socially important person had a great bearing on the fate of the rest of the society. When misfortune strikes this man and he vainly tries to struggle against it, the sight is indeed awesome and spectacular. The conjecture is that if such be the fate of a noble man what possibly could be the fate of a lesser mortal? Terror for the man's predicament is aroused followed by pity and sympathy for the fallen hero.

14. Shakespeare's Tragedies; An Anthology of Modern Criticism; Edited by Laurence Lerner; Penguin Books. p 297
Like most of the modern writers of tragedy and in keeping with the changed ethos of the times, Ernest Hemingway did not feel that it was necessary that a man of standing was required to play the role of a tragic hero. Any ordinary person would also do, provided he could fit the role. What was of utmost importance and was so strenuously emphasized, was the action arising from the appalling situation. "We feel no desire to rejoice when the perpetrator of evil is brought to his doom, and at the same time we are aware that many characters in these plays are subjected to an evil for which they are in no way responsible. Nor is there in great tragedy the suggestion that these things will be put right in another world." If the action was sustained long enough, the appropriate feelings such as pity, fear and terror would automatically follow. A classic example of an ordinary man in the role of a hero could be Willy Loman the salesman, the hero of Arthur Miller's play Death of a Salesman. The hero here is an ordinary salesman, striving vainly to make both ends meet and put his life and family in order. But his various attempts are fruitless and he ends up as a failure. His failure is not a result of his untiring efforts but a result of

15. Ibid. p 290
something else altogether. He is up against a system which is devoid of feelings. Poor Willy Loman trapped in the quagmire of modern materialism and shunned by his worthless sons, is driven to the only possible escape - death. Like Arthur Miller's hero Willy Loman, Hemingway's heroes are quite ordinary men too. Frederick Henry is only a Lieutenant in the Italian Army. Robert Jordan is not even a soldier in the accepted sense. He too is an ordinary man brought into the stage of conflict only because of his interest in and commitment to a cause. The old man Santiago is what he is - an old man; a humble fisherman who strives to eke out a living. But their being 'ordinary' men does not in any way lessen the feeling of tragedy; for the tragedy that befalls each one of them is poignant and could have happened to any one of us. Their being 'ordinary', like any one of us is why we can readily identify ourselves with them and that is why perhaps we so readily and willingly feel drawn into their struggle and grieve at their defeat and downfall.

Hemingway certainly makes his mark as a tragic artist. The tragic pattern is set into motion with _A Farewell to Arms_, developed in _For Whom the Bell Tolls_ and finally brought to a close in his masterpiece, the
novelette, The Old Man And The Sea. That he succeeds so well, so easily, and seemingly so effortlessly in his task is because he personally underwent many of the emotions he expresses in his novels. Very early in life, when he was still in his teens, he saw action in Italy where he was wounded and hospitalised. The shock of being wounded brought to him the realisation of the brutality and ugliness and the horrors of war. During his recuperation in a hospital in Milan he fell in love with a pretty nurse, Agnes Von Kurowsky, the prototype of Catherine in A_Farewell_to_Arms. He also took part and actually fought in the Spanish war; and the locations he describes so vividly in For_Whom The_Bell_Tolls are real and they truly exist. His stories of bull-fighting are so realistic and authentic because he was in love with the sport and had had the privilege of watching and bearing witness to some of the greatest acts of courage in the arena. Renowned matadors such as Maera and Cordonaz were not only known to him but were his personal friends in whose company he spent endless hours discussing the sport.

Then again, as a correspondent in the Second World War he sometimes exceeded his duties. We are told that he was actually in command of a partisan
band of guerillas that led the allied advance into Paris. And once Paris was taken he even put up a command post in the 'Hotel Ritz', complete with maps, a stock of arms and ammunition and other paraphernalia of war. On many occasions he himself took active part and led the action in spite of the fact that his vocation did not permit him to do so. Hemingway himself claims to have gone enemy submarine hunting off the coast of Havana in his very own boat, "The Pilar", in Cuba.

A keen and talented sportsman and marksman, he collected many prized trophies in the dense jungles of Africa, quite often with only a spear in his hand. And as for fishing, that was what he was very adept at and loved most of all. He even had his own boat "The Pilar" for this favourite pastime. His novelette, The Old Man and The Sea is a direct expression of his experiences of fishing in the sea.

A proud man, he often settled arguments and disputes with his fists. But in spite of his bravado and tough exterior, he was actually a child at heart possessed with the knowledge of his own and man's limitations and of the mystery of his very existence in a world without hope. He knew that human life was fleeting and momentary
and without any permanence. That is why in his own humble way he tries to give to life a meaning and a pattern through his novels and the characters therein depicted. He was aware that being frail and with so many limitations, man was bound to lose the struggle for life. If not anything else, Time the eternal factor would defeat him; as Ruskin Bond so lucidly put it,

"It is'nt time that's passing by my friend, It is you and I."

With this realisation in mind he evolved a code of his own which he could follow and which would at least rectify or soften that terrible fate. Hemingway reasoned that if man is destined to go on a one way trip, he might as well make the most of it. The pitfalls of life, he argues, are to be faced and not avoided, for the knowing individual "could bring to consciousness what he is besides and beyond this, he would willingly give up his individuality, smile at the tenacity of his attachment thereto, and say:

'What does the loss of this individuality matter to me? For I carry within myself the possibility of innumerable individualities." 16

Like Atticus in To Kill A Mockingbird he, that is man, has to try to

16. The World As Will And Representation - Arthur Schopenhauer Translated from the German by J.F.J PAYNE. Vol. II p 491

To Kill A Mockingbird - Harper Lee
do his best even when he knows he is going to lose, because that is the quality expected in a courageous man and the only exercise that will give some sense and form to a life that is otherwise destined to end in nought.

One may argue that Hemingway's heroes willingly err and are rash in their endeavours. But in support of them one could argue that, they act in such a manner only because they are human. Hemingway tells the point that the frail human being is essentially alone. This is a truth of life, albeit a frightening and bitter truth. The souls of his heroes always wail for company and people like Frederick Henry and Robert Jordan do find momentary happiness in the company of Catherine and Maria before it is snatched away by providence. Even the old fisherman Santiago who is far more knowledgeable, competent, and composed than any of the earlier heroes, longs for the company of the young boy, Manolin, when alone at sea.

Like the existentialists, Hemingway too tried to come to that point of realisation when one becomes aware that everything is illusory except the fact of
the nothingness of one's being which the Buddhist faith refers to as "Nirvana". That is the bitter and unsavoury truth of life. One way or another our fate begins and ends in nothingness. Tragedy only happens to portray this truth of life in its purest form of expression.

Here one may recount the ancient story of King Midas. "King Midas hunted in the forest a long time for the wise Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, without capturing him. When Silenus at last fell into his hands, the king asked what was the best and most desirable of all things for man. Fixed and immovable, the demigod said not a word, till at last, urged by the king, he gave a shrill laugh and broke out into these words: 'Oh, wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and misery, why do you compel me to tell you what it would be most expedient for you not to hear? What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best for you is - to die soon.'

Against this stark pessimism Hemingway asserts his lusty faith in man, in his inner resources and a

17. Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary describes "Nirvana" as - the cessation of individual existence; the state to which a Buddhist aspires as the best attainable.


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steely will never to be overcome even in the face of the inevitable and inexorable.