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# JAKE BARNES AND HIS LADY BRETT: USING HOMOSEXUALITY TO ESCAPE PSYCHOLOGICAL CASTRATION IN *THE SUN ALSO RISES*



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**Jake Barnes and his Lady Brett: Using Homosexuality to Escape Psychological  
Castration in *The Sun Also Rises***

**Synopsis:**

In Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*, the most significant aspect of the character Jake Barnes is, of course, his physical impotence and his struggle with gender identity. Jake Barnes exorcises himself of his "Circe" known as Brett Ashley by placing himself into the position of the homosexual, thus rendering Brett incapable of castrating him psychologically.

## **Jake Barnes and his Lady Brett: Using Homosexuality to Escape Psychological Castration**

In Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*, the most significant aspect of the character Jake Barnes is, of course, his physical impotence and his struggle with gender identity. He has been physically wounded in a war and attempts to come to grips with life, especially in the area of emotion and his dealing with the masculine "Circe" known as Brett Ashley. Hemingway concludes his novel with the famous cab-ride scene on Madrid's Fran Via where Brett's comment to Jake that "we could have had such a damned good time together" is met with his reply of "Isn't it pretty to think so" (247). Brett's statement is anything but a sign of femininity. Hemingway describes Brett's behavior and appearance as near masculine on earlier occasions in the novel, and this concluding passage presents Brett's masculinity as a castration threat to Jake, who has adopted the feminine term "pretty." However, Jake Barnes exorcises himself of Brett by placing himself into the position of the homosexual, thus rendering Brett incapable of castrating him psychologically.