Farewell To Arms Essay, Research Paper

Farewell to Arms

Ernest Hemingway?s ?A Farewell to Arms? holds the secret of a man (the author) who experiences many things and then changes them for in his writings. The main character of the novel, Frederic, experiences many of the same situations that Hemingway lived. He captures the inspiring trials and tribulations of a disillusioned man caught between love and war. Driving an ambulance on the Italian front of World War One, Frederick discovers his values as he realizes his love for Catherine, an English Nurse also enlisted in the war effort. An American Lieutenant as an Italian Ambulance driver, Frederick is shown to be an average man in search of a set of his self. Initially, Frederick is lonely, lustful, and confused, but as he becomes involved with Catherine he finds how he feels, and a meaning to his life.

Frederick can be considered heroic in the fact that he is honorable, not interested in material commodities, and puts his fellow soldier before himself. ?I?d rather wait. There are much worse wounded than me. I?m all right.? (P58) When the entire cafeteria makes fun of the priest, Frederick defends him and becomes his only true friend in the army. Also, when he is offered an award for what he did after he was injured, Frederick refuses the opportunity. Additionally, when he and the other drivers were hit with a trench mortar, he ignores his own injuries to assist the others and insist that the doctors treat others before him self. Catherine is a young English nurse who has already lost one fianc? to the war. She begins her relationship with Frederick pretending that he is her lost fianc? who has returned to her, but soon falls in love with him for his own personality. Throughout the story Catherine represents the ideal Hemingway character that Frederick is to become as the novel ends. The basic story of the book focuses around Frederick?s relationship with Catherine. The whole book is basically just a love story during wartime.

Frederick experiences the war in the Italian Alps Mountains and has a leg injury that keeps him hospitalized him for quite a few months. Even though he knew Catherine before he was hospitalized, their relationship blossoms during this period while he is away from the front of the war. They spend a lot of time together in the town, but mostly in his hospital room. Soon after he returns back to the front or the fighting, there is a huge retreat and he takes his ambulance crew on a back road to get away from traffic. A lot happens on that back road. He is forced to show his rank and keep some authority over his troops when two mechanics try to run away. He shoots one to death and the other gets away. When he finally does make it back to the army, he is forced to desert in fear of execution. The Italian army needed a scapegoat so they decided that the officers were the obvious ones to blame. He finds Catherine and they flee to Switzerland to begin a new life together. One the trip to Switzerland, they run across some trouble as they are jailed until the Swiss government sees that they have money. Ultimately, Frederick learns his basic values through Catherine in their adventures of love, war, and death during World War One.

The theme shown is that love can come from even the strangest places. There is a basic good versus evil shown by the terrible tragedy at the end of the book. Some say that there was foreshadowing, but in my eyes there was no early showing that Catherine would die. A Farewell to Arms is a very emotional and understanding story for some. Throughout the book Frederick acted as a confused hero with Catherine as his ?moral guide?. Frederick is very realistic since he is based after a real man and his adventures, but he still has several character flaws. Catherine on the other hand is entirely too perfect for a real woman to be. She seems almost fake in her love for Frederick, like an angel at times. Initially when she is a little unsure of Frederick?s motives, her character was more realistic.

During the book, Frederick is shown to mature an enormous amount. He goes from just wanting Catherine cause she is a beautiful woman to actually loving her and caring about her. Maturity is important because, as usual, the women are shown to be matured in the book. The men seem to still be like small children who go on impulse and sexual drive alone. Another theme that carried the book was love. The love that Frederick had for Catherine made the ending that much more unbelievable. In most books there is not the death of a main character. Most books would lose a lot of depth if they were to kill off a main character. For A Farewell to Arms to lose Catherine as far into the book as it did, you could tell that the story must be almost over. There could not be much more to the plot if it would of kept on going. These two themes are present in our daily life. In school you can see the freshman boys progress into the same state as the seniors. You see people who are in love and have tragic endings to their relationships (not generally so drastic though). Every theme has a meaning and every meaning has a message. To some you can interpret the maturing of Fredrick as the maturing of the author, but then to some others, it could just mean that Fredrick was maturing as all people do.

While each character had their own very important role, each also had their own reflection in the real world. Each character had a part that would parallel the real world that we live in; this style of writing helps us get a grip on it as a reality. The story is written in the first person narrative, where Frederick is the narrator and sometimes refers to future events. All in all, A Farewell to Arms was a good book that while not always an adventure kept me interested and surprised me at the end.