

THE ENEMY: FORM AND CONTENT

Structurally, there are three parts to this story: the beginning, middle and end. The beginning sets the time, introduces the characters and theme, and sets the mood. The plot is brought to its crisis and climax in the middle section, and the end describes the relationship between the General and Sadao, and resolves the story.

PLACE: The story is set on the Japanese coast, in the home of Dr. Sadao Hoki.

TIME: The story takes place during the Second World War, while Japan and America are at war with each other.

MOOD: The mood is reflected in the natural weather conditions, which underline the changing and often conflicting emotions of the main characters. At first, the weather is foggy and misty, signifying the uncertainty that faces Sadao and his wife. The weather is windy in the middle section, symbolizing the tension and confusion in Sadao's thoughts. The rain in the end is the natural outcome of the fog and mist of the beginning, and symbolizes reconciliation.

PLOT: The plot is built up through a number of stages that lead to the climax of the story, after which the pace is slower, until finally all the elements are drawn together in the conclusion. The stages of the plot are:

a. **Serenity:** The scene described at the beginning of the story is one of tranquility and serenity. Hana comes out to her husband, and affectionately takes his arm. Together they make a picture of perfect harmony. This picture of a happy, loving couple is soon shattered by the appearance of a body in the water.

b. **Dilemma:** The arrival of the wounded white sailor disturbs the happy picture. Sadao and his wife must make a choice: treat the man or let him die; give him shelter or throw him back into the sea; turn him in to the authorities or let him recover first. As a doctor, Sadao is sworn to help any man in need, but this man is his enemy. If he turns the man over to the police, he will surely die, but if Sadao shelters him in his home, he himself could be condemned as a traitor. This conflict, with no satisfactory solution, is a dilemma. Finally, they decide to bring him inside, and after he has regained his strength, to turn him over.

c. Complications: The placid, everyday life of the household is disrupted - Sadao discovers that he must operate on the sailor in order to save his life, but no one is willing to help him. The very idea of touching a white man is repulsive. Hana finally consents to help him operate, but none of the servants can even try to understand the conflicting feelings within Sadao.

d. Crisis: The crisis comes when the servants leave the house. Since they are superstitious and uneducated, they cannot fathom Sadao's reasons for saving the sailor's life. They look at the world in black and white, and cannot understand anything in between. Once they leave, the burden of running the household falls on Hana, who proves to be an understanding and reliable wife to Sadao. Together, they cope with the operation and with keeping the house in order, and the sailor recovers. Now the main question has to be faced - will Sadao inform the police after he has saved the man's life?

e. Climax: The conflict comes to a head during the operation, and, when it is over, Sadao starts to write the report to the police, but never sends it. With this act, he has kept his promise to his wife, and performed his duty to his country. Now the tension rises. Will General Takima arrest him? The General can understand Sadao's behavior, since he also studied in America. Moreover, he needs Sadao to take care of him and treat his illness. The General suggests an easy solution to the doctor's problem by offering to send his assassins to kill Tom, thus removing from Sadao the burden of making a decision. The doctor suffers through three long, windy nights, but the assassins do not appear.

d. Resolution: Sadao is unable to sleep, and cannot keep his secret from Hana any longer. He is forced to act, so he helps Tom escape. With the sailor's departure, the conflict is resolved. He feels he has done his duty to his country and also kept faith with his profession. Tranquility is restored to the house.

In summary, the real conflict here is between the humanitarian values instilled in Sadao during his years of study in America, and the age-old heritage of racial superiority and prejudice he grew up with and lives with daily in Japan. The conflict is resolved when humanitarianism overcomes prejudice and chauvinism, which is the story's message.

ANALYSIS

This story takes place in Japan at the time of the Second World War. Japan was at war with the United States. Japanese aggression was intensifying and hatred for all other races had been impressed so deeply into the minds of the people, that it was part of their culture; chauvinism was at its height. Around this theme of racial superiority and Japanese chauvinism the story is built.

We can see quite clearly that the main idea is the inner conflict between Dr. Sadao's loyalty to his country and his devotion to his profession. On the one hand, since Japan is at war, harboring an enemy is treason. Influencing the doctor are his whole background, his upbringing in a chauvinistic society, his strong nationalism and the tremendous influence of his father on his way of thinking. On the other hand, he had received a modern education abroad: he had studied medicine and knew well the principles of humanitarianism. In other words, it was his duty, as a doctor, to operate on the wounded man, regardless of his nationality or race. These are conflicting loyalties or the conflict between two worlds - between tradition and modern education.

Pearl Buck (1893-1973)



Pearl Buck was an American writer. She was born in West Virginia, U.S.A. the fourth of seven children. Her parents were missionaries in China, who came to spend their vacation in U.S.A. Five months later, they went back to China with their tiny daughter. Buck was schooled at home by her mother and a Chinese tutor. She spoke Chinese before English and her best friends were Chinese. Unlike most of the other families of Western missionaries who lived together in a "ghetto", Buck's family made their home among the Chinese people allowing their daughter to become a part of the culture of her adopted land.

As a young woman, Buck returned to the States. She chose to attend college in Virginia which took female students seriously. While studying she was also involved in college activities and wrote for the university literary magazine. Although she had intended to stay in the U.S., news that her mother was ill brought her back to China. There she met and married the American John Buck. The couple moved to a rural Chinese province and her life there supplied Buck with much of the material she would use later in her books about China.

Buck stayed in China for 42 years. She loved the big country and had compassion for her people suffering from distress and deficiency. In some of her books she describes the Chinese life, mostly that of the common people.

For many years, Buck and her husband taught at the Nanjing University. She began to publish essays and stories in the 1920's. *The Good Earth*, the story of a Chinese peasant and his relationship to his family and

to the land that kept them alive, was published in 1931. It became a huge best seller, won the Pulitzer Prize for Buck and was made into a major film in 1937.

Buck's work was well appreciated. In 1938 she got the Nobel Prize in Literature, thus being the first American woman who got such recognition. She had become one of the most popular and widely translated authors in the world. She devoted much of her time to charity work and adopted a few Asian children. She died in 1973.