

English Notes



Vistas Chapter-4

The Enemy

Author: Pearl S. Buck

About the Author

Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973) was an American novelist and Nobel Prize winner. She spent many years in China and wrote extensively about Asian culture and society. Her writings often focus on **human values, moral dilemmas, and cultural conflicts**.

The Enemy is set during **World War II** and highlights the conflict between **professional duty and national loyalty**.

Detailed Summary

The story *The Enemy* is set during **World War II**, when Japan and America were enemies. It revolves around **Dr. Sadao Hoki**, a skilled Japanese surgeon who faces a serious moral dilemma when he finds a wounded American soldier near his house.

Dr. Sadao lives with his wife **Hana** in a beautiful house located near the sea. One evening, while walking on the beach, they discover an unconscious American prisoner of war lying on the sand. The soldier has been badly wounded and is close to death. Since the man is an **enemy soldier**, Dr. Sadao knows that helping him could put his entire family in danger. However, as a doctor, his first duty is to **save human life**, regardless of nationality. After struggling with this moral conflict, he decides to take the wounded man into his house and operate on him.

Hana initially hesitates because she fears the consequences. Harboring an enemy soldier during wartime is a serious crime. Despite her fear and discomfort, she supports her husband and helps him during the operation.

Dr. Sadao successfully removes the bullet from the soldier's body and saves his life. However, their household servants strongly oppose helping the enemy. They believe that treating an American soldier is a betrayal of their country. Because of this, the servants leave the house in protest.

Dr. Sadao later informs **the General**, a powerful military officer, about the presence of the American soldier. The General promises that he will send his secret assassins to kill the prisoner quietly so that Dr. Sadao will not be blamed. However, the General is a selfish and careless man who is more concerned about his own health. Since Dr. Sadao is his personal surgeon, the General does not want him to get into trouble. Eventually, the General forgets his promise and takes no action.

Realizing that the soldier cannot stay in his house forever, Dr. Sadao decides to help him escape. He secretly arranges a boat, food, and directions so the soldier can reach a nearby island and later escape safely. The American soldier eventually leaves, and Dr. Sadao feels relieved. The story ends with Dr. Sadao reflecting on his actions. Although the soldier was technically his enemy, he could not allow him to die because **humanity and professional duty were more important than national hatred**.

Main Characters

Themes

Theme	Explanation
Humanity vs War	The story shows how compassion can exist even during war.
Professional Duty	Dr. Sadao believes a doctor must save lives regardless of nationality.
Moral Conflict	The characters struggle between national loyalty and human values.
Prejudice and Racism	Dr. Sadao recalls the discrimination he faced in America.
Courage and Compassion	Hana and Dr. Sadao show courage by helping the wounded soldier.

Literary Devices

Device	Example / Explanation
Irony	Dr. Sadao saves an enemy soldier during wartime.
Symbolism	The wounded soldier symbolizes the suffering caused by war.
Conflict	The central conflict is between duty to country vs duty to humanity .
Imagery	Descriptions of the sea, beach, and the wounded soldier create vivid images.

Title Justification

The title “**The Enemy**” refers to the wounded American soldier who belongs to the enemy nation during **World War II**. However, the story challenges the idea of labeling someone as an enemy. Dr. Sadao realizes that despite being a soldier from the opposing country, the man is still a human being who deserves compassion and medical care. Thus, the title highlights the **contrast between national hostility and universal human values**.

Extract-Based Questions

Extract

"He is wounded," Sadao said. "And if I leave him here he will die."

Questions

- Who is speaking these words?
→ Dr. Sadao.
- Who is the wounded person mentioned here?
→ An American prisoner of war.
- What conflict does Dr. Sadao face here?
→ The conflict between helping an enemy and fulfilling his duty as a doctor.
- What decision does Dr. Sadao take?
→ He decides to save the soldier's life.

One-Mark Questions

1. Who wrote *The Enemy*?
→ Pearl S. Buck.
2. During which war is the story set?
→ World War II.
3. Who is Dr. Sadao?
→ A Japanese surgeon.
4. Where does Dr. Sadao find the wounded soldier?
→ On the beach near his house.
5. Why do the servants leave the house?
→ Because they oppose helping an enemy soldier.
6. Why does the General not punish Dr. Sadao?
→ Because Dr. Sadao is his personal surgeon.

Three-Mark Questions

Why does Dr. Sadao help the American soldier?

Dr. Sadao is a doctor, and he believes that his first responsibility is to save human life. Even though the soldier is an enemy, Dr. Sadao cannot allow him to die. His professional ethics and humanity guide his decision.

Why do the servants leave Dr. Sadao's house?

The servants believe that helping an enemy soldier is wrong and disloyal to their country. They are afraid that the presence of the American prisoner will bring trouble to the household. Because of this, they leave the house in protest.

How does Hana support Dr. Sadao?

Although Hana is initially afraid, she stands by her husband. She helps him during the surgery and assists in nursing the soldier back to health. Her courage and loyalty make it possible for Dr. Sadao to save the soldier.

Long Answer Questions (5–6 Marks)

How does Dr. Sadao face the conflict between duty and patriotism?

Dr. Sadao faces a difficult moral dilemma when he finds the wounded American soldier. As a Japanese citizen during **World War II**, he should treat the soldier as an enemy. However, as a doctor, his duty is to save lives.

After thinking deeply, Dr. Sadao decides to operate on the soldier and save his life. Although this decision puts his family at risk, he believes that professional ethics and humanity are more important than national hatred. His actions show that compassion can exist even during war.

Value-Based Question

What lesson do we learn from Dr. Sadao's actions?

Dr. Sadao's actions teach us that humanity is greater than hatred. Even during war, people should not forget their moral responsibilities. His decision to save the enemy soldier shows that compassion, kindness, and professional ethics should guide human behavior.

