

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 4: THE ENEMY



THE ENEMY

~Summary~

-by Pearl S Buck

Dr Sadao Hoki and his Traditional Father

Dr Sadao Hoki, a famous Japanese surgeon and an accomplished scientist, lived in a house on the Japanese coast. The house was set upon rocks above a narrow beach surrounded by pine trees. As a child, Sadao used to climb these trees. He often visited the South Sea islands with his father. His father believed that the islands were stepping stones to Japan's future to gain perfection. Sadao's father was a very serious and traditional man. He never joked or played with him but took infinite pains for his son. Sadao's education was his chief concern. He even sent Sadao to America to complete his studies. Sadao's father inculcated in him values of patriotism and national loyalty when the latter was quite young and Sadao had always cherished these great virtues.

The Second World War started, but Sadao was not sent with the troops because he was about to make a discovery which would render wounds entirely clean. Also, the General who was old, was being treated by Sadao, and he might require an operation anytime.

Sadao met Hana in America, Waited for his Father's Consent to Marry Her

Sadao had met Hana in America, but he had waited until he was sure that she was Japanese before deciding to marry her. His father would never have approved of her otherwise. Sadao recalled that his meeting with Hana was an accident. Sadao lived in Professor Harley's house and had almost not gone to the Professor's house that night, where he met Hana, a new student.

After Sadao and Hana had finished their studies, they came home to Japan. The marriage was solemnised in the traditional Japanese way according to his father's wishes. They were a happy couple.

The Prisoner is Washed Ashore

One night, Sadao and Hana were enjoying the view of the sea from their verandah when they saw something black coming out of the mists. It was a man. He staggered a few steps and then the mists hid him again. When they saw him again, he was crawling. Sadao thought that he was a fisherman washed ashore from his boat.

The surf beyond the beach was spiked with rocks. The man might be badly hurt. They found the man wounded. Hana realised that it was a white man. The fellow was young and unconscious.

The man was bleeding profusely. Sadao saw that a bullet wound had reopened. Sadao packed the wound with sea moss. The man moaned with pain, but he did not awaken. Sadao wanted to throw the man back into the sea, as he had now realised that he was an American prisoner of war. Hana also agreed. Sadao knew that giving shelter to the enemy would get them into trouble. He was torn between his moral duty as a doctor which urged him to save the dying man and his national duty which required handing him over to the Army as a patriot. Both Hana and Sadao finally decided to take the man home, as he was in need of urgent medical attention.

The Servants React Bitterly

They decided that they should tell the servants also. They would tell them that they intended to hand him over to the police. The man had been starved for a long time and he was light as a fowl. They carried him to Sadao's father's bedroom as his father was no longer alive. The old man had never allowed a foreign object in his room.

The American was very dirty and needed to be washed. Hana said that Yumi, the governess, might wash her. She went to fetch her. When she returned to the kitchen, she found the other two servants frightened at what Sadao had told them. The servants tried to convince Sadao that he must hand over the enemy to the police. Yumi refused to wash the American and Hana had to wash him herself.

Sadao Saves the Enemy's Life

Sadao was ready to operate. He was completely absorbed in his work. He told Hana that she would need to give anaesthetic to the man. Hana probably had never seen an operation and started vomiting. Sadao was irritable and impatient with his enemy, as he was not able to help Hana in her distress. The man groaned with pain.

Interestingly enough, Hana was able to assist her husband in the operation. Hana noticed deep red scars on the neck of their enemy. She wondered if the war torture stories she had heard were actually true. She recalled that General Takima was a ruthless man who didn't even spare his wife.

Sadao murmured while operating, as was his habit. He called the enemy his friend'. Sadao finally succeeded in taking the bullet out. He was sure that the man would live in spite of his sufferings.

The Patient gets Better but the Servants Decide to Leave

Hana took good care of the man. She served him, as the servants refused to enter the room. The man was surprised to see Hana talk in English. Hana told him that she had lived in America for a long time. The enemy revealed his name to Hana. His name was Tom. Sadao was still confused about handing him over to the police.

The servants resented their decision to help the American soldier. Hana told Sadao that the servants would not live in the house if the enemy was still present. The servants thought that the couple liked Americans. Sadao tried to clarify that all Americans were his enemies. They talked about the consequences of harbouring an enemy. Hana could hear what they were talking about. On the seventh day, the servants left.

The General's Messenger; Sadao Goes to See the General

On the same day, a messenger in official uniform came to Sadao's house. Hana was so scared that she was unable to speak. She thought that he was there to arrest Sadao. In fact, the messenger had come to inform Sadao that the General needed him. Looking at Hana in utter distress, Sadao decided to get rid of the man.

Sadao told the whole episode to the General. The General knew that Sadao was indispensable to him. He never trusted other Japanese surgeons. The General promised Sadao that nothing would happen to him.

The General then planned to get the American soldier assassinated. He told Sadao that his private assassins were very competent and would also remove the dead body. Sadao thought that this plan would be the best for his family.

After that meeting, Sadao spent three restless nights waiting for the assassins. But they didn't come. Finally, the torture became too much to bear for him. He planned to get rid of the enemy himself.

Sadao Helps the Enemy

Sadao told the escape plan to Tom. He also warned him that he needed to escape as the news of his presence was not hidden any more. He arranged a boat, food, drinking water and clothing for the young man and also gave him his own flashlight. He told Tom that he should flash the light two times if he needed something, once if everything was fine. He must do this only when the sun dropped under the horizon. He further added that Tom could find many fish to eat but he should eat them raw, lest the fire be seen. Even Hana didn't know about this plan. Sadao had told Tom to wait for a Korean ship.

Sadao went to the General and informed him that the American had escaped. The General informed Sadao that he forgot about the prisoner, as he was unwell. He told Sadao not to leak

out this information to anybody. Back at home, Sadao remembered his days in America and the Americans he met there. He wondered why he could not kill Tom, his enemy.

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NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 47)

(Reading with Insight)

Question 1. There are moments in life when we have to make hard choices between our roles as private individuals and as citizens with a sense of national loyalty. Discuss with reference to the story you have just read.

Answer: The story revolves around human values that propel a Japanese doctor, the protagonist, to help an enemy during war. The story is about a doctor who encounters a severely wounded enemy soldier. Being a doctor and as a human being, he observes the white man in critical condition who badly requires the doctor's help. However, he is afraid of assisting him as the man belonged to the rival country. If he treats the white man, it makes him feel dishonest towards his land. But when he decides to hand over the man to the cops, he feels he is not capable of keeping up his job professionally.

Question 2. Dr Sadao was compelled by his duty as a doctor to help the enemy soldier. What made Hana, his wife, sympathetic to him in the face of open defiance from the domestic staff?

Answer: Dr. Sadao and his wife Hana knew that everyone would question their decision to save the enemy soldier. Hana felt sympathetic to him because she completely understood what Sadao was feeling at that time, as she had known Dr. Sadao for a long period of time. She was aware that his duty compelled Dr. Sadao as a doctor but simultaneously felt it might be considered a lack of patriotism on his part. He was hiding the foe in his home, and their domestic staff had also left the job, making the condition even worse. This helpless situation of her husband made her feel sympathy towards him.

Question 3. How would you explain the reluctance of the soldier to leave the shelter of the doctor's home even when he knew he couldn't stay there without risk to the doctor and himself?

Answer:

The story says that the white man named Tom was very young, nearly seventeen years old and he was admitted into the army. When the American war prisoner came to consciousness and understood that he was rescued by a Japanese family, he worried that he would soon be handed over to their army. When he walked inside the doctor's home, the treatment which he got from them made him feel affectionate towards them. He knew that although he was a threat to Dr.Sadao's family, his life might be saved there. Overwhelmed with thankfulness towards them, he finally decided to comply with what the doctor planned for him to escape.

Question 4. What explains the attitude of the General in the matter of the enemy soldier? Was it human consideration, lack of national loyalty, dereliction of duty or simply self-absorption?

Answer: The general was governed by total self-absorption. He was a patient of Dr. Sadao and when it came to his health, he trusted no one else but him. He couldn't risk going unprotected if the doctor was executed for treason. He had personal assassins whom he vowed to use to eliminate the wounded soldier. But he sadly 'forgot' about his promise to help the doctor. Humans were not his thing. Humans were not his cup of tea.

Question 5. While hatred against a member of the enemy race is justifiable, especially during wartime, what makes a human being rise above narrow prejudices?

Answer: It is very natural to hate your enemy but more challenging is to accept them and to show love towards them. While hatred against the enemy is logical, particularly during wartime, the sense of humanity makes a human being rise above narrow preconceptions. It is obvious that the countries at war are enemies and hatred is a part of this enmity. It becomes very essential to break the chains and stand aside from the crowd. Here in this story, when the doctor observed the injured enemy he was unable to resist himself to help the man. It is the best example to describe the situation that makes a human being rise above conventional biases.

Question 6. Do you think the doctor's final solution to the problem was the best possible one in the circumstances?

Answer: The doctor attempted his best to save the injured soldier as a part of his service. But the final question was what to do next. It cannot be said that he betrayed his land as he told the truth to the General. The final decision he made was advantageous to both the white man and the doctor's family as he treated him very finely. He also presented him with attire and food and asked him to leave for his home place. By doing this he saved himself too. However, when the general remarked that the injured soldier was to be killed not for the advantage of the country but only to save the doctor's life, he decided to help him flee. In such a condition, the doctor's final solution to the problem was the best possible one.

Question 7. Does the story remind you of 'Birth' by A. J. Cronin that you read in Snapshots last year? What are the similarities?

Answer: Yes, the story reminds me of "BIRTH" by A.J. Cronin. There are many striking similarities between BIRTH and THE ENEMY. Both stories show the gentle character of the doctors towards their patients, irrespective of other circumstances. "BIRTH" describes the very practical nature of the doctor when Morgan calls him for his child. In "THE ENEMY" the doctor helps the white man because of his injury although he is his enemy. "BIRTH" shows the patient nature of a doctor

when though a baby after birth is lifeless, but the doctor continues to hope to save him/her. And in "THE ENEMY" the doctor has taken care of white sailors for many days till the white man securely goes through the boat. In both the stories the doctors treated their patients with devotion towards their job, whatever the difficulty. For Dr. Sadao, the risk was to give a stay to the white man and for that, they could get arrested while Dr. Andrew risked giving a new life to the 'stillborn' baby. Consequently, both the stories deal with humanity's love, affection, selflessness, and a strong sense of duty.

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