



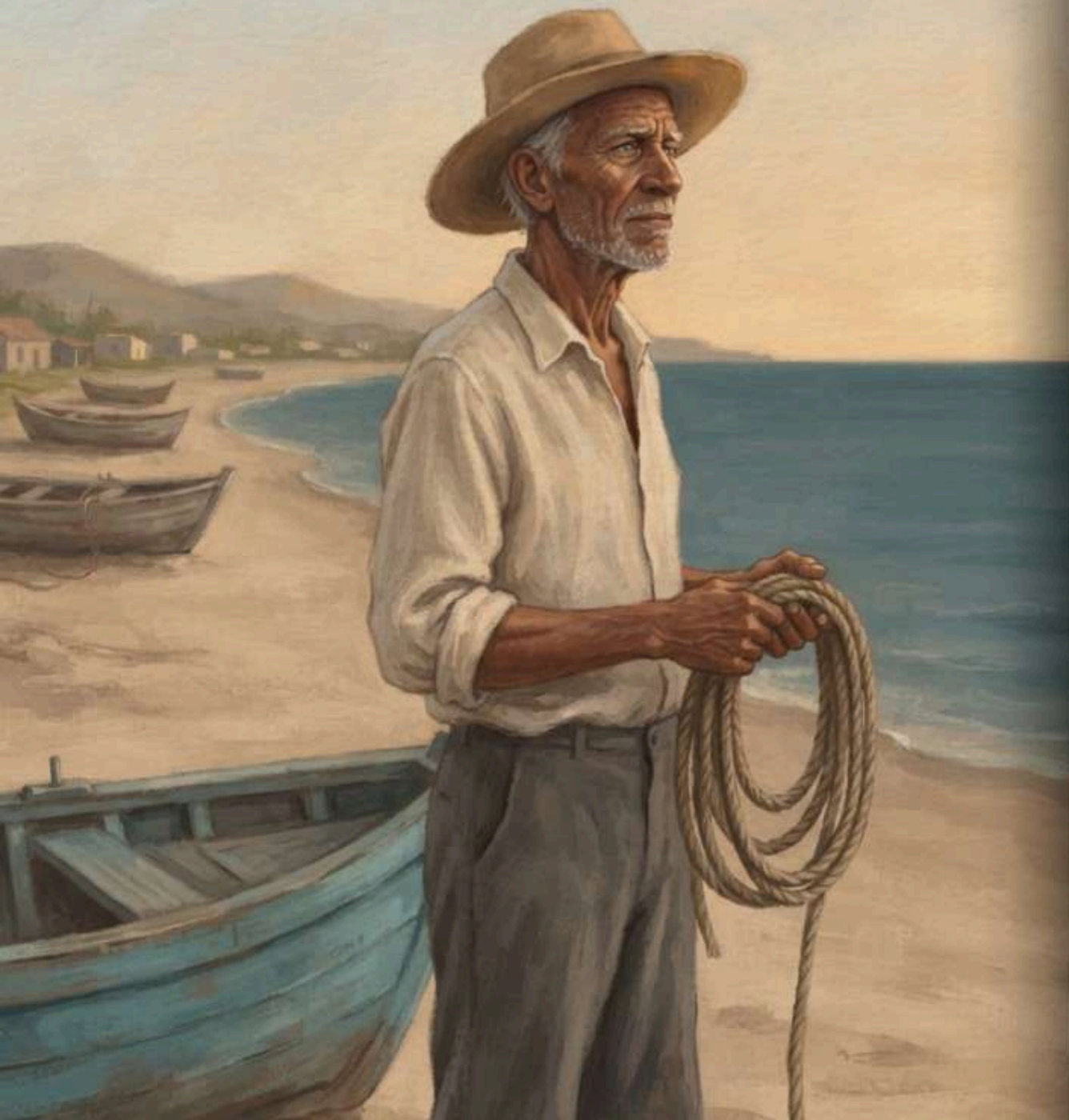
The Old Man and the Sea
By
Ernest Hemingway

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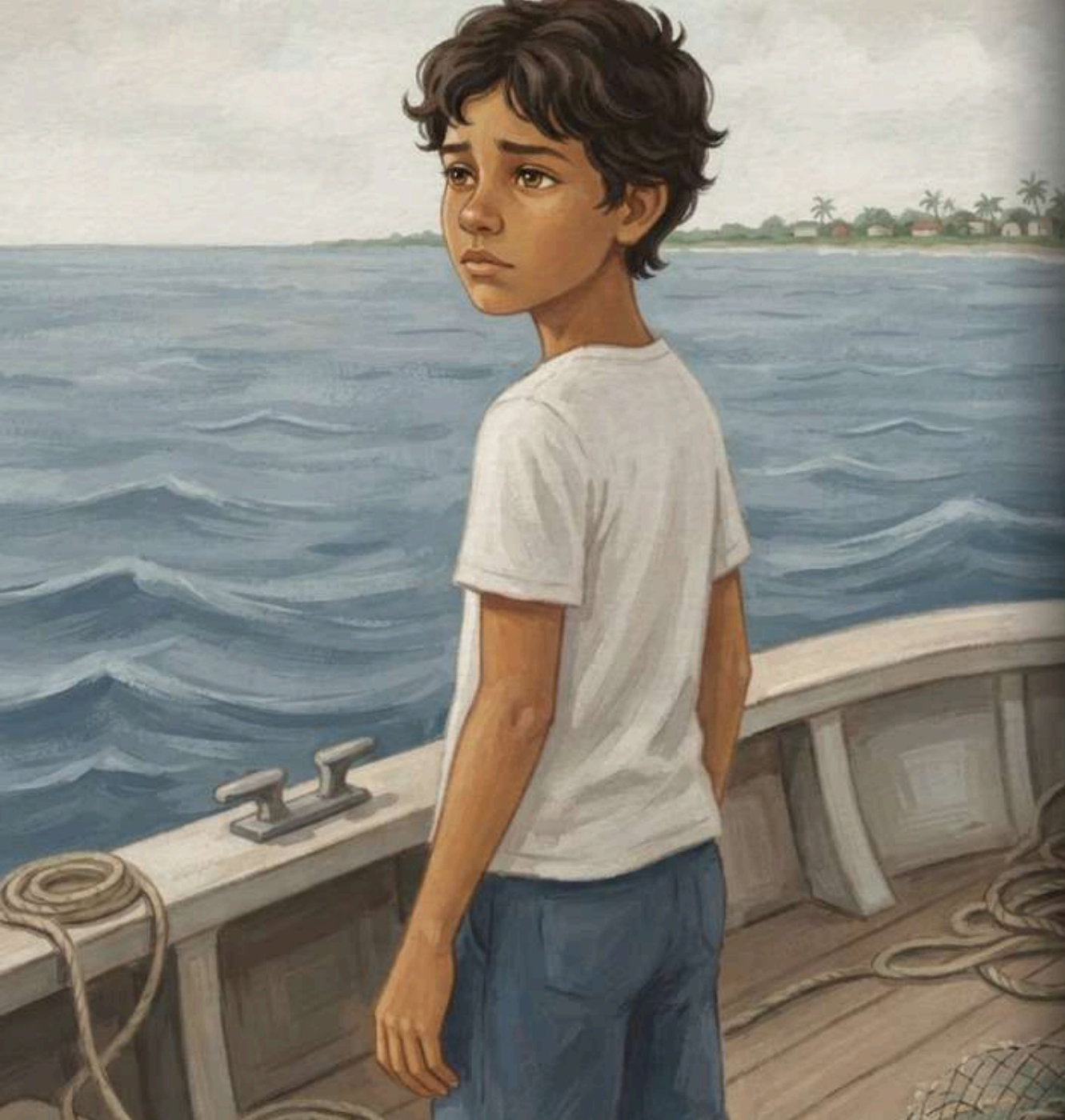
**A Short Story for ESOL & Functional
Skills Learners**



Santiago is an old fisherman who lives in a small fishing village in Cuba. He is poor and lives alone, but he has spent his whole life fishing at sea.



Santiago has not caught a fish for eighty-four days. People begin to think that he is very unlucky, but Santiago refuses to give up.



A young boy called Manolin loves and respects Santiago and used to fish with him. However, Manolin's parents have told him to work on another boat because Santiago has been unlucky for so long.



Although they no longer fish together, Manolin still looks after the old man. He helps Santiago carry his fishing equipment, brings him food and enjoys listening to his stories.



On the eighty-fifth morning, Santiago goes out to sea alone before sunrise. He sails much farther from the shore than the other fishermen because he believes that today his luck will change.



After several hours, Santiago feels a strong pull on one of his fishing lines. He realises that a very large fish has taken the bait deep below the water.



The fish is so powerful that Santiago cannot pull it into the boat. Instead, the fish begins to swim out to sea, pulling Santiago and his small boat behind it.



For many hours, Santiago holds tightly to the fishing line. His hands become cut and painful, and his body grows tired, but he refuses to let the fish go.



Santiago finally sees the fish and discovers that it is an enormous marlin. He is amazed by its size and beauty and begins to respect the marlin as a strong and worthy opponent.



The struggle continues through the night and into another day. Santiago is exhausted, hungry and in pain, but he tells himself that he must remain strong.



Santiago feels a strange connection with the marlin. He calls the fish his brother and admires its courage, even though he knows that he must kill it.



Eventually, the marlin becomes tired and begins swimming in circles around the boat. Santiago uses all his remaining strength and finally kills the great fish with his harpoon.



The marlin is too large to fit inside Santiago's small boat. He ties it to the side of the boat and begins the long journey back towards his village.



Santiago feels proud of the enormous fish, but soon he notices blood spreading through the water. The blood attracts a shark, which swims towards the marlin.



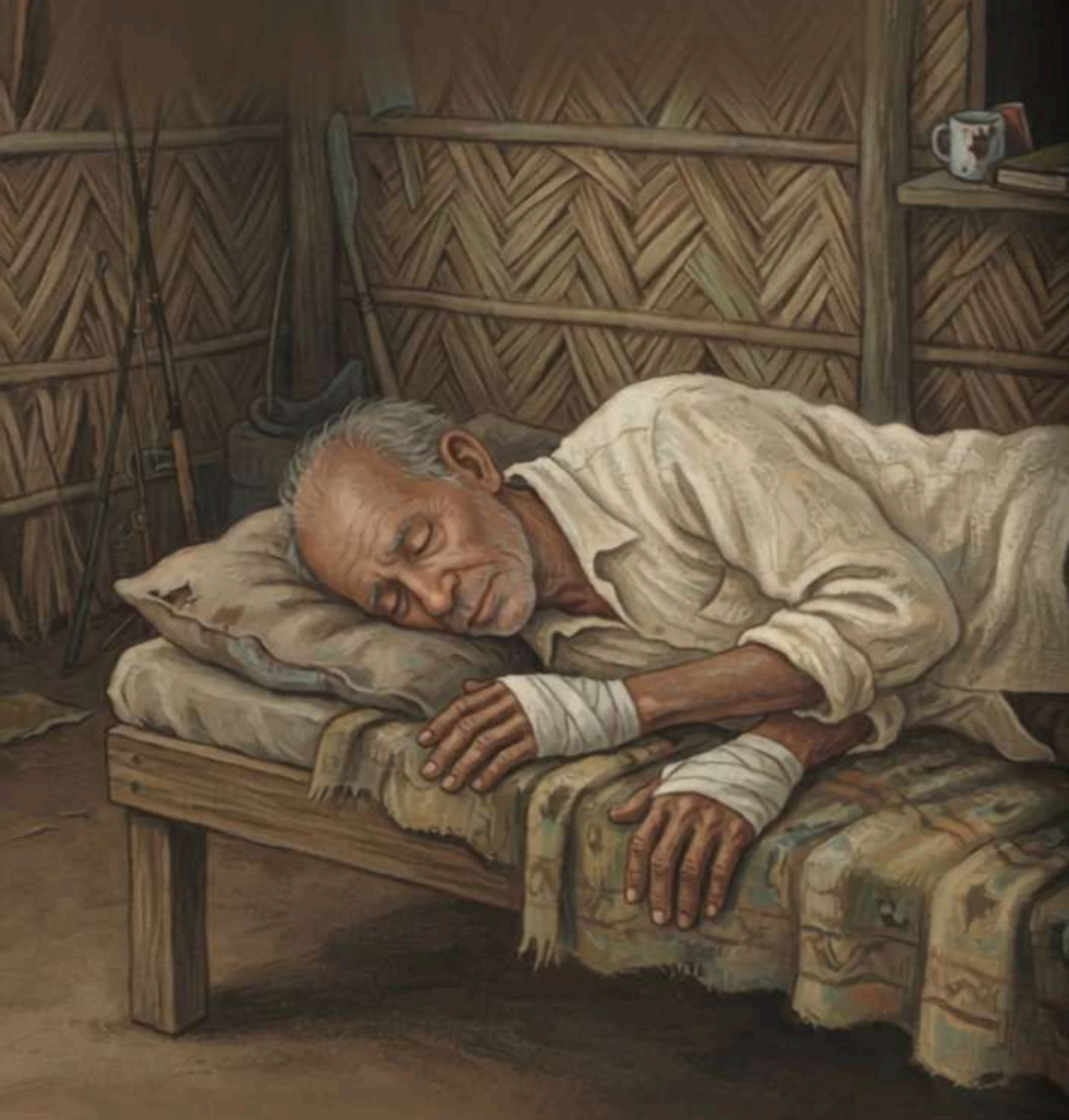
Santiago fights the shark and kills it, but the shark has already eaten part of the marlin. More sharks arrive, attracted by the blood, and Santiago desperately tries to protect his catch.



Santiago fights the sharks with everything he has. He loses his harpoon and later uses a knife, an oar and anything else he can find, but the sharks continue attacking.



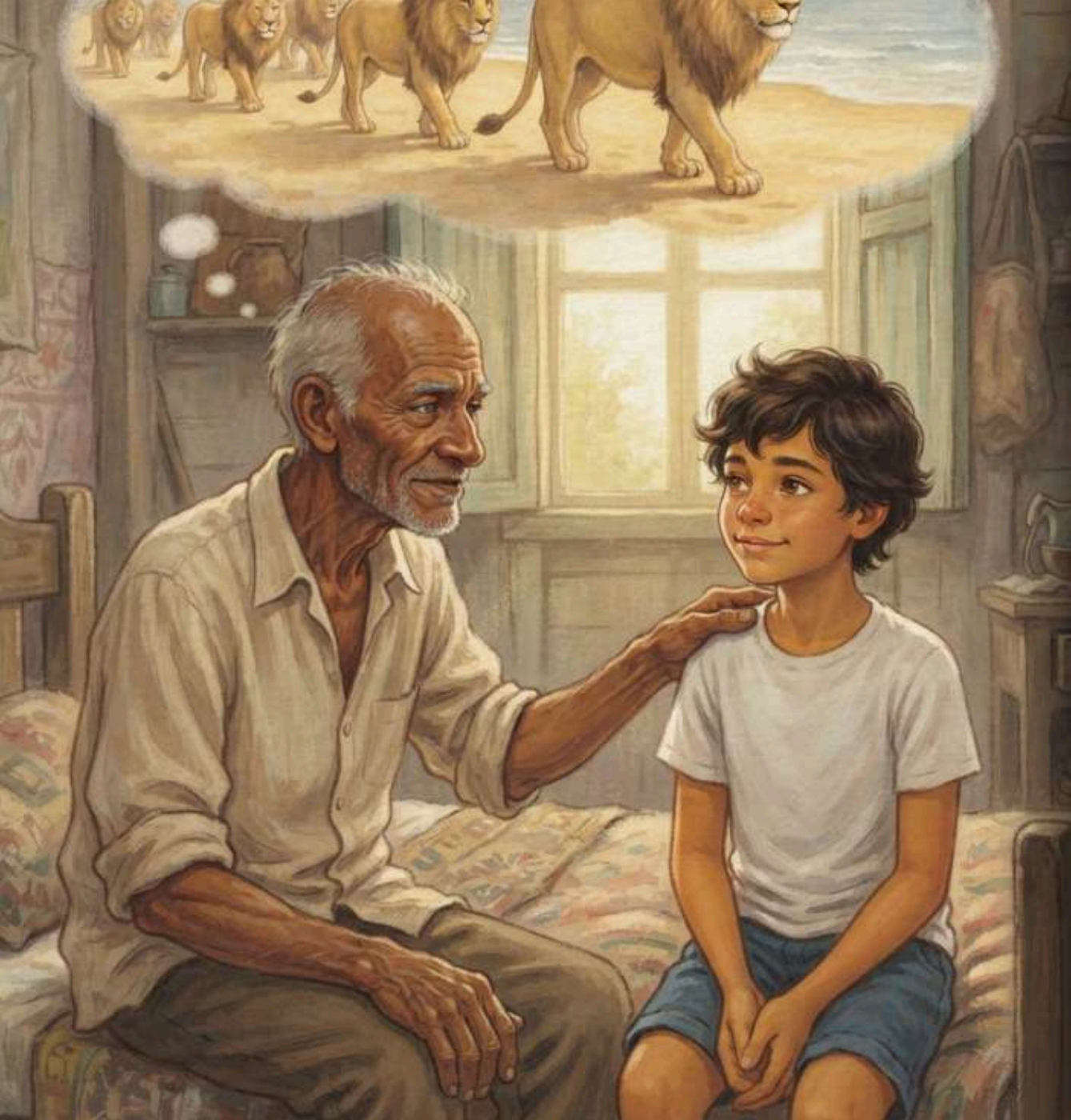
By the time Santiago reaches the village, the sharks have eaten almost all of the marlin. Only its enormous skeleton, head and tail remain tied to the side of his boat.



Santiago returns to his small home completely exhausted. He lies down on his bed and falls into a deep sleep while the other fishermen gather around his boat.



The fishermen are amazed when they see the enormous skeleton and realise how large Santiago's marlin was. Manolin finds Santiago sleeping and cries when he sees the old man's injured hands.



Manolin tells Santiago that they will fish together again, and Santiago is comforted by the boy's friendship. As the old man sleeps, he dreams of the lions he used to see on the beaches of Africa when he was young—a memory of strength, hope and courage.