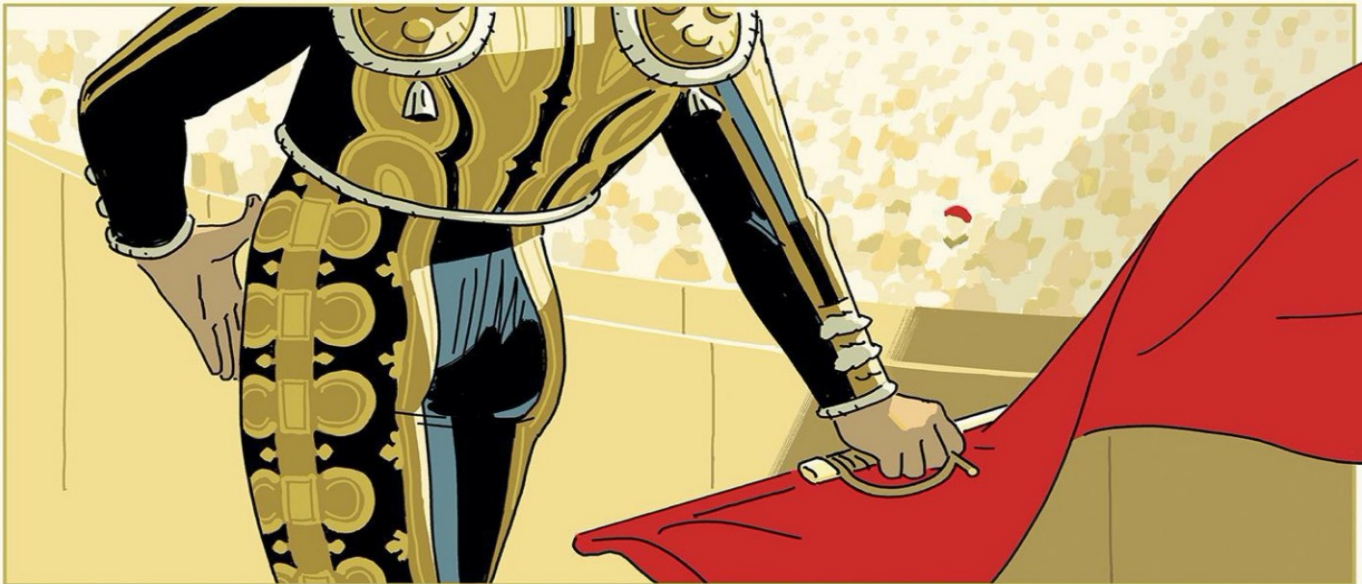




THE SUN ALSO RISES



ERNEST HEMINGWAY



Introduction by AMOR TOWLES

PENGUIN CLASSICS



DELUXE EDITION

THE SUN ALSO RISES

It's the early 1920s in Paris, and Jake, a wounded World War I veteran working as a journalist, is hopelessly in love with charismatic British socialite Lady Brett Ashley. Brett, however, settles for no one: an independent, liberated divorcée, all she wants out of life is a good time. When Jake, Brett, and a crew of their fellow expatriate friends travel to Spain to watch the bullfights, both passions and tensions rise. Amid the flash and revelry of the fiesta, each of the men vies to make Brett his own, until Brett's flirtation with a confident young bullfighter ignites jealousies that set their group alight.

An indelible portrait of what Gertrude Stein called the Lost Generation—the jaded, decadent youth who gave up trying to make sense of a senseless world in the disaffected postwar era—*The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway's beloved first novel, is a masterpiece of modernist literature and one of the finest examples of the distinctly spare prose that would become his legacy to American letters.



“It is a testament to Hemingway’s skill as a storyteller that nearly a hundred years after its publication *The Sun Also Rises* remains deeply satisfying. . . . Despite the passage of the decades, we continue . . . to be attracted to the company of these bon vivants.”

—Amor Towles, from the Introduction

“The ideal companion for troubled times: equal parts Continental escape and serious grappling with the question of what it means to be, and feel, lost . . . [The] themes he touches on—how to make sense of a time in crisis, how to find authenticity and meaning out of upheaval—are as pertinent as they’ve ever been.”

—*The Wall Street Journal*

“Hemingway’s first, and best, novel . . . A literary landmark that earns its reputation as a modern classic.”

—*The Guardian*

“An absorbing, beautifully and tenderly absurd, heartbreaking narrative . . . A truly gripping story, told in lean, hard, athletic prose.”

—*The New York Times*

PENGUIN CLASSICS  DELUXE EDITION

THE SUN ALSO RISES

ERNEST HEMINGWAY (1889–1961) was one of the most renowned and influential writers of the twentieth century. Born and raised in Illinois, he spent much of his life working as a newspaper reporter, an experience that helped shape the spare, journalistic writing style that would become his signature. He traveled widely throughout his life, living in Italy, France, Spain, and Cuba, and reporting from the frontlines of World War I, the Spanish Civil War, and World War II. After volunteering for the American Red Cross during World War I and getting injured in Italy, he moved to Paris, where he became part of the so-called Lost Generation of expatriate artists and writers that sprung up around American modernist Gertrude Stein. Much of his writing, including the novels *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, was inspired by his life and travels. In 1953, Hemingway received the Pulitzer Prize for *The Old Man and the Sea*; a year later he received the Nobel Prize in Literature.

AMOR TOWLES is the multimillion-copy bestselling author of *The Lincoln Highway*, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, and *Rules of Civility*. He graduated from Yale University and received an MA in English from Stanford University. Born and raised in the Boston area, he lives in Manhattan with his wife and two children.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The Sun Also Rises

Introduction by
AMOR TOWLES

PENGUIN BOOKS

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An imprint of Penguin Random House LLC

penguinrandomhouse.com

First published in the United States of America by Charles Scribner's Sons 1926

Published with an introduction by Amor Towles in Penguin Books 2022

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Hemingway, Ernest, 1899–1961, author. | Towles, Amor, writer of introduction.

Title: The sun also rises / Ernest Hemingway ; introduction by Amor Towles.

Description: New York : Penguin Classics, 2022. | Series: Penguin vitae |

Identifiers: LCCN 2021037337 (print) | LCCN 2021037338 (ebook) | ISBN 9780143136866 (hardcover) |

ISBN 9780143136774 (paperback) | ISBN 9780525508274 (ebook)

Classification: LCC PS3515.E37 S8 2022d (print) | LCC PS3515.E37 (ebook) | DDC 813/.52—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021037337>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021037338>

Art & Design by R. Kikuo Johnson

Adapted for ebook by Shayan Saalabi

pid_prh_6.0_138897311_c0_r0

This book is for HADLEY and for JOHN HADLEY NICANOR

“You are all a lost generation.”

—Gertrude Stein *in conversation*

“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever . . . The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose . . . The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. . . . All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.”

—*Ecclesiastes*

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Introduction

Nearly a hundred years after its publication, Ernest Hemingway's first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, invites a fresh reading. In part this is because the book was written before so many developments that could interfere with our approach to Hemingway's work. Hemingway began writing the novel on July 21, 1925, his twenty-sixth birthday. At the time, he was still married to the first of his four wives. By trade, he was still a foreign correspondent living in Paris. While his stories had appeared in journals and a small French edition, his first significant work—the collection of short stories called *In Our Time*—wouldn't be published for another few months. It was also before his trip to Africa to hunt big game. Before his face would adorn the cover of *Life* magazine—three separate times. So, *The Sun Also Rises* was written before Hemingway's fame, before his ultra-masculine persona was mythologized, and before his style was broadly praised, or imitated.

As twenty-first-century readers, most of us will bring a knowledge of these eventualities to the book. But it is important to understand that when Hemingway was writing this text, *he* had yet to be influenced by them. He had yet to experience the potentially compromising effects of fame, wealth, and recognition. In reading *The Sun Also Rises* we have the opportunity to set aside what we think we know about Hemingway as a man and writer, to set aside what we think we know about his style, to read the book as if it were newly released, and to be amply rewarded for doing so.

IN THE HERE AND NOW

Narrated by Jake Barnes, an American-born foreign correspondent living in Paris, the events of *The Sun Also Rises* are fairly straightforward. Opening in the late spring of 1925, the novel follows Jake and his social circle as they bandy about the Latin Quarter, meeting in bars, cafés, and dance halls, concluding and initiating sexual liaisons, while drinking well into the night. At the heart of the action are four expatriates who have come to know one another through Jake: a relatively new friend, Robert Cohn; an old friend, Bill Gorton; an ex-flame, Lady Brett Ashley; and her fiancé, Mike Campbell. With Jake leading the way, the five agree to meet in Pamplona at the beginning of July to see the bullfights during the festival of San Fermin. While they're in Spain, a variety of petty sins that have been simmering beneath the surface of their interactions will finally boil over to profound effect, as Brett, Cohn, and Jake each perform acts that cannot be forgiven, forgotten, or undone.

One of the enduring attractions of *The Sun Also Rises* is its intrinsic immediacy. The book's tone, structure, and style all add to a feeling while we read that we are witnessing events as they unfold. Hemingway achieves this effect through a variety of means, but first and foremost through the story's narrow temporal aperture. Taking place in June and July, the vast majority of the narrative is dedicated to describing the events of a few individual nights in Paris, a few days in the Spanish countryside, and a week in Pamplona. Given the novel's short duration, it isn't weighed down with the exposition required by a novelist to communicate the passage of time or to describe how the world and the characters are evolving from one year to the next.

Hemingway sharpens this focus by choosing to leave out almost all that has come before. With the exception of Cohn, whose personal history is described in the book's opening pages, there is almost no narrative background provided on Jake or the other central characters. What tidbits of their history we come to know—that Jake is impotent due to a war injury, that Brett has been married twice, that Bill is successful and Mike bankrupt

—we learn almost in passing. Similarly, the narrative provides us no glimpse of the future. While the events of the story are told in retrospect, *The Sun Also Rises* is not a novel in which the narrator looks back with perspective, nostalgia, or the wisdom of his years. The story is told in the immediate aftermath of events. The brief duration of the narrative and the absence of the past and future necessitate that we as readers join Hemingway's characters in the here and now.

The novel's immediacy is reinforced by Hemingway's deservedly famous declarative style. If we compare *The Sun Also Rises* to three important novels published in 1925—F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*—we find that Hemingway is using sentences that are half the length of his peers', averaging fewer than ten words versus about twenty. Generally speaking, Hemingway's sentences are shorter because they have fewer modifiers, qualifiers, and clauses. Which is to say, there is less mediation between what we are reading and what Jake is witnessing.

In addition, Hemingway is using dialogue to spur his story forward to a much greater extent than his peers. Adjusting for word count, incidents of speech occur in *The Sun Also Rises* with 50 percent more frequency than in *Gatsby*, three times more than in *American Tragedy*, and almost ten times more than in *Dalloway*. There are many conversational exchanges in the course of the book that run pages in length with only an occasional interruption by the narrator, usually to describe some physical action, like the refilling of glasses.

The delightful paradox of Hemingway's immediacy is that while we are more *present* in the action, we *know* less. Without the benefit of backgrounding, retrospective reflection, or narrative interruption, we have little context with which to consider or judge the characters. It's as if we are one more acquaintance of Jake's who, after a few cursory introductions, has been invited to pull up a chair in a crowded café. As the conversation rolls ahead, rife with indirection, insinuation, and innuendo, we must listen a little more carefully and watch a little more closely if we hope to identify

the personalities around the table, decode the subtext of their repartee, and make some sense of their motivations.

PARIS

Aside from a few brief stops, the majority of *The Sun Also Rises* occurs in three settings—Paris, Burguete, and Pamplona—each with its own tempo, tenor, and thematic emphasis. The Parisian section, in which we meet the characters, is defined by disconsolate glamor.

As we join Jake and his circle in the City of Lights, there is a definite allure to their lifestyle. Of the group, only Jake has a day job. Cohn, his girlfriend, Frances, and Bill are all writers in between books, as it were, while Brett and Mike are unemployed. What ties the characters have to family—or conventional morality, for that matter—are across the ocean and rarely mentioned. Untethered and unencumbered, they make the most of their liberty by spending countless hours in the bars, restaurants, and cafés of Paris, where they run into acquaintances, throw in with colorful strangers, engage in witty, erudite banter, flirt, and dance to the music of accordions and jazz bands. Hovering quietly in the background is a small army of mostly nameless waiters, bartenders, chauffeurs, and cab drivers who ease the way, serving food, pouring drinks, and delivering the characters from one stop to the next.

To put the cavorting in perspective, in a single night Jake makes eight stops at which he drinks nine kinds of alcohol. The evening begins in the café beneath his office, where he has whiskey and sodas with Cohn. Later, he has Pernod with a prostitute at the Café Napolitain. At Lavigne's restaurant the two share bottles of wine followed by liqueurs. Joining up with Jake's circle, they go to a dance hall, where Jake has a beer. Unsettled by Brett's arrival with a group of young men, Jake walks down the street to another bar, where he has another beer and a cognac alone. Returning to the dance hall he has a *fine a l'eau* with a stranger and another drink with Cohn. After he and Brett go to a pub for a drink together, they rejoin the

crew at the Café Select, where there is champagne. And finally, at some hour in the middle of the night, after Jake has fallen asleep, Brett shows up at his apartment for brandy and sodas.

Hemingway signals the glittering allure of the environs by providing us a comprehensive catalog of the light sources that brighten the Paris night. While Jake sits alone in the Café Napolitain, he watches “the electric signs come on, and the red and green stop-and-go traffic-signal.” Later that night, while with Brett in a taxi, Jake observes a “lighted square” and “the lighted bars”; then he sees Brett’s face by “the lights from the open shops” and “the light of acetylene flares” being used by workmen in the street. Some evenings later, as Jake walks through the city with Bill, they pause on a bridge over the Seine to admire a riverboat “all bright with lights” as well as “the lights of the big bridges.” Continuing on, they cross a square where “the arc-light shone through the leaves of the trees,” then walk past the “Ronde, past its lights and tables.” Given the lights, the music, the drinking, and the sexually charged interactions, Jake and his circle are clearly pursuing a life of enticing sensations. But just beneath the surface—and only just—is a pervading sense of unease.

One source of the unease is the relatively tenuous financial position of the characters. These are not the sort of wealthy Americans on grand European tours that we might encounter in the novels of Henry James or Edith Wharton. Nor are they impoverished. They are mostly Americans and Brits with comfortable backgrounds but limited incomes. Cohn relies on a monthly allowance from his mother; Brett, who is divorcing her way out of the aristocracy, has no assets of her own; and Mike is in the midst of bankruptcy proceedings. Collectively, they are waiting for wires, borrowing from friends, and relying on the generosity of wealthy acquaintances. While Jake is the one central character with a day job, we get the sense that he is making just enough to get by, as he is frequently tallying his expenses and negotiating prices over the course of the novel. Popping up several times in the narrative is the ill-shaven, misanthropic figure of Harvey Stone, an American who is so broke he has stopped eating and who now generally prefers to be alone. Stone’s ghostly reappearances serve as a reminder that

any number of the characters in the book are one misstep away from a similar state of dissolution.

A second source of the characters' unease springs from their overall lack of direction. Hemingway signals this from the beginning, with an epigraph quoting Gertrude Stein: "You are all a lost generation." Interpreters of Stein's phrase over the decades have routinely pointed to the First World War as the disorienting cataclysm that set this cohort adrift. But we do a disservice to Hemingway's work by pinning the malaise of his characters to a specific moment in history, for their problems are reasonably timeless. In fact, what the characters are going through in the novel looks a lot like what for the last half century we have called a midlife crisis—that disruptive state of anxiety that stems from a growing awareness of mortality and a dwindling sense of promise. The modern psychologists' index of symptoms of the midlife crisis—boredom, confusion, discontentment, self-doubt, sexual affairs, and alcohol abuse—reads like a checklist of the afflictions in Hemingway's book. Yes, the characters are mostly in their midthirties, but the average life expectancy of an American in 1925 was about sixty. Cohn, who is thirty-four, makes this point explicitly, saying to Jake that "in about thirty-five years more we'll be dead."

For better or worse, these characters have racked up the life experiences and formed the jaded perspectives that we more commonly associate with middle age than youth. Also thirty-four, Brett is on the verge of leaving her second marriage for a third. Cohn, having already left a wife and three children back in the States, has been stringing along the divorcee Frances with promises of marriage for three years before finally sending her packing with two hundred pounds sterling so he can pursue the affianced Brett. The night that the impotent Jake invites the prostitute to join him for dinner at the Napolitain, he regrets doing so almost immediately, removes her hand when she initiates sexual interaction, and eventually leaves money for her with a bartender. Suffice it to say that there are few romantic illusions about love in this circle.

The picture is not much rosier from the standpoint of careers. Mike is in bankruptcy because of a business failure. Cohn frittered away a small

fortune, which he received upon his father's death, on an ill-conceived publishing venture back in the States. Having then become a writer, he published a first book that seems to have fallen short of its promise, and he is struggling with what to write next. While Jake does have a job, it receives only a few paragraphs of attention in the novel. At the one press conference he attends, Jake imparts a certain pointlessness to his work: "Several people asked questions to hear themselves talk and there were a couple of questions asked by news service men who wanted to know the answers. There was no news." In terms of both love and career, Hemingway's characters are in the process of transitioning from the open-ended dreams of youth to the narrower realities of maturity.

Hemingway emphasizes the transitional position of his characters through the bridges that appear wherever the characters go. In the course of the novel, Jake crosses seven different bridges: two in Paris, two in Bayonne, one at the Spanish-French frontier, one in Burguete, and one in Pamplona. Figuratively speaking, Jake and his circle are all crossing into the shrinking territory of life's second half as the river of time flows relentlessly beneath their feet.

Given the pervading sense of unease among the characters in Paris, perhaps it is not surprising that their libertine interactions are tainted by an array of petty sins, including envy, jealousy, condescension, indifference, and prejudice. Add to this mix the fact that a number of the central characters are functioning alcoholics, that all four men are attracted to the freewheeling Brett, and that they plan to spend a week together at a crowded festival where there is plenty of alcohol and little chance for sleep: What, as they say, could possibly go wrong?

BURGUETE

Before the central characters reconvene in Pamplona for the fiesta, Jake and Bill visit the town of Burguete in the Spanish countryside in order to fish on the Irati River. In his 1958 *Paris Review* interview, Hemingway recalls that

the novelist Nathan Asch, a reader of one of the early drafts of *The Sun Also Rises*, complained about the fishing trip, remarking to Hemingway that he had written a travel book, not a novel. In the end Hemingway kept the section, and we should be glad he did. For it is during this retreat that Jake as protagonist and we as readers gain a renewed sense of perspective.

To Asch's point, this part of the narrative does recall a travel guide in many respects. In it, Jake gives us a detailed account of his journey from Paris to Burguete, including descriptions of the tourists he and Bill meet on the train to Spain and the locals they meet on the bus to the countryside; he describes the quality of the hotel rooms and the food they eat; he gives a meticulous accounting of expenses. While in many novels this information would seem superfluous, in the context of Jake's story it complements the other elements of immediacy. We are with Jake on this journey, recognizing all the little unavoidable practicalities of travel. But the concreteness of these details also provides us with a new sense of grounding.

Having traveled by train and bus to Burguete, Jake and Bill have to hike half a day into the country in order to reach the river they intend to fish. On the way, they cross a meadow, follow a path through rolling fields into an ancient wood, traverse hills, and enter another wood while exchanging few words. Suddenly, all of the frenetic activity of Paris is forgotten. There are no acquaintances to run into, no music or lights, no jealousy or envy or desire.

When the two finally reach the river, they separate in order to fish alone. "I do not know anything that can give a person more enjoyment through life," Hemingway says of fishing in a letter he wrote to his father in August 1925 while hard at work on *The Sun Also Rises*. Jake clearly shares Hemingway's love of the sport. After fishing, Bill and Jake have a picnic lunch of hardboiled eggs, cold chicken, and a local wine chilled in the river. Afterward, they nap on the ground. This interlude is the moral center of the novel, providing Jake, Bill, and us a reminder of the deep satisfaction that can be had from natural beauty, silence, a simple meal, and the companionship of an old friend. All of which only makes what is to follow seem that much more tragic.

PAMPLONA

If the trip to Burguete provides Jake (and the reader) some relief from the antagonisms, desires, and disconsolations evidenced in Paris, Pamplona does the opposite: It amplifies them. The festival of San Fermin is a fiesta characterized by abandon. Crowds from throughout the region descend upon the small city. Fireworks and rockets punctuate the parades, dancing, and reveling. At the center of the festivities is a series of bullfights that begin each day with the running of the bulls, in which hundreds of men risk life and limb by dashing through the town with the bulls charging behind them. Because the running is early in the morning and the festivities last well into night, no one is getting much sleep and everyone is drinking prodigiously—for seven days in a row. During the festival of San Fermin, as Jake observes, “everything became quite unreal finally and it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences.” So, whatever malignancies, whatever uglier instincts were tempered while back in Paris—whether from inhibition, convention, or self-denial—are bound to find open expression in Pamplona.

Of the novel’s nineteen chapters, six begin at the start of a day with a similar opening sentence, and five of those chapters occur in Spain:

“In the morning I walked down the Boulevard . . .” (chap. 5)

“In the morning it was bright, and they were sprinkling the streets . . .”
(chap. 10)

“When I woke in the morning I went to the window and looked out.”
(chap. 12)

“One morning I went down to breakfast . . .” (chap. 13)

“In the morning it was raining.” (chap. 16)

“In the morning it was all over.” (chap. 19)

To some degree the recurrence of this “in the morning” phrasing to launch chapters reflects the journal-like style of the novel’s narration. We can easily imagine Jake sitting down shortly after these events in order to record what happened day by day. The repetition also harkens back to the passage

from Ecclesiastes that serves as both one of the novel's epigraphs and the source of its title:

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever . . . The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose . . . The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. . . . All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

This passage describes not only the eternal cycles of the elements, but also those of humanity. Just as the sun sets and rises every day, when one generation passes, another generation takes its place. In the context of the Old Testament, this is meant to be humbling. It is a reminder that within the scope of eternity, our lives are but the passage of a day, of no longer duration and of no greater import.

But in the context of *The Sun Also Rises* and its escalating series of events, there is something profoundly disconcerting about the “in the morning” repetition. For while morning is a universal metaphor for new beginnings, in this novel the characters are waking every day to repeat the same failed behaviors in a cycle that more closely resembles damnation. In classical mythology, damnation was often depicted as eternal repetition. Sisyphus rolls his boulder up the same hill over and over, just as Tantalus reaches for his retreating fruit and water. Bound to a rock, Prometheus has his liver eaten out by an eagle only to have the organ regenerate overnight so the torture can be repeated on the following day. Back in Paris, Jake notes how hellish recurrence can be when he observes at the end of a cavorting night with Brett and the others: “I had the feeling as in a nightmare of it all being something repeated, something I had been through and that now I must go through again.”

In the tradition of classical damnation, each day of the San Fermin festival repeats itself, beginning with the running of the bulls, followed by

drinking in crowded cafés, then the bullfights, then revels into the night. In the midst of this cycle, the characters seem unable to constrain their worst instincts and begin repeating their ugliest behaviors, often in a self-destructive fashion. Cohn, who has been following Brett for weeks, hovers ever more closely, even though he knows that by doing so he is alienating himself from the group. Mike, who is naturally irked by Cohn's obsession with Brett, becomes increasingly confrontational (and repetitive). "Don't you know you're not wanted?" he says to Cohn after the festival begins. "I know when I'm not wanted. Why don't you know when you're not wanted? You came down to San Sebastian where you weren't wanted, and followed Brett around like a bloody steer." A few nights later, Mike is back at it, saying to Cohn, "I do know when I'm not wanted. Why don't you see when you're not wanted?" At the same time, the latent anti-Semitism of Jake's circle toward Cohn expresses itself with increasing frequency and volume. In the first half of the novel, Cohn's Jewish heritage is mentioned a few times by Jake in the course of narration, mostly in the opening pages. But once the ensemble arrives in Spain, Cohn's heritage is pinpointed by Brett, Mike, and Bill in nine different conversations and always in a derogatory sense. Initially, this occurs between characters in Cohn's absence, but eventually to Cohn directly.

Brett, who has already cheated on Mike with Cohn before coming to Pamplona, can't resist another sexual conquest—setting her sights on the promising young matador, Romero. When Brett asks Jake to help her in this effort and he tries to dissuade her, she explains herself (repetitively): "I can't help it. I'm a goner. . . . I can't help it. I've never been able to help anything. . . . How can I stop it? I can't stop things. . . . I can't help it. I'm a goner now, anyway." Sure enough, having already introduced Brett to Cohn, Jake now introduces her to Romero even though he knows that to do so can only have terrible repercussions for everyone, including himself.

THE TERRAIN OF THE BULL

One of the central paradoxes of *The Sun Also Rises* is that as the characters become increasingly open about their ugliest impulses, they are actually drawing closer to Jake's moral ideal: authenticity.

Jake reveals his reverence for authenticity most explicitly through his discussion of bullfighting. "In bull-fighting they speak of the terrain of the bull and the terrain of the bull-fighter," he tells us. "As long as a bull-fighter stays in his own terrain he is comparatively safe. Each time he enters into the terrain of the bull he is in great danger. Belmonte, in his best days, worked always in the terrain of the bull. This way he gave the sensation of coming tragedy." For Jake (and Hemingway), this is the heart of authenticity. To step out of the safety of one's own terrain into the terrain of the bull. To put oneself in mortal danger as one seeks to control a force of nature with courage and grace. Jake describes for us a generation of bullfighters who learned tricks to make it seem they were in the terrain of the bull, even when they weren't. These bullfighters "twisted themselves like corkscrews, their elbows raised, and leaned against the flanks of the bull after his horns had passed, to give a faked look of danger. Afterward, all that was faked turned bad and gave an unpleasant feeling." Standing apart from this group, however, is the young matador Romero. "Romero's bull-fighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his movements and always quietly and calmly let the horns pass him close." With Romero, "there were no tricks and no mystifications."

While the behavior of the characters is becoming increasingly reprehensible during the fiesta, at least it has moved into the terrain of the bull. Gone are the flirtations, innuendos, and insinuations, those corkscrew-like twistings that give the imitation of danger and leave behind an unpleasant feeling.

Nowhere is this late surge in authenticity more apparent than in Cohn's explosion of physical violence. In the very first sentence of the novel, Jake tells us that Cohn "was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton." But almost as soon as he tells us this, he begins undercutting the

accomplishment, ultimately concluding the paragraph: “I never met any one of his class who remembered him. They did not even remember that he was middleweight boxing champion.” Throughout the novel as Cohn is taunted, dismissed, and condescended to by Jake and the others, just beneath the surface, forgotten by all, remains the reality of his combative expertise. As the festival draws to a close and the ill will in the group crescendos, the beleaguered Cohn finally abandons the vocabulary of wit, innuendo, and indirection in order to communicate in the most direct fashion possible—by beating up not only Jake and Bill, but Romero too, all in a single night, knocking Romero down “about fifteen times.” It’s as if Hemingway is rewriting E. M. Forster’s famous maxim “Only connect . . .” but where *connect* is to be taken in the pugilistic sense: to land an effective punch.

When Jake observes that during the fiesta “it seemed as though nothing could have any consequences,” the critical word is *seemed*. For while the abandon of the festival unleashes the uglier behaviors of the characters, it most certainly is going to have consequences. But in a manner consistent with the overall immediacy of his novel, Hemingway does not investigate or articulate the ways in which the festival may have changed the characters’ lives. Rather, he leaves us in the position of acquaintances who, having witnessed all that has unfolded, must imagine the repercussions for ourselves.

* * * * *

In a letter to his mother a few months after the publication of *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway explains that his characters were based on some friends and acquaintances who “were certainly burned out, hollow and smashed—and that is the way I have attempted to show them.” To F. Scott Fitzgerald he writes more simply nine months earlier that in his book “the only instruction is how people go to hell.” It is a testament to Hemingway’s skill as a storyteller that nearly a hundred years after its publication *The Sun Also*

Rises remains deeply satisfying despite essentially being a novel of unpleasant people behaving unpleasantly.

The immediacy of the novel is one of the central reasons for its durability. By focusing his narrative on an acutely observed moment in time unburdened by the baggage of the past or the moralizing of the future, by stripping his prose of qualifications, interruptions, and unnecessary verbiage, by allowing the flaws of his characters to be on unvarnished display, Hemingway ensures that we are fully present in the tale. Despite the passage of the decades, we continue as readers to be lured into the mystique of Paris, to be attracted to the company of these bon vivants upon first meeting, and to be disillusioned as we grow to know them better. We continue to feel the sense of reprieve when we travel into the countryside to fish, and the sense of dread when we arrive in Pamplona with no choice but to finally enter the terrain of the bull.

AMOR TOWLES