



## Catherine's death

*The last chapter of the novel takes place in a Swiss hospital where Catherine gives birth to a dead baby boy.*

Ernest Hemingway  
*A Farewell to Arms*  
(1929)

Book V, Chapter 41

Upstairs I met the nurse coming down the hall.

'I just called you at the hotel,' she said. **Something dropped inside me.**

'What is wrong?'

'Mrs Henry has had a hemorrhage.'

5 'Can I go in?'

'No, not yet. The doctor is with her.'

'Is it dangerous?'

'It is very dangerous.' The nurse went into the room and shut the door. I sat outside in the hall. **Everything was gone<sup>1</sup> inside of me.** I did not think. I could not think. I knew  
10 she was going to die and I prayed that she would not. Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. Dear God, don't let her die. Please, please, please don't let her die. God please make her not die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. You took the baby but don't let her die. That was all right but don't let her die. Please, please,  
15 dear God, don't let her die.

The nurse opened the door and motioned with her finger for me<sup>2</sup> to come. I followed her into the room. Catherine did not look up when I came in. I went over to the side of the bed<sup>3</sup>. The doctor was standing by the bed on the opposite side. **Catherine looked at me and smiled.** I bent down<sup>4</sup> over the bed and **started to cry.**

20 '**Poor darling;**' Catherine said very softly. **She looked gray.**

'You're all right, Cat,' I said. 'You're going to be all right.'

'**I'm going to die,**' she said; then waited and said, 'I hate it.'

I took her hand.

'**Don't touch me,**' she said. I let go of her hand. She smiled. '**Poor darling. You touch me all you want<sup>5</sup>?**'

'You'll be all right, Cat. I know you'll be all right.'

'**I meant to write you a letter to have if anything happened, but I didn't do it.**'

'Do you want me to get a priest or any one to come and see you?'

'Just you,' she said. Then a little later, 'I'm not afraid. I just hate it.'

30 'You must not talk so much,' the doctor said.

'All right,' Catherine said.

'Do you want me to do anything, Cat? Can I get you anything?'

Catherine smiled, 'No.' Then a little later, '**You won't do our things with another girl, or say the same things, will you?**'

35 'Never.'

'I want you to have girls, though.'

'I don't want them.'

'You are talking too much,' the doctor said. 'Mr Henry must go out. He can come back again later. You are not going to die. You must not be silly.'

40 '**All right,**' Catherine said. '**I'll come and stay with you nights<sup>6</sup>,**' she said. **It was very hard for her to talk.**

'Please go out of the room,' the doctor said. 'You cannot talk.' **Catherine winked at me<sup>7</sup>, her face gray.** 'I'll be right outside,' I said.

'**Don't worry, darling,**' Catherine said. '**I'm not a bit afraid. It's just a dirty trick<sup>8</sup>?**'

45 'You dear, brave sweet.'

I waited outside in the hall. I waited a long time. The nurse came to the door and came over to me. 'I'm afraid Mrs Henry is very ill,' she said. 'I'm afraid for her.'

'Is she dead?'

'No, but she is unconscious.'

1 Everything was gone. Tutto era finito.

2 motioned ... me. Mi fece cenno con il dito.

3 I went ... bed. Mi avvicinai al capezzale del letto.

4 I bent down. Mi curvai.

5 all you want. Finché vuoi.

6 nights. Di notte.

7 winked at me. Mi fece l'occholino.

8 dirty trick. Sporco trucco.



50 It seems she had one hemorrhage after another. They couldn't stop it. I went into the room and stayed with Catherine until she died. She was unconscious all the time, and it did not take her very long to die.

[...]

I went to the door of the room.

55 'You can't come in now,' one of the nurses said.

'Yes I can,' I said.

'You can't come in yet.'

'You get out,' I said. 'The other one too<sup>9</sup>'

60 But after I had got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good<sup>10</sup>. It was like saying good-bye to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain.

9 The ... too. Anche quell'altra.

10 it wasn't any good. Non servi a niente.

## VISUAL ANALYSIS

**1 READ** the text and identify its three parts. Then write a heading for each section.

- Part 1 (lines .....): .....
- Part 2 (lines .....): .....
- Part 3 (lines .....): .....

**2 LOOK** at the visual analysis of the text and write down what each highlight and colour represents.

 .....

 .....

 .....

Catherine .....

She .....

It .....

I .....

 .....

What do they stand for?

.....

Who is Henry speaking to?

 .....

**3 DISCUSS** the following questions in pairs.

- 1 How is Catherine depicted?
- 2 Do Henry's sensations fit a male character according to Hemingway? Why?
- 3 How does he try to shield himself from the pain of Catherine's death?
- 4 Does he succeed in doing so?
- 5 How is Catherine's death described?
- 6 What is the theme of the extract?
- 7 How is it related to the largest thematic unit of the novel?