

CHAPTER - III

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Ernest Hemingway's For Whom the Bell Tolls is one of the most popular novels of the twentieth century. The novel was published in 1940. The Spanish Civil War becomes a great source for 'For Whom the Bell Tolls'. Hemingway used nearly his twenty years experience of Spain to write the novel. He witnessed the suffering of his friends in the Spanish Civil War and he had observed the death and the destruction of them which provided the main theme of the novel.

Robert Jordan has been charged with the mission of blowing up a bridge in order to prevent fascist troops being brought up to meet a Republican attack. Golz, the Russian general briefed Jordan the importance of the timing in the operation. Jordan is aware of the difficulties and importance of his mission. Jordan is asked to take the help of a guerrilla band, who are living in a cave on the mountain side above the valley. Pablo, the leader of the band is selfish. He is interested in the saving of his own skin and of his horses that the saving of the

'Republic' Pablo's woman, Pilar, supports Jordan, in his mission against Pablo's wish.

Rest of the members of the band siding with Pilar, help Robert. Pilar takes Robert to another guerrilla leader El Sordo. He promises Jordan to help him in his mission with his four trustworthy men. Anselmo returns from the town with the news that General Golz's plan of attack and fascist's counter attack are common talk in cafe gossips. Jordan sends a runner through the lines to warn Golz to call off the attack, if possible. In the meantime, Robert executes the plan.

Next night Palbo disappears, taking Jordan's detonator with him. In the morning he returns with confession. He declares his help in Jordan's mission.

The runner fails to reach Golz's headquarter in time to cancel the operation. When they hear the signal of the loyalist bomber attack, Jordan and Palbo's band destroy the bridge and the guard post. And as they cross the road to climb the pass, Jordan is wounded. The novel closes with him lying, as it begins, in the pine wood, covering the escape of the guerrillas with his sub-machine gun in the last minutes of his life.

The novel has a sub-plot. In Pablo's camp, there is girl Maria. Her parents were shot and she was repeatedly raped by the falangists. She was rescued by Pablo's guerrilla band. Robert and Maria fall in love at first sight. Jordan and Maria find immediate and complete perfection in the fulfilment of their love for each other during three days and nights.

Robert Jordan, the hero of For Whom the Bell Tolls, is an American volunteer. His father and grand father is the 'Republic'. His father committed suicide by shooting himself. It disturbed the sensitive mind of Robert. Robert's desire to struggle with problems courageously depicts his hatred for his father's coward behavior. He respects his grandfather's heroic nature. Robert worked as the Spanish language instructor in the university. He visited Spain to study the Spanish language for the proficiency in it

'I came first twelve years ago to study the country and the language', Robert Jordan said, 'I teach Spanish in a University.'¹ It seems that Robert takes efforts for the perfection.

To participate in the Spanish Civil War, Robert has given up his well-settled job. For the love of liberty of the Spanish people,

he joins the Spanish Civil War. Robert is assigned an important mission. He is asked to blow up the bridge. Robert is very sincere. Jordan is aware of the importance of the help of the guerrilla band. Jordan develops and builds rapport with the members of the guerrilla band. He takes utmost care for the success of his plan. His distribution of the copy of the plan to the members of the group reveals his views on action to be taken in the critical situation. He says to Agustin and Anselmo about the plan.

'I thought we should carry a little mustard them all, I carry our papers. In my right pocket, I kept the fascist papers. Thus one does not make a mistake in an emergency.'

Robert keeps detonators with him. Robert is honest in his work. He obeys orders, issued by seniors. Jordan wants to call off the attack because fascist knows about it. Jordan prefers to wait for orders than to cancel it.

Robert knows that his mission is very risky, but he is not afraid of the tragic end of it. He wants to live life. Instead of living under tension, he desires to struggle and face it. He does not care for life span. His relation with Maria gives new approaches of life to him. He thinks, 'But Maria has been good. Has she not?'

Oh, has she not? He thought, 'May be that is what I am to get now from life. 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.'³

Robert doesn't believe in the measurement of the life. He sets a goal before him. He prefers to die for his goal.

Robert participates in the civil war for the liberty of the Spanish people. But he is not interested in the war. Robert is basically a literary man. He wants to write a true book about Spain after the war is over. 'He would write a book when he got through with this. But only about the things he knew truly and about what he knew. But I will have to be a much better writer than I am now to handle them, he thought. The things he had come to know in this war were so simple.'⁴

Robert Jordan wants to write for his commitment of the society. When Jordan hears the story of peasant's massacre of the fascists in a certain village by Pilar, Jordan appreciates Pilar's technique of story-telling. He thinks, 'If that woman could only write he would try to write it and if he had luck and could

remember it perhaps he could get it as she told it. God, how could she tell a story. She is better than Quevedo, he thought. He never wrote the death of any Don Faustino as well as she told it. I wish I could write well enough to write that story, he thought what we did. Not what the others did to us. He knew enough about that. He knew plenty about that behind the line. But you had to have known the people before. You had to know what they had been in the village.⁵

Jordan thinks a lot. It indicates his inner conflict of mind and disturbance. Jordan always tries to control his feelings as a man and as an artist. Hearing about the extermination of El Sordo's band, he gets depressed. But he warns himself, 'Take it easy. He told himself. Don't get into rage... There isn't any need to deny everything. There has been just because you are going to lose it don't be like some damned snake with a broken back biting at itself; and your back isn't broken either, you hound.'⁶ Jordan's involvement with other individuals takes him close to the members of the guerrilla band.

He is associated with all the members of the group and is prepared for sacrifice for them. At the end of the novel, Robert Jordan puts himself aside and accepts the death for the group. Jordan acknowledges that he must face pain and suffering as well as death in order to make better life for others. He believes in goodness.

Jordan is able to control his feelings and skillfully works out plan, 'Listen, he told himself. You better cut this out this is very bad for you and for your work.'⁷

Jordan has his own ethics of the profession. He denies to kill anyone without weapon. He gives importance to duty than that of his personal feelings. Though Maria is with him, he is thinking for his mission. 'He was walking beside her but his mind was thinking of the problem of the bridge now and it was all clear and hard and sharp as when a camera lens is brought into focus.'⁸

As Earl Rovit says, "Maria is the vessel of Jordan's complete self-realization : in his mergence with her, he has achieved the immortality of becoming 'other' of losing himself into something that is not himself."⁹ As Robert tells Maria in his final



good bye, "Thou art me now too. Thou art all. There will be of me." Maria instigates the desire of life in Robert. He doesn't believe in mortal life. Sacrificing his own life for others he becomes immortal. He wants to become a part of Nature. As he thinks, "Robert Jordan lay behind the trunk of a pine tree on the slope of the hill above the road and the bridge and watched it become daylight. He loved this hour of the day always and now he watched it : feeling it gray within him, as though he were a part of the slow lightening that comes before the rising of the sun. When solid things darken and the lights that have shone in the night go yellow and then fade as the day comes. The pine trees below him were hard and clear now. Their trunks solid and brown and the road was shiny with a wisp of mist over it. The dew had wet him and the forest floor was soft and fell the give of the brown, dropped, pine needles under his elbows."¹⁰ Robert always enjoys peace of mind in Nature. He observes every minute details of Nature and feels integrity with it.

When the novel opens, he begins to lose his memory connected with the war. Jordan is not a soldier by temperament. He is a lover of beauty. Like Anselmo, he does not want to kill

anybody either animal or man. Jordan wants to live life. Robert is a poet. He describes life as "living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg and a hill and valley and a stream with trees along it and the far side of the valley and the hills beyond."¹¹

Jordan is at the thresh-hold of the death. He is courageous as well as sensitive. Jordan tries to see beauty in everything.

Robert is an intelligent. He wants to learn the lessons of life from every one. Though he was an instructor of language in the university, he accepts his illiteracy.

He says to Maria, 'You taught me a lot, guapa'.

He said in English.

'What did you say?'

'I have learned much from thee.'

Que'va she said, it is thou, who are educated. 'Educated?' he thought, 'I have the very smallest beginnings. If I die on this day, it is waste, it is a waste because I know few things now I

wonder if you only learn them from now, because you are over sensitized, because of the shortness of the time.¹²

Robert has developed relations with all the members of the guerrilla band. His feeling for Anselmo, Agustín and María makes him strong. Robert's passion for the hills and the members of the guerrilla band develops temptation of the life in him. He thinks, 'I have been all my life in these hills since I have here. Anselmo is my oldest friend. Agustín is brother. María is my true love and my wife. She is my sister, my daughter and I never will have a daughter. I hate to leave a thing that is so good.'¹³ Robert falls in love with life. Robert is a man of action. He always thinks about his plan and its success.

Robert is introspective. Robert tries to search out the depth of his love for María, his future life with her and about his plan. He is not afraid of death. As Malcolm Cowley mentions in his review of Hemingway, 'for the first time Hemingway's male protagonist is a fully developed hero.'¹⁴ He is able to lead his group towards success. Successfully, he blows up the bridge. Robert's sincerity, techniques of the work, his love for humanity, his faith in others are the qualities which help him to complete his

mission. Temperamentally, he has accepted the soldier's life against of his wish. 'Well, I don't want to a soldier, he thought. I know that. So that's out'.¹⁵

Robert's love story with Maria reveals the true nature of the hero. Robert is attracted towards Maria at first sight. Maria evokes desire of life in Robert. His desire to stay with Maria peacefully is like a dream. Robert finds himself into the grip of his adopted ideology. He becomes only an instrument to do his duty. Pilar comments on him, 'Thou art very religious about thy politics', He takes it seriously and does not laugh. Later she asks him if he has fear in life, his reply is : 'Only of not doing my duty as I should'.

'You are a very cold boy'.

'No', he said 'I do not think so'.

'No', In the head you are very cold'

'It is that I am very preoccupied with my work'.

'But you do not like the things of life?'

'Yes. Very much. But not to interfere with my work.'

'You like to drink. I know. I have seen'.

'Yes. Very much. But not to interfere with my work.'

'and women?'

'I like them very much, but I have not given them much importance.'¹⁶ Robert enjoys drink and women but he has not given priorities to them. Work is always important to him. This ideology remains with him till the end of his life. But his belief in work seems to be shattered. He wants peace of mind. Maria makes him see this clearly. His love for Maria is different from his early experiences of love. "So far she had not affected his resolution but he would much prefer not to die. He would abandon a hero's or a martyr's end gladly. He did not want to make a Thermopylae, nor be Horatius at any bridge, nor be the Dutch boy with his finger in that dyke. He would like to spend some time with Maria. That was the simplest expression of it. He would like to spend a long, long time with her."¹⁷ Robert's determination for duty is shaken. It makes him pensive. He thinks a lot about the complete involvement with Maria Carlos Baker rightly says, 'Robert has been well trained in his work, but he has not been trained for involvement.'¹⁸



At the end of the novel, Robert pleads Maria to return alone. He finds perfection in his love with Maria. His caring, loving attitude makes Maria to go away from him. He doesn't want to spoil the life of Maria.

'Nay, rabbit listen. That people cannot do together. Each one must do it alone. But if thou go, then I go with thee. It is in that way that I go too. Thou wilt go now for us both'. He said, 'You must not be selfish, rabbit. You must do your duty now.'¹⁹

At the bed of death also, Jordon thinks of 'duty'. Robert is the physically wounded hero. In the novel, Hemingway draws Robert as a soldier and as a lover. He is honest in his both robes Robert, initially, wants to remain as a lover. But his love for Maria is his personal matter. His love for liberty and humanity is greater from his personal feelings. Robert is able to overcome of his emotion. He is spiritually very strong. Jordon is mature. He is ready to die for others. He insists that, "that is what human being must do - work for good."

Pilar, a woman of Pablo, is very dominant. She is aged, ugly, superstitious and strict but sensitive and intuitive woman.

She is a devotee of 'Republic', Pablo's denial to assist Robert's mission hurts Pilar. She stands against him and declares herself as the leader of the band. Without her help, Jordan would not have been succeeded in blowing up the bridge. Pilar takes Robert to another guerrilla leader El Sordo. He makes available five faithful men and horses to Robert.

Pilar helps Jordan in his love for Maria. Pilar notices the attraction between them. She brings them together. She sends Maria in his sleeping bag and guides Maria how to be a good woman and how to take care of a man. Pilar had been sorry at what the girl had gone through at the hands of the fascist. Pilar had protected Maria from the men of her own group. But she offers Maria to Jordan as a beloved. Pilar seems to help Jordan to identify his own personality which he has forgotten.

Pilar is sad because she is ugly and not young. She sometimes hates Maria for her age and beauty. She confesses in sad mood. 'Life is very curious I would have made a good man, but I am all woman and all ugly. Yet many men have loved me and I have loved many men.'²⁰ Because of her age, she feels

powerless and unwanted. She recalls the memory of her love story with Pablo.

Pilar is an ignorant peasant woman. She is plain and accepts her envy feeling against Maria. She tells, 'I am jealous and say it and it is there and I say it.'²¹ Pilar accepts her weakness. Whenever she behaves rudely with Maria, she apologizes to her. Like a learned woman, she expresses her views on 'reality' and illusion which is strange. Looking at the mountain peaks, she speaks.

"What rotten stuff is the snow and how beautiful it looks", Pilar said, 'what an illusion is the snow.'²² Pilar learns many things from Nature. She has knowledge of weather. Her association with Nature taught her many lessons of life.

Pilar is confused. She is emotionally disturbed. She is inferior to Maria. Perhaps her attraction for Robert is a cause for her irritation. She hates Pablo for his coward nature. She undergoes psychological changes.

Pilar has knowledge of palmistry. She could read Robert's hand. But she doesn't disclose, what she has read in Robert's

hand. Robert is impressed by Pilar's personality. Her strictness, her kindness, her nursing attitude and her hospitality attract him 'Look at the Pilar woman, he thought, 'Look at her walking with those two kids. You could not get three better looking product of Spain than those. She is like a mountain, and the boy and the girl are like young trees.'²³ Robert compares Pilar with a mountain. At the end of the novel Robert informs about his injury, Immediately Pilar decides to help him.

Robert said, sweating heavily, 'The left leg is broken, guapa'.

'We will bind it up', Pilar said, 'Thou canst ride that', she pointed to one of the horses that was packed'. Cut off the load.²⁴

Pilar, in this novel, performs various roles. She is a beloved of Sordo, wife of Pablo, a leader of guerrilla band, guide and well-wisher of Robert and companion of Maria. Pilar has womanly affection and love for the Republic. By sketching the character of Pilar, Hemingway probably draw the character from peasant community. She is representing the guerrilla group and illiterate, rough women. Her participation in the republic is as

important as Jordan's participation. Because of her age she irritates, but it remains temporary. Pilar is the middle aged woman who has maintained discipline and homely atmosphere in the cave. She is criticized by the members of the group for her harsh language and rough behavior but members of the band respect her also. Her caring attitudes towards Maria reveal her motherly affection. Pilar is very strong and honest.

Maria, the beloved of Robert Jordan was the daughter of the public Mayor. Her parents were murdered. Her head was shaven. She had been raped by the falongists. She has thin and attractive body. Robert is attracted towards Maria at first sight.

Maria is a simple and innocent girl. She is able to evoke desire of life in Robert Jordan, who has undertaken a risky job in which his life was on the stake. Maria becomes symbolic to Jordan's self realization of the universal rightness of the cause for which Jordan is offering his life. Robert wants to marry and live with Maria. Maria may be compared to the good aspect of the Queen Goddess of the world whom the hero joins in mystical

marriage. Maria , for Robert is mother, sister, bride and daughter as well as teacher.

Maria is submissive. She is disturbed. She performs the assigned duties. Maria's role in the novel is rather passive. Her personality is eclipsed by the dominant figure of Pilar. She is not ambitious like Pilar. She wants to lead her life as a woman of Robert only. She wants to serve Robert. She had been raped by many, many times still she is spiritually pure. She is aware of the life of her love and her love is blossoming under abnormal pressure in abnormal circumstances. Philip Greene observes in his review of For Whom the Bell Tolls that. 'Maria is submissive and devoted beyond credibility. She lives for her lover alone and has no other interest and function in life but to serve Robert Jordan,'²⁵ Maria has impact of Pilar's personality. She is very close to Pilar, she believes in Pilar. She tolerates Pilars rude behavior towards her. She obeys Pilar's orders like a daughter.

Maria wants to spend her life with Robert. But she is compelled by Robert to go away from him with Pilar. Maria obeys the wish of Robert.

Maria perhaps doesn't have any interest like Pilar, in the Spanish Civil War. Her honest desire is to be a woman of Robert Jordan and wants to take care of him. Still her role in this novel is prominent. She develops desire of life in Robert Jordan. Her simplicity, beauty and love compel Jordan to think for life sincerely. Hemingway perhaps wants to show that cruelty, brutality of falangists could not destroy innocence of Maria. They raped her body, not mind. With fresh mind not only she but Robert also wants to restart life. Innocent Maria stands for morality. Robert, too asks her to go and live alone he asks her.

'No guapa, don't', he said,' We will not go to Madrid now but I always go with thee wherever thou goest. Understand? As long as there is one of us, there is one of us, there is both of us. Do you understand?'

Anselmo is simple and sentimental peasant, who has knowledge of mountain. He is a guide for Robert to the mountain. Anselmo has come from Barco de Avila. Anselmo is a religious man. He has a firm faith that instead of war there should be an education of people to become good republicans. Anselmo has

childlike vision of life. Anselmo's remark at the moment reveals his naivete about politics.

"He told us all", Fernando said, "What barbarians these fascists are? We must do away with all such barbarians in Spain. He then said bitterly,, in them is lacking all conception of dignity.

Anselmo grinned in the dark an hour ago he could not have imagined that he would ever smile again. What a marvel, that Fernando, he thought.

"Yes", he said to Fernando. "We must teach them. We must take away their planes, their automatic weapons, their tanks, their artillery and teach them dignity."²⁷ Anselmo talks of taking weapons away from the fascists as if it meant taking away dangerous things from children.

Anselmo has lost his faith in religion. For him, fighting for the Republicans is not a religion. His faith in the 'Republic' is his strength : "I am lonely in the day when I am not working but when the dark comes it is a time of great loneliness. But one thing I have that no man or any God can take from me and that is that I have worked well for the Republic."²⁹



Anselmo, an old, lonely man contributes his service in the civil war. He originally doesn't want to kill anybody. But he becomes a soldier at the age of sixty-eight and actively participates in Robert's mission. Anselmo dies in the mission. "Anselmo, whose feeling of solidarity with the fascists as well as the Republicans, with people known and unknown, makes him a symbol of abstract universal brotherhood.'

Pablo, the leader of the guerrilla band was loyal to the Republic and proved his loyalty through his act. Pablo refused to help in Robert's mission directly reflects his boldness. Pablo has fed up with attacks of the wars. He wants to live peacefully. Pablo explains : 'Not for me. I am tired of being hunted. Here we are all right. Now if you blow a bridge here, we will be hunted. If they know we are here and hunt with planes. I am tired of all this.'³⁰ Pablo is hated by the group of members for his disability, drunkenness and reluctance for the Spanish Civil War. Pablo has lost faith in humanity. Pablo's lack of faith breaks him completely. Always, he drinks to get over his depression. When Pablo hears the plan of his killing, he disappears, taking dynamiters with him.

But next morning, he returns and provides himself and his horses to Robert's mission.

Pablo is aware of the hopeless situation of the bridge. Pablo is leading rather disturbed life. His crying in the hands of Pilar, depicts his helplessness. In his youth, Pablo was a symbol of anarchy for his extreme selfishness and senseless killing. His loneliness brought him back to the band.

Hemingway has shown different types of characters. He has developed along with Jordan and Maria. Pilar , Pablo and Anselmo.

Alvah C. Bessie quotes in review of, "For Whom the Bell Tolls is the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Hemingway's increasingly serious concern about the internal condition of his own country is depicted." Between March 1937 to November 1938, Hemingway made four trips to Spain. In his report to Spain, Hemingway writes, 'Since I had seen them last spring, they have become soldiers. The romantics have pulled out. The cowards have gone home along with the badly wounded, those who are left tough, with blackened matter of fact faces, and, after seven

months they know their trade.” Hemingway’s biographer Carlos Baker points out, ‘much of Hemingway’s actual experience in Spain was transmuted into the material of this novel”

‘For Whom the Bell Tolls’, is a political novel, which deals with an American volunteer’s involvement in the Spanish civil war. Hemingway, along with Robert Jordan, has created some of the major characters - Maria, Pilar, Pablo and Anselmo. All these characters have come together with mission that is to save mankind. Earl Rovit writes in *The Merrill studies in ‘For Whom the Bell Tolls’* : ‘Robert Jordan’s sole reason for going behind the enemy lines is to blow up the bridge. By extension, the bridge becomes symbolically a pivotal center for the destiny of mankind - there is a bridge and the bridge can be the point on which one of the human race can turn.’³¹

Hemingway said of ‘For Whom the Bell Tolls.’ “It was everything I had learned about Spain for eighteen years.”³² Through this novel; Hemingway is propagating the message of brotherhood and humanity. His hero - Robert Jordan, like his

other hero is a wounded man. He is physically wounded and participates in the war for the sake of humanity.

As per the suggestion of the critic: If both God and man are dead, there seems to be two possible solutions. The first is to reestablish God and second is to reestablish man. Hemingway does this through a highly complex myth of the hero.³³

Ernest Hemingway's hero establishes the concept of a man kind. Robert Jordan's sincerity, his grasping power, his sensitive mind, his rapport with others, his love for others who have lost hope in mankind makes him the great. Hemingway also passes the message of brotherhood. Robert Jordan is an American, but he participates in 'The Spanish Civil War'.

Robert is a man of action. His love for Maria cannot make him weak. He prefers to die for the mankind than to live with Maria. He achieves the peace of mind. With complete satisfaction, victoriously Robert waits for death. He has achieved the immortality. Earl Rovit writes, from Ernest Hemingway : 'Maria is a vessel of Jordan's complete self-realization : in her mergence with her, he has achieved the immortality of becoming 'other' of

losing himself that is not himself.³⁴ As he tells her in his final
goodbye. 'Thou art me now too. Thou art all there will be of me.'

(P.No. 495)



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