



A Farewell to Arms

by Ernest Hemingway, 1929

WORK AND AUTHOR

A Farewell to Arms:

1. Published in 1929.
2. A novel of World War I.
3. Sold 80,000 copies in four months.
4. Parallels some of Hemingway's personal experiences.

Ernest Hemingway:

1. An American novelist, journalist, and short-story writer known for his simple and concise descriptions and dialogue.
2. Believed heroism was based on courage and action rather than thought or ideals.
3. A spokesman for what has been called "the lost generation."

THEME AND CONTENTS

1. Set during World War I, this work is an autobiographical story of Frederic Henry.
2. It focuses on:
 - War.
 - Death and dying.
 - Fear.
 - Love.
 - Desertion.
 - Depression.

MAIN CHARACTERS

1. Frederic Henry, an American in the Italian army who is in love with a British nurse.
2. Catherine Barkley, Henry's love and the heroine of the story. A nurse who cares for him.
3. Rinaldi, an Italian surgeon who is Henry's friend.
4. Miss Ferguson, a British nurse and a friend of Catherine's.

STORY

1. Henry returns to the front after leave in southern Italy.
2. Henry meets Catherine at a hospital unit.
3. Henry is injured by shrapnel in his legs and is sent to a Milan hospital where Catherine has been transferred.
4. A romantic affair occurs between Henry and Catherine. She becomes pregnant.
5. Henry returns to the front, where he loses his way driving an ambulance.
6. Henry is nearly executed as a deserter, but he escapes.

7. He finds Catherine.
8. He decides for him the war is over and deserts.
9. They row across Lake Geneva to freedom in Switzerland.
10. Catherine dies during childbirth.
11. The story ends with Henry a sad and broken man.

LASTING IMPACT

1. *A Farewell to Arms* is first and foremost an anti-war story.
2. Through Henry, Hemingway takes the fatalist's point of view that whether you are good or bad, brave or fearful, in the end you are killed.
3. Though Frederic survives, he experienced the death of his soul when Catherine dies. He has lost his beliefs and his optimism.
4. Finally, *A Farewell to Arms* makes the point that there is no way for man to prove himself in modern war, where all men are reduced to helpless targets. This war has no glorious, heroic, or idealistic traits.
5. The book was a popular success because of the interesting and human story it tells.