The Enemy

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF PEARL BUCK

Pearl S. Buck was born in West Virginia to Presbyterian missionaries, who took her to Chinkiang, China when she was only three months old. Throughout her childhood, she was forced to oscillate between the Chinese world outside and the Christian and American world of her home life. Buck and her family also physically moved between China and the United States several times throughout her childhood. This mobility was largely out of necessity—the family's first return to America came in the wake of the violent, anti-imperialist Boxer Rebellion, which targeted foreigners (especially Christian missionaries) much like Buck and her family. Buck's transcultural upbringing turned out to be both a help and a hindrance, as it allowed her to develop a unique literary style that blends Chinese storytelling with American literary conventions, but it also led critics to consider her neither authentically Chinese nor wholly American. The same attitude was true of her childhood peers: in China, Buck was marginalized and "pitied for [her] blue eyes and yellow hair," while in America, she was considered "a freak who could speak Chinese" and wore traditional garments spun from Chinese grass linen. In 1938, Buck received the Nobel Prize for Literature; she was the first American woman (and only the third American writer whatsoever) to receive the honor in the thirty-seven years that the prize had existed. Receiving this honor didn't earn her much acclaim, though, as the American literary scene was still largely dismissive of American women as serious, influential writers—especially since female writers tended toward sentimentality, which was not considered a respected writing style in American literary circles. After marrying John Lossing Buck in 1917, Pearl S. Buck gave birth to her sole biological child—a severely disabled daughter. Over time, the couple adopted seven children. The family fluctuated between China, Japan, and the United States. Throughout the course of her marriage, Buck felt increasingly stifled in her role as a wife and became estranged from her husband, eventually filing for divorce. She also became fundamentally opposed to the Christian missionary work going on in China, deeming it a type of Western ethnocentrism and "spiritual imperialism." Buck went on to marry her publisher, Richard Walsh.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Pearl S. Buck lived through the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, when a group of staunchly anti-imperialist peasants brutally killed 230 foreigners (mostly Christian missionaries) and several thousand Chinese Christians. The eight-year-old Buck and her family escaped to Shanghai, and then returned briefly to the United States. This experience of being rejected, hated, and at risk of being killed because of her race, religion, and nationality deeply impacted the young Pearl S. Buck. That experience resonates throughout her literary works—including "The Enemy"—and is seen most clearly by the way she stresses the universality of humankind, which is muddled by nationalism and racial prejudice. "The Enemy" was published a year after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, when Japanese forces launched a surprise aerial attack on a U.S. naval base in Hawaii. This event catalyzed America's entry into World War II, which is when "The Enemy" is set.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Buck's literary works are heavily influenced by Chinese storytelling traditions, given that she spent nearly forty years of her life in China. Attributes of the Chinese novel include simple vocabulary, an omniscient third-person narrator, and fast-paced present action devoid of flashbacks. One such work is *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, a famous eighteenth-century Chinese novel that influenced Buck's own approach to writing. Most of her works contain international or intercultural themes, seen through novels like *The Promise* (1943) and *The Hidden Flower* (1952), which feature interracial relationships in the midst of fraught political climates. Buck's works are also highly sentimental, a literary style that hinges on the author's ability to elicit empathy from the reader and thus shape the reader's morals. This literary style came under fire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when sentimental literature's emotional warmth was deemed saccharine, unserious, and even outright harmful. A famous example of sentimental literature is Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Despite having its critics (and its flaws, as the novel does sometimes bend to racist stereotypes), *Uncle Tom's Cabin*'s sentimentalism enabled it to pull America's heartstrings in a crucial way and serve as a catalyst for the Civil War and the end of slavery. A modern example of sentimentalism in popular culture is Stephenie Meyer's *Twlight* series, which openly appeals to readers' emotions and conforms to a predictable romance plot, earning it as many loyal readers as critics.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** "The Enemy"
- **When Written:** Early 1940s
- **Where Written:** Pennsylvania
- **When Published:** November 1942
- **Literary Period:** Twentieth-Century Literature, Modernism

- **Genre:** Fiction, sentimental fiction
- **Setting:** The Japanese coast
- **Climax:** Dr. Sadao saves Tom from the assassins and the authorities by helping him escape to a nearby island.
- **Antagonist:** Cruelty and prejudice
- **Point of View:** Third-person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Third Culture Kid. Pearl S. Buck is what sociologists call a "Third Culture Kid," meaning a person who grew up in the midst of several different cultures while not necessarily belonging to any of them. In her autobiography, Buck writes, "I grew up in a double world. Geographically, my worlds are on opposite sides of the globe [...] only the years of my life tie them together."

Famous Critics. Upon hearing of Buck's Novel Prize, Robert Frost icily remarked, "If she can get it, anybody can," while William Faulkner proclaimed that the reputation of the Nobel Prize had been forever ruined with the choice of Pearl S. Buck.

PLOT SUMMARY

While gazing out at his secluded property on the coast of Japan, Dr. Sadao Hoki notices a strange shape crawling out from the ocean. Realizing it's a man, Sadao and his wife, Hana, rush out to the beach to help. They are shocked to realize that the man, who is covered with blood and is now unconscious, is white and looks no older than seventeen. From the gunshot wound in the boy's back, the ominous red **scars** on his neck, and his U.S. Navy hat, they deduce that he is a prisoner of war who has recently escaped from the Japanese authorities. Sadao, a famously skilled surgeon, can't help but pack the man's wounds with sea moss to stop his bleeding, even while proclaiming his hatred for Americans. Sadao and Hana can't bear to turn the man over to the authorities, as they will surely kill him, but they can't leave him stranded out at sea either. They know that bringing the man into their house is illegal and dangerous, an act that could deem them traitors and lead to their own arrests. After much deliberation, the couple decides to bring the wounded American into their home despite the risks.

After properly examining the man, Sadao decides that he's surely going to die unless he undergoes surgery immediately. Sadao quickly loses himself in the operation, talking to his patient and calling him "my friend" as Sadao removes the bullet lodged in the boy's side. The surgery is messy, and Hana is forced to act as her husband's assistant. When she politely excuses herself to throw up, her husband is cold and unsympathetic, forgetting that she's never witnessed an operation before. The surgery is a success, and over the course of several days, the boy—who introduces himself as Tom—improves dramatically. He's warm and grateful, showering the surgeon and his wife with praise for saving his life. Sadao and Hana always respond coldly, implying that they're still going to turn him over to the authorities.

The servants are shocked at Sadao and Hana's decision to help a white man—their "old master," Sadao's father, would have never done such a thing. After a week, all of the servants quit—even though two of them, the cook and the gardener, have been an instrumental part of the household since Sadao was just a little boy.

Sadao pays a visit to one of his most powerful patients, the General, who struggles with a critical health problem. The General is fiercely loyal to Sadao, believing him to be the best doctor in Japan. Because of this bond the men share, Sadao confides in him about Tom. Like Sadao and Hana, the General also attended college in the United States, so he understands Sadao's impulse to help the American even though he is an enemy. The General is mostly concerned that Sadao will be sentenced to death and thus be unable to operate on the General in the future. The General comes up with a plan: he will send his private assassins to Sadao's house sometime in the next week. Sadao is to leave the door to Tom's room unlocked; in the middle of the night the assassins will silently kill the white man and dispose of the body, lifting the burden from Sadao's shoulders.

Several days pass, and the assassins never show up. Tired of waiting, Sadao sends Tom to a nearby island in the middle of the night, where he is bound to be picked up by a Korean fishing boat. He tells Tom to flash his flashlight at dusk if he runs out of food before being picked up.

A few days later, Sadao tells the General that Tom has escaped. The General guiltily realizes that he forgot to send the assassins in the first place—he had been so wrapped up in his own fragile health that he forgot to help Sadao. The General hastily makes sure that Sadao doesn't think him any less patriotic or dutiful for forgetting to have the white man killed. The two men both promise to keep quiet about the whole situation.

Things return to normal in Sadao's household, and even the servants come back. At dusk, Sadao looks out over the sea. There are no flashes from a flashlight; Sadao knows Tom has fled to safety. Sadao thinks bitterly about all the "other white faces" he's known in his lifetime and wonders why he couldn't kill Tom.

CHARACTERS

Dr. Sadao Hoki – Dr. Sadao Hoki is the protagonist of the story and Hana's husband. A skilled surgeon educated in America, Sadao is wholly responsible for saving the life of Tom, an American prisoner of war who washes up on the beach alongside Sadao and Hana's isolated home on the Japanese

coast. Sadao is an emotionally complex character who struggles to come to terms with his inexplicable impulse to save the life of an American, who is supposedly his enemy, and his staunch Japanese patriotism (which increasingly reads as outright nationalism and racial prejudice). Sadao's arc is anti-epiphanic, ending with his deeply prejudiced thoughts about all the Americans he's known throughout his lifetime. However, the story suggests that the reason he helped the prisoner of war—putting his and his household's safety on the line in doing so—is because of the latent human impulse to be good and kind. Alongside his nationalism, Sadao is also a proponent of traditional Japanese gender roles, requiring his wife to be a meek, subservient housewife who tends to the servants and follows Sadao's orders unflinchingly. Even though the couple met at college in America, Hana generally conforms to this role gladly and seems to value Japanese customs. Despite upholding strict gender roles—with Sadao often coming across as cold and domineering—the couple appears to genuinely and tenderly love one another, even if those feelings are largely unspoken. Many of the decisions Sadao makes about how to deal with Tom stem from Sadao wanting to alleviate his wife's severe anxiety at housing the prisoner.

Hana – Hana is Dr. Sadao Hoki's wife. The couple met at a university in America, but "waited to fall in love" until their parents back in Japan could properly approve of and arrange the marriage. Hana shows a deep love for Japanese customs and the old way of living, seen through her traditional house (peppered with patios and courtyards) and her role as a subservient housewife. She largely bends to Sadao's will, often without resentment, and upholds him as the head of the household. Hana's main task is overseeing the servants—who, in turn, tend to her household and children—and ensuring that her husband is always fed first and taken care of. Although she appears less overtly racist than her husband, she too distains Tom for being white and American. She is also more afraid of going against the cultural grain by dangerously housing and saving the white man, who is clearly a prisoner of war. Tom makes her uncomfortable and anxious, both because of his Americanness and because his presence poses a severe threat to her and Sadao's safety, given that aiding a prisoner of war and political enemy is against the law. Nonetheless, she finds herself taking care of the American even though she doesn't really want to, washing him tenderly while thinking racist thoughts. Hana, like Sadao, demonstrates the human impulse to be altruistic and take care of fellow humans, but also shows how racial prejudice and nationalism cloud such thinking.

Tom / The American – Tom is a teenage American prisoner of war who was captured and tortured by the Japanese but somehow escaped. He washes up on the beach near Dr. Sadao Hoki and Hana's isolated house, and they discern that he's a prisoner of war from his recent bullet wound (reopened by one of the rocks out at sea), his blonde hair, and his U.S. navy cap. Even though Tom is unconscious or sleeping for much of his time with Sadao and Hana, his mere presence forces them to grapple with their conflicting impulses to help a fellow human and to be loyal to one's country. When he is conscious, Tom is scared of Sadao but also deeply grateful to the surgeon for saving his life—praise that Sadao coldly shrugs off. After saving Tom's life through surgery, Sadao knows that he can't allow the American to stay, but nor can he turn the American over to the authorities—the boy will surely die a torturous death. Sadao arranges for the General, an influential patient of his, to have a few assassins come to Sadao's house in the middle of the night to silently kill Tom and do away with his body. When the assassins fail to show up night after night, Sadao decides to take matters into his own hands by helping Tom escape by boat to a nearby island, where he's bound to be saved by a Korean fishing boat. The plan works, and Sadao is ultimately baffled as to why he couldn't just kill Tom, given that Americans are his enemies and he hates all white people. In the story, Tom is the catalyst for human kindness, forcing Sadao and Hana to consider the universality of humankind and the inherent human impulse to be kind.

The General – The General is a sickly man in the Japanese military who suffers from some sort of physical condition that Dr. Sadao Hoki treats. According to Sadao, the General will only be able to survive one more "attack"—he suffers from something that has to do with his gallbladder. Because Sadao can keep the General reasonably healthy and can tend to him so expertly, the General feels indebted to Sadao and is willing to help—and keep quiet—about Tom. The General promises to send a few assassins to Sadao's house to silently kill Tom and do away with his body, releasing Sadao of the burden of having to figure out what to do with the prisoner. Ultimately, the General doesn't follow through with the deal and sheepishly admits to forgetting about the situation altogether. This claim is treated as somewhat suspect in the story, leaving open the possibility that the General, too, didn't want the American to die because he saw him as a fellow human rather than an enemy. This interpretation is bolstered by the fact that the General, like Sadao, went to college in America, and perhaps his Princeton education and connection to America forced him to see people of other races and nationalities as fellow humans rather than political enemies or objects of racial prejudice. However, it's possible that the sickly General—whose very position implies fierce patriotism and a generally pro-war sensibility—truly did forget to send the assassins and did consider Tom an enemy. The General is possibly the same person as General Takima, though the story doesn't confirm this.

The Gardener – The elderly gardener is one of the servants who works for Dr. Sadao Hoki and Hana. Like the cook, he's been an instrumental part of the household ever since Sadao was just a boy. He is fiercely loyal to Sadao's father, who is dead at the outset of the story. The gardener is especially skilled with

flowers and moss; in his younger years, he created "one of the finest moss gardens in Japan" for Sadao's father. He refers to Sadao's father as "my old master" and Sadao as "my old master's son," demonstrating his lopsided loyalty to Sadao's father over Sadao. This, coupled with his old age, suggests that the gardener clings to traditions, superstitions, and mindsets of the past. Even though Sadao and Hana are fairly traditional, the gardener aligns himself with Sadao's father's belief in racial purity, Japanese superiority, and the "old Japanese way" of doing things. Like the other servants, the gardener resents Sadao for saving Tom—besides his racist reasons for believing Tom should die, he also superstitiously believes that saving Tom from the sea will make the sea take revenge on Sadao and his family. The gardener eventually cuts ties with the family and leaves the household because of Tom. However, like the other servants, the gardener returns once Tom is gone, suggesting that the gardener was too engrained in the household—and too devoted to the memory Sadao's father—to truly leave.

Yumi – Yumi is one of the servants at Dr. Sadao Hoki and Hana's house. She largely tends to the children and is seen with them far more than Hana herself is. Like the gardener, she is openly prejudiced against Tom and speaks critically of Sadao and Hana for saving a white man. She is so frightened by Sadao and Hana's lawbreaking and shocking empathy for the enemy that she stubbornly refuses to follow orders and eventually leaves the household altogether with the gardener and the cook. Her tear-soaked departure comes as an emotional blow for Hana (who is in charge of the servants) and for Yumi herself, who cares for the two children as if they are her own. She is distraught at the thought of what would happen to the children if their father was found out as a "traitor." When Tom escapes, Yumi quickly returns to her post and resumes taking care of the children. However, Yumi insists on burning Sulphur in the guest room, where Tom had been staying, "to get the white man's smell out of it."

The Cook – The cook is one of Dr. Sadao Hoki and Hana's servants. She is critical of her "young master," implying that she is more loyal to Sadao's father, even though he is dead. Like the gardener, the cook has worked in the household since Sadao was a little boy. She believes Sadao to be arrogant and undiscerning in the way he employs his talents, "so proud of his skill to save life that he saves any life." Besides their unflinching loyalty to Sadao's father, the cook and the gardener are also linked in their loyalty to the "old Japanese way" of doing things—seen, for instance, through the way that the cook kills a live fowl for dinner and carefully saves the blood for the gardener to use, since "Blood is the best of fertilisers." Condemning Sadao and Hana's decision to save Tom and nurse the white man back to health, the cook tearfully quits and leaves the household with Yumi and the gardener. The servants swiftly return once Tom is gone, however, suggesting that they are deeply rooted to the household.

Sadao's Father – Dr. Sadao Hoki's father is dead from the outset of the story, but his presence lingers throughout the story due to Sadao's reflections and the servants' loyalty to their "old master." At the start of the story, Sadao thinks about how his harsh, domineering father, "who never joked or played with him," pushed Sadao toward the best education possible, even if that meant sending him to a university in America. In life, Sadao's father was a Japanese nationalist who believed firmly in racial purity—Sadao could only marry Hana if she was purely Japanese. He cleaved to the "old Japanese way" of doing things, seen by the way he properly arranged Sadao and Hana's marriage (even though they met in college in America) and ensured that his bedroom was outfitted in a traditional Japanese fashion and contained only Japanese-made furniture and goods. The cook and the gardener both worked for Sadao's father when Sadao was just a little boy, and as such they are far more loyal to their "old master" than the "young master." When Tom enters into the picture, it is this loyalty to Sadao's father (plus an understandable dose of fear of being seen as traitors by the authorities) that lead the gardener and the cook to quit and leave the household after several decades of working there. When Tom "escapes" (that is, when Sadao helps him steal away to a nearby island where he's bound to be picked up by a Korean fishing boat), the servants return, suggesting that their roots in the household and their devotion to Sadao's father's memory was far too deep to sever permanently.

Sadao's Anatomy Professor – As he's performing an emergency surgery on Tom to remove the bullet lodged near his kidney, Dr. Sadao Hoki thinks back fondly on his strict anatomy professor from college in America. The professor was adamant that his students understand every minute detail of the human body—performing surgery without this intimate knowledge is "murder," the professor said. Sadao implies that his success as a surgeon largely stems from this one anatomy professor's teaching and influence, and this man is also the only American that Sadao doesn't outright despise in the story. The professor believed fervently in "mercy with the knife," gesturing to the undertones of human compassion and altruism that run throughout the story. Although Sadao seems to genuinely respect his anatomy professor, at the end of the story, Sadao lumps him in with all of the "white and repulsive" faces he's known throughout his life. Thus, Sadao's anatomy professor challenges Sadao's narrow prejudices, but his influence, though profound professionally, doesn't overturn Sadao's way of thinking.

The American Landlady – When Dr. Sadao Hoki moved to the United States for college, he struggled to find housing because he was Japanese. Only one landlady—"fat and slatternly"—welcomed him into her home. Instead of feeling grateful for her open-mindedness and generous spirit, Sadao "had despised the ignorant and dirty old woman" who "house[d] him in her miserable home." Sadao implies that the woman was

somewhat hesitant to accept Sadao as a tenant—she "at last consented" to welcome him into her home, which suggests racism on her end. However, his further reflections paint her as a kindly woman who was willing to help him when no one else would. Sadao reflects that "he had once tried to be grateful to her" when he fell sick with the flu and she kindly nursed him back to health—"but it was difficult, for she was no less repulsive to him in her kindness." This reflection comes in the closing lines of the story, leaving readers with the unsettling and unsatisfying realization that Sadao hasn't really changed. He thinks to himself that "Americans were full of prejudice and it had been bitter to live in it, knowing himself their superior." Sadao meets racism with racism; although he's given into the human impulse to help a fellow human by saving Tom (whose face, Sadao still thinks, is "white and repulsive"), his deep-rooted prejudices and nationalist sentiments are still intact.

General Takima – General Takima is a famed Japanese war hero. While observing Tom's peculiar wounds—which indicate that he's endured some type of torture at the hands of the Japanese—Hana reflects on how General Takima "beat his wife cruelly" in the privacy of their own home, but how "no one mentioned it now that he had fought so victorious a battle in Manchuria." Hana wonders, "If a man like that could be so cruel to a woman in his power, would he not be cruel to one like this for instance?" Although Hana desperately wants to believe that Tom hasn't been tortured, she knows that he has. This makes her doubt the media's claims "that wherever the Japanese armies went the people received them gladly, with cries of joy at their liberation." Thinking of General Takima's disparate public and private personas forces Hana to consider that the Japanese authorities might not be wholly good, perfect, and heroic as nationalist sentiments may lead her to believe. This moment of doubt is fairly fleeting for Hana, though the relative lengthiness of her reflection in relation to the rest of the narrative suggests that the moment is a significant one for her. General Takima's abuse of his wife—which seems widely known, given that "no one mentioned it now"—also emphasizes the way that strict gender roles can be abused, and suggests that Hana and Dr. Sadao Hoki's marriage, though traditional, is a positive one.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

DECISIONS AND DUTY

In "The Enemy," set in Japan during World War II, a severely injured American prisoner of war named Tom washes up on the beach alongside the secluded home of a Japanese doctor named Dr. Sadao Hoki and his wife, Hana. For the bulk of the story, Sadao struggles to reconcile his duty as a surgeon, which goes directly against the grain of his duty as a loyal Japanese citizen. His occupation as a surgeon, and an extremely talented one at that, compels him to save a life whenever possible, even if it belongs to a white enemy. Meanwhile, his Japanese citizenship and heritage requires him to unflinchingly turn the white man over to the authorities, even though the man will surely die a painful, torturous death at their hands. Alongside this primary conflict, Sadao also grapples with his duty as the head of the household to tend to his wife, children, and servants. All of these responsibilities pull Sadao in conflicting directions, challenging his deep-rooted beliefs about his identity and role in his household, his country, and the wider world. Ultimately, Pearl S. Buck suggests that though the duty to one's country and family is great, the duty to one's self—like Sadao's convictions as a surgeon—is greater.

Sadao's duty to his country is a dangerous undercurrent in the story. If Sadao doesn't perform his duty as a surgeon, Tom will die, but if Sadao instead performs the surgery and betrays his duty as a Japanese citizen, Sadao (and probably his whole family) will die at the hands of the authorities. Early on in the story, Sadao parrots an antagonistic, wartime ideology that neatly shelves all white people as Japan's enemies: "I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy." His short, staccato sentences imply that he's reciting an ideology that's been repeatedly drilled into him. Hana too, makes a similar observation. Even though she and Sadao both went to college in the United States and had American classmates and teachers, "[Tom] was the first [white man] she had seen since she left America and now he seemed to have nothing to do with those whom she had known there. Here he was her enemy, a menace, living or dead." Hana's specification of the word "Here," meaning Japan, emphasizes her country's role in vilifying Americans, and how accepting that ideology is part of being a patriotic citizen. Sadao explicitly references his country's unforgiving stance at helping an enemy: "If we sheltered a white man in our house we should be arrested and if we turned him over as a prisoner, he would certainly die." Even the General—Sadao's most influential and powerful patient—reaffirms that Sadao would surely be arrested and even sentenced to death if news of his traitorous actions got out.

Alongside his duty as a Japanese citizen, Sadao's responsibility as the head of the household also pulls him in different directions, as it requires him to be a good son, husband, father, and employer, which are sometimes at odds. Much of Sadao's

concerns about sheltering Tom stem from Hana's own anxieties about the situation. As a husband in a traditional Japanese marriage, Sadao should be protecting Hana—not a random white prisoner of war. Even when they first stumble across Tom, Hana says to Sadao with surprising firmness, "We must simply tell [the servants] that we intend to give him over to the police—as indeed we must, Sadao. We must think of the children and your position. It would endanger all of us if we did not give this man over as a prisoner of war." In this moment, Sadao agrees with Hana's conviction, declaring, "Certainly [...] I would not think of doing anything else." Of course, Sadao *does* think of other ways to handle the situation and fails to hand Tom over to the police, showing the strength of his convictions as a surgeon.

Sadao's status as an acclaimed surgeon is at the forefront of the story, as much of the plot centers around Sadao skillfully tending to Tom's wounds and nursing him back to health, albeit ambivalently. Sadao's unparalleled talent as a surgeon, and the fact that he loses sight of all else during an operation, suggests that surgery and medicine are an inherent part of Sadao's self; his duty as a surgeon to preserve lives is also a duty to himself. This is why Sadao eventually bends to this duty and skirts the others—and why the story lauds him even in his imperfections. Even as Sadao wonders aloud to Hana what they should do with the white man, "his trained hands seemed of their own will to be doing what they could to stanch the fearful bleeding." Likewise, as he skillfully packs sea moss into the man's bullet wound—clearly trying to keep the man from bleeding to death—Sadao thinks and talks of the man as if he wants him to die, claiming that he's just going to throw the man back into the sea or turn him over to the police. In a moment of emotional transparency, Sadao admits to his wife why he's so torn about what to do with Tom: "The strange thing is [...] if the man were whole I could turn him over to the police without difficulty. I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy. And he is only a common fellow. You see how foolish his face is. But since he is wounded..." The surgeon trails off, implying he has a duty to himself and to other people to save lives. When Sadao declares that Tom will surely die unless he is operated on, Hana is aghast, exclaiming, "Don't try to save him! What if he should live!" Sadao sharply replies, "What if he should die?" Sadao's responsibility to save lives eclipses all other concerns—even the towering threat of being seen as a traitor by his country and endangering his wife and children.

Throughout the story, Sadao struggles to come to terms with his conflicting responsibilities and identities. However, the story resists a tidy, feel-good ending. Tom has survived his injuries and has made it to safety all thanks to Sadao, but the protagonist remains cold and prejudiced. Though perhaps disappointing for the reader, Sadao's lingering loyalty to his country is understandable—he's long internalized his own superiority to people of other races and nationalities, and helping anyone who is categorized as an enemy is a death sentence for him and his family. However, the fact that Sadao does choose to prioritize his duty as a surgeon—and by extension, his duty to himself—reveals the necessity of following one's own convictions first and foremost.

HUMANIZATION, KINDNESS, AND ANTAGONISM

Throughout the course of "The Enemy," Dr. Sadao Hoki struggles to come to terms with his conflicting impulses to see Tom—an American prisoner of war who has washed up on the beach alongside Sadao's house—as an inhuman enemy and as a fellow man. The story is set in Japan in the thick of World War II, making it understandable that Sadao, a loyal Japanese citizen, would perceive Tom as an enemy. Even as Sadao embraces this belief, he finds himself treating Tom with a reluctant sort of kindness that reveals Sadao's competing, compassionate impulse to view Tom as a human instead of an enemy. As Sadao and Tom's brief but complicated relationship unfolds, Pearl S. Buck suggests that all humans have the inherent desire to be a loyal global citizen, committed to helping a fellow human regardless of race, nationality, religion, or social standing. Broadening her concern with racism and nationalism, Buck suggests that the human impulse toward kindness is clouded by politics more generally, as it often spurs an antagonistic "us versus them" dynamic.

Sadao initially deems Tom an enemy because of his status as an outsider (due to Tom's white skin and his ties to the United States). In other words, it is racism, nationalism, and the tense wartime climate (all manmade ideas and circumstances) that cloud Sadao's human impulse to treat Tom as a brother and friend. When examining the unconscious Tom on the beach, Sadao muses that the man—who is really a boy, no more than seventeen years old—looks American. He examines the boy's cap more closely and sees the faint letters spelling out "U.S. Navy." Immediately, Sadao declares that this boy is "from an American warship" and is "a prisoner of war." Tom's Americanness compounds Sadao's already profound dislike of the man due to his white skin. Upon confirming that Tom is, in fact, American, Sadao's words take a sharp, political turn, painting the injured, unconscious young boy as a fierce enemy tied to the larger political foe that is the United States. Tying the boy back to politics allows Sadao to dehumanize him and care less for him.

Even as Sadao's country tells him to hate the white man as a whole entity, Sadao (and Hana to a lesser extent) feels a twinge of compassion for the sole white man who washes up on the beach. The fact that Sadao comes in contact with one white man is significant, because it transforms the faceless and nameless white enemy into a helpless, bleeding seventeen-year-old boy named Tom who is frightened, in pain, and deeply grateful for his unexpected hosts, aloof as they are. Sadao

voices this sentiment when he tells his wife, "The strange thing is […] if the man were whole I could turn him over to the police without difficulty. I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy. And he is only a common fellow. You see how foolish his face is. But since he is wounded…" Sadao trails off, leaving readers with the sense that his so-called enemy has been made human by a "foolish" face and pools of blood. Though terrified and disdainful of the white man, Hana does not want to turn him over to the authorities, where he's bound to die a torturous death. She declares to her husband, "The kindest thing would be to put him back into the sea." Even though Tom is her enemy on two fronts—he is white and American—Hana's first impulse is to consider what "The kindest thing" to do would be in this situation.

Furthermore, she and her husband go on to do an even kinder thing by bringing the bleeding enemy into their home and nursing him back to health—even though they're not quite sure why they're doing so. Operating on the unconscious Tom, Sadao mindlessly whispers to him, "[The bullet] is not quite at the kidney, my friend." The narrative points out that "it was [Sadao's] habit to murmur to the patient when he forgot himself in an operation. 'My friend,' he always called his patients and so now he did, forgetting that this was his enemy." Significantly, Sadao's profound act of human kindness—saving the enemy's life through surgery and housing him illegally—actually helps Sadao momentarily forget that Tom is, in fact, supposed to be an enemy. In this moment, Tom is simply a friend. Later, as Tom recovers, Hana kneels at his bedside and feeds him: "'Now you will soon be strong,' she said, not liking him and yet moved to comfort him." This inexplicable pull to gently care for and comfort an enemy is one of the central strands of the story, emphasizing humankind's universality, goodness, and capacity to take care of one another.

In the story, Sadao acts on this impulse to be kind to a fellow human in two major ways, first by saving Tom's life through surgery, and then by saving Tom's life from the assassins and authorities by helping him slip away in the night to a nearby island. However, Sadao's altruism is ultimately unsatisfying. As gazes out toward the island, Sadao thinks to himself "although without reason" about all the "other white faces he had known." His thoughts are far from compassionate, as he thinks bitterly about Americans like the "ignorant and dirty," "fat and slatternly landlady" who took care of him when he had the flu in college. These recollections of other white people he's known come to him "without reason," revealing that Sadao's arc is anti-epiphanic. Although Sadao's impulse to perceive an enemy as a fellow human has risen to the surface several times throughout the story, he stuffs it back down, reverting to ideological antagonism. However, hope is not lost—as the story has repeatedly demonstrated, Sadao does harbor these feelings of compassion for all humans, which can rise to the surface again.

RACISM AND NATIONALISM

Set in Japan during World War II, "The Enemy" follows renowned surgeon Dr. Sadao Hoki and his wife, Hana, as they struggle to decide what to do with an American prisoner of war who has washed up on the beach alongside their house. The prisoner, a white teenager named Tom, is badly injured due to a fresh gunshot wound—evidence of his recent (and narrow) escape from Japanese authorities—and Sadao feels compelled as a surgeon to save the boy's life. However, Tom's presence in the household is largely unwelcome, on account of his whiteness and Americanness, two things that squarely mark him as an enemy. As the story unfolds, Tom challenges, but doesn't overturn, Sadao's deeply engrained prejudice toward Americans and his conviction of his own superiority as a Japanese man.

Throughout the story, Sadao and other characters make claims of Japanese ethnocentrism and authority, depicting the Japanese as the pinnacle of humankind. Initially, this appears as benign or even positive patriotism. In a flashback from Sadao's childhood at the beginning of the story, Sadao's father gazes at the islands in the distance while on vacation in the South Seas and tells his son, "Those islands yonder, they are the stepping stones to the future for Japan." Young Sadao asks his father, "Where shall we step from them?" to which his father replies, "Who knows? […] Who can limit our future?" This seemingly healthy optimism and belief in greatness for the future of Japan soon shifts into poisonous territory. At the very end of the story, thinking back to his time in college at an American university, Sadao thinks about how "Americans were full of prejudice and it had been bitter to live in it, knowing himself their superior." In this way, the story begins and ends with a statement of Japanese greatness and superiority, revealing nationalism as one of the story's principal concerns.

The story's intervening moments also reveal the characters' dangerously narrow and arrogant mindsets, steeped in nationalistic ideology. As Sadao and Hana carry Tom into the guest bedroom—which used to belong to Sadao's father and has not been used since his death—the narrative provides further insight into Sadao's father's attitude toward Japan versus the rest of the world: "Everything here [in the bedroom] had been Japanese to please the old man, who would never in his own home sit on a chair or sleep in a foreign bed." Although Sadao's father has since died, his memory—and his staunch nationalism—lives on in his aging, loyal servants, the cook and the gardener. They, too, espouse racist and nationalistic sentiments, refusing to call Tom by his name and instead only calling him "the white man." They also declare that because Hana and Sadao attended college in America, they have been defiled and are no longer capable of putting their own country first. To add insult to injury, just before they quit, the servants accuse Sadao and Hana of actually *liking* Americans, which

comes as a severe emotional blow for the couple.

Despite these frequent, loud declarations of nationalism and racism, there a few moments throughout the story that quietly, albeit significantly, challenge Sadao and Hana's belief in their own superiority. One of the most crucial images in the story is that of Hana reluctantly tending to Tom's injuries even though she's reticent to even touch a white person. As she brings the anesthetic up to Tom's nose, she crouches close to Tom's sleeping face, which is "piteously thin." She can tell by his "twisted" lips that the unconscious man is "suffering whether he knew it or not." This observation leads her to think about the rumors she's heard about the horrifyingly inhumane way that Japanese authorities treat their prisoners of war. For some inexplicable reason (he's the enemy, after all), Hana "hope[s] anxiously that this man had not been tortured." Just then, she notices ugly, crimson **scars** laced on the American's neck, just under his ears, and knows that the rumors must be true. In this moment, Hana elevates her wish for Tom's safety over her belief in her country and its methods, which is a brief but powerful rejection of the racism and nationalism she's clung to thus far.

Likewise, Sadao helps Tom several times throughout the course of the story—first by bringing him into the house, then by performing emergency surgery on him, and finally by helping him escape to a nearby island—though he never understands why he's helping the American. At the end of the story, Sadao looks out at the island he's helped Tom escape to (where Tom would then hitch a ride with a Korean fishing boat and be brought to safety). When he sees that the island is completely dark—there's no sign of Tom or the flashlight Sadao had begrudgingly gifted him—Sadao is relieved to realize that Tom is finally safe. Although this reflection seems like Sadao has finally changed his racist ways, his thoughts immediately turn to hostile recollections of the all the Americans he's ever known. As he thinks bitterly of their "white faces" one by one, his mind's eye then rests on the face of his white prisoner, "white and repulsive." Sadao simply thinks to himself, "Strange, […] I wonder why I could not kill him?" In the story's anti-epiphanic ending, Sadao is perhaps as prejudiced as ever, but his inability to kill Tom—and his confusion as to why he couldn't manage to do so—reveals a small but significant hope for a world unmarred by racism and nationalism.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

TOM'S SCARS

The deep crimson scars on Tom's neck, evidence of his torture at the hands of Japanese authorities, contain two levels of symbolic significance: they testify to the cruelty of prejudice and war, while also underscoring the human capacity for kindness in the face of violence. On the surface, the scars represent the broader issues of nationalism and racism that run throughout the story. When Hana reluctantly tends to Tom's injuries, thinking him an "enemy" and a "menace," she thinks about the rumors she's heard about how brutally the Japanese treat their prisoners of war. Even though the media loudly proclaims "that wherever the Japanese armies went the people received them gladly, with cries of joy at their liberation," when Hana sees the strange scars just below Tom's ears, she knows that the rumors of Japan's inhumane treatment of its enemies must be true. The story doesn't detail the way in which Tom received his scars—or what, exactly, Hana has heard through the rumor mill—but Buck makes it clear that Tom's scars are symptomatic of some kind of brutal torture. During World War II, the Japanese were known for their unthinkably cruel methods of torture (used as a way to glean valuable information from their prisoners), which were classified as war crimes. They would subject live prisoners of war to deeply inhumane science "experiments," wrap the prisoners in quick-growing bamboo that would gradually asphyxiate them, or hang them with enough slack that the prisoners would slowly suffocate. The red scars just below Tom's ears are perhaps evidence of one of these latter methods of torture.

Significantly, the symbolic meaning of Tom's scars—as reflections of poisonous, dehumanizing nationalism and racism—reverse when Hana privately and "anxiously" hopes that Tom hasn't been tortured. This may point to her desire to believe in her country as ethical and unstained by something as horrendous as torture. However, from that point on in the story, the scars are always mentioned at times in which Hana and Sadao are selflessly helping the American (such as when Hana tenderly washes Tom, when Sadao helps Tom walk a few minutes per day to regain his strength, and when Sadao arranges for Tom to escape to a nearby island by boat). In this way, Tom's scars transform from a symbol of inhumanity and toxic nationalism to a symbol of the inherent human impulse to be good and compassionate to fellow humans, regardless of race, nationality, social class, or religion. Even though she's made it very clear that she sees Tom as an enemy—or perhaps that she knows she *should* see him as an enemy—Hana desperately wants to believe that Tom hasn't been subjected to such unthinkable pain, revealing her underlying compassion for him.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the National Council of Education Research and Training edition of *Vistas* published in 2015.

The Enemy Quotes

He had met Hana in America, but he had waited to fall in love with her until he was sure she was Japanese. His father would never have received her unless she had been pure in her race [...] they had not married heedlessly in America. They had finished their work at school and had come home to Japan, and when his father had seen her the marriage had been arranged in the old Japanese way, although Sadao and Hana had talked everything over beforehand.

Related Characters: Sadao's Father, Hana, Dr. Sadao Hoki

Related Themes:

Page Number: 25-26

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Sadao thinks back on how he met his wife, Hana, at a university in America. In his recollection, Sadao stresses the importance of Hana's Japanese heritage. He claims to have "waited to fall in love with her until he was sure she was Japanese," as if falling in love were something he had control over. This implies that he would not have entangled himself with a non-Japanese girl, especially because of his father's influence. He states that his father wouldn't have "received her unless she had been pure in her race." With this, Sadao suggests that it is not enough to marry a partially or mostly Japanese girl—she must be "pure in her race." This introduces the dangerous undercurrent of racism and nationalism that runs throughout the story, as the Japanese are positioned as wholly superior to all other people. Sadao's father is also concerned with the "old Japanese way" of doing things, unwilling to let different perspectives encroach on tradition.

"What shall we do with this man?" Sadao muttered. But his trained hands seemed of their own will to be doing what they could to stanch the fearful bleeding. He packed the wound with the sea moss that strewed the beach. [...]

"The best thing that we could do would be to put him back in the sea," Sadao said, answering himself. Now that the bleeding was stopped for a moment he stood up and dusted the sand from his hands.

"Yes, undoubtedly that would be best," Hana said steadily. But she continued to stare down at the motionless man.

Related Characters: Hana, Dr. Sadao Hoki (speaker), Tom / The American

Related Themes:

Page Number: 27-28

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Sadao and Hana discover that the strange shape they saw moving across the beach by their house is actually an injured American prisoner of war. Sadao and Hana talk back and forth about what the best mode of action is, though they both remain unmoved. This disparity between what one says and what one does reappears frequently throughout the story. Here, Sadao and Hana talk of what they should do—throw the man back into the sea—because it is safest for them and for the white man. If they brought him into the house, the couple would risk looking like traitors and being sentenced to jail or even death, and if they turned the man over to the authorities, he would certainly be tortured then die. Although the middle-of-the-road option of throwing him into the sea seems safe and logical, neither Sadao nor Hana are able to go through with it. Even Sadao's own hands seem to have a mind of their own, committed to stopping the man's bleeding rather than tossing him back into the sea. This moment reflects Sadao's conflicting duties, as there's no one way to deal with Tom that allows him to be a responsible surgeon, a loyal Japanese citizen, and a good head of the household.

Sadao hesitated again. "The strange thing is," he said, "that if the man were whole I could turn him over to the police without difficulty. I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy. And he is only a common fellow. You see how foolish his face is. But since he is wounded..."

"You cannot throw him back to the sea," Hana said.

Related Characters: Hana, Dr. Sadao Hoki (speaker), Tom / The American

Related Themes:

Page Number: 28

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Sadao explains to his wife why he's so torn about what they should do with Tom. Throughout the story, both Sadao and Hana repeatedly assert that they "care nothing for" Tom, even though their actions say otherwise. It seems that Sadao and Hana are largely trying to convince themselves that they don't care about their fellow human,

dehumanizing him by referring to him as an "enemy." Besides the nationalism and racism embedded in Sadao's words, he also introduces an angle of classism when he says, "he is only a common fellow. You see how foolish his face is." With this assertion, Sadao suggests that he'd be perhaps more inclined to help a more dignified or powerful person. Sadao also implies that Tom's life is less valuable since he's "only a common fellow. This reflects Sadao's arrogance, though the fact that he doesn't act on these words—he instead goes to great lengths to save Tom's life—reveals his impulse to protect and help fellow humans.

> "This man," he thought, "there is no reason under heaven why he should live."

Unconsciously this thought made him ruthless and he proceeded swiftly. In his dream, the man moaned but Sadao paid no heed except to mutter at him.

"Groan," he muttered, "groan if you like. I am not doing this for my own pleasure. In fact, I do not know why I am doing it."

Related Characters: Dr. Sadao Hoki (speaker), Tom / The American

Related Themes:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

Here, Sadao performs an emergency operation on the unconscious white man, Tom, who is bound to die unless Sadao acts quickly. Throughout most of the surgery, Sadao is incredibly gentle and even quietly talks to Tom and calls him "my friend." In this moment, however, Sadao feels aggravated and "ruthless," reminding himself of Tom's political designation as an enemy. Even then, Sadao doesn't botch the surgery, kill Tom, or stop the operation; he merely (and irritably) says, "I am not doing this for my own pleasure. In fact, I do not know why I am doing it." Sadao's words illustrate that he's been inexplicably moved to selflessly help Tom. Sadao and Hana frequently question their own kind actions and behaviors in the story, not understanding why they're being so kind to a man they should hate.

> Watching him, she wondered if the stories they heard sometimes of the sufferings of prisoners were true. They came like flickers of rumour, told by word of mouth and always contradicted. In the newspapers the reports were always that wherever the Japanese armies went the people received them gladly, with cries of joy at their liberation. But sometimes she remembered such men as General Takima, who at home beat his wife cruelly, though no one mentioned it now that he had fought so victorious a battle in Manchuria. If a man like that could be so cruel to a woman in his power, would he not be cruel to one like this for instance?

Related Characters: Tom / The American, General Takima, Hana

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

While Hana administers the anesthetic to Tom during his surgery, she thinks about the rumors she'd heard regarding the Japanese authorities' inhumane treatment of their prisoners. She likens the relationship between prisoner and authority figure to that of a wife and her physically abusive husband. In both instances, the prisoner and wife cannot escape and must only endure the treatment they receive to the best of their abilities. Though Hana doesn't appear to be abused, it seems that this analogy brings Tom's situation closer to home in that he resembles the poorly treated, helpless women Hana knows in her daily life.

This passage is also the only time in which the story mentions a General Takima, posing the question if General Takima is the same person as the old General, one of Sadao's most powerful (and fiercely loyal) patients. If this is the case, it casts doubt on the interpretation that the General intentionally forgot to send his private assassins to Sadao's house to kill Tom, thereby allowing Tom to flee to safety.

> "It is not quite at the kidney, my friend," Sadao murmured. It was his habit to murmur to the patient when he forgot himself in an operation. "My friend," he always called his patients and so now he did, forgetting that this was his enemy.

Related Characters: Dr. Sadao Hoki (speaker), Tom / The American

Related Themes:

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Sadao performs emergency surgery on Tom and dislodges the bullet that is dangerously near Tom's kidney. Sadao loses himself as he performs the surgery, unknowingly collapsing the distinction between "friend" and "enemy." In the world of the surgery, neither politics nor race play a role, as Sadao and Tom are simply surgeon and patient (or surgeon and friend) rather than political enemies. Forgetting his political sensibilities, Sadao is able to see Tom clearly as a friend and fellow human, made of the same flesh and blood as anyone else. With this, Buck emphasizes that nationalism and racism are manmade ideas that cloud people's ability to see one another clearly as brothers and sisters and fellow global citizens.

> "You say you think I can stand one more such attack as I have had today?"

"Not more than one," Sadao said.

"Then certainly I can allow nothing to happen to you," the General said with anxiety. His long pale Japanese face became expressionless, which meant that he was in deep thought. "You cannot be arrested," the General said, closing his eyes. "Suppose you were condemned to death and the next day I had to have my operation?"

"There are other surgeons, Excellency," Sadao suggested.

"None I trust," the General replied. "The best ones have been trained by Germans and would consider the operation successful even if I died."

Related Characters: Dr. Sadao Hoki, The General (speaker), Tom / The American

Related Themes:

Page Number: 40

Explanation and Analysis

After the General's so-called "attack" (some sort of flare-up of a medical problem), he is all the more committed to protecting Sadao—though for his own sake, not Sadao's. The General appears in this passage as a deeply selfish man who cares only for his own well-being. He talks casually about Sadao being arrested or "condemned to death" and then reveals that such a situation would be bad because the General needs Sadao around to operate on him. Besides just being selfish and insensitive, the General also reveals himself to be racist, as he depicts all Germans as unfeeling.

The General's disregard for anyone but himself suggests that he might be the abusive General Takima whom Hana thought about earlier, though the story doesn't confirm this.

> "That prisoner," he said with some energy, "did I not promise you I would kill him for you?"

"You did, Excellency," Sadao said.

"Well, well!" the old man said in a tone of amazement, "so I did! But you see, I was suffering a good deal. The truth is, I thought of nothing but myself. In short, I forgot my promise to you."

"I wondered, Your Excellency," Sadao murmured.

"It was certainly very careless of me," the General said. "But you understand it was not lack of patriotism or dereliction of duty." He looked anxiously at his doctor. "If the matter should come out you would understand that, wouldn't you?"

Related Characters: Dr. Sadao Hoki, The General (speaker), Tom / The American

Related Themes:

Page Number: 45-46

Explanation and Analysis

Here, the General admits that the reason the assassins never came to Sadao's house to kill Tom is that the General forgot to arrange the whole thing in the first place. In a moment of self-awareness, the General blames himself for being selfish and preoccupied with his fragile health.

However, the General's anxieties about the situation, coupled with his somewhat dramatic assertion of his patriotism, suggest that he might have intentionally let Tom go free. He nervously tells Sadao, "But you understand it was not lack of patriotism or dereliction of duty [...] If the matter should come out you would understand that, wouldn't you?" With this, the General is pressuring Sadao into agreeing that the General merely—and unintentionally—forgot to send the assassins to kill the American. The General's earlier comment about his own American education means that he can understand why Sadao felt compelled to save the American perhaps strengthens this interpretation, which Buck largely leaves up to the reader to discern.

> The Americans were full of prejudice and it had been bitter to live in it, knowing himself their superior. How he had despised the ignorant and dirty old woman who had at last consented to house him in her miserable home! He had once tried to be grateful to her because she had in his last year nursed him through influenza, but it was difficult, for she was no less repulsive to him in her kindness. Now he remembered the youthful, haggard face of his prisoner—white and repulsive. "Strange," he thought. "I wonder why I could not kill him?"

Related Characters: Dr. Sadao Hoki (speaker), The American Landlady, Tom / The American

Related Themes:

Page Number: 46-47

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the story, Sadao looks out over the ocean and thinks about how Tom must be safe now. This tender, almost poignant moment is shattered, however, when Sadao thinks of all the other Americans he's known throughout his lifetime. He saves particularly blistering criticism for his landlady, whom he deems "ignorant," "repulsive," and "dirty," among other unflattering things. He also attacks her home, and indirectly, her occupation as a landlady, calling it "miserable." Strangely, he doesn't deny that she was the only landlord willing to house a Japanese tenant, nor does he fail to mention that she kindly "nursed him through influenza," making his scathing hatred of her feel somewhat confusing and displaced. Sadao ironically blames Americans for their prejudice while simultaneously declaring his own superiority, clearly spouting off prejudice of his own. Although this moment reveals that Sadao is far from being a changed man after his experience with Tom, it also speaks to the way that all people are susceptible to giving into self-importance and poisonous prejudices.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

THE ENEMY

Dr. Sadao Hoki lives in his childhood home in Japan, nestled between pine trees and a small beach. When he was a little boy, he used to climb the pines as if they were the palm trees he'd seen in his frequent visits to the islands of the South Seas. On every visit to the islands, Sadao's father would say, "Those islands yonder, they are the stepping stones to the future for Japan." Once, Sadao had asked his father, "Where shall we step from them?" His father had answered, "Who knows? [...] Who can limit our future? It depends on what we make it."

The story opens with a flashback from Sadao's childhood, which immediately establishes his father's Japanese patriotism and belief in Japan's capacity for greatness. Sadao's father also initially appears to be a warm, encouraging father figure, which the story will soon complicate.

Growing up, Sadao's father never "joked or played" with Sadao but "spent infinite pains upon him who was his only son." Sadao's father's "chief concern" was his son's education. When Sadao was 22, his father sent him to school in America to become a doctor. Sadao returned to Japan when has was 30 and quickly became a famed surgeon and scientist.

Sadao's father immediately transforms from a seemingly warm, compassionate father encouraging his son to reach for greatness to a cold, harsh man who pushes his son to be the best. The fact that Sadao's education is his father's "chief concern" also points to the story's preoccupation with duty.

When World War II broke out, Sadao had been working on an important medical discovery. For this reason—and because he needed to be near the General, who "might need an operation"—Sadao was required to stay in Japan rather than join the war effort.

This passage introduces the many facets of Sadao's identity and the different duties that accompany those identities. As a Japanese citizen, he has a duty to do whatever his country asks of him, and as a skilled surgeon, he has a duty to tend to his patients.

Back in the present, Sadao looks out over his expansive property and admires the mist "wreathing around the pines" and "creeping up the beach." His wife, Hana, joins him outside, quietly wrapping him into an embrace. Sadao thinks back to how he met Hana in college in America, but "had waited to fall in love with her until he was sure she was Japanese." Sadao's father never would have approved of the marriage had Hana not been "pure in her race."

Sadao's father sees it as his responsibility to ensure his son is in a proper marriage, and he also considers it his duty as a Japanese man—a nationalistic one, at that—to ensure that the bride is "pure in her race." The fact that Sadao waited "to fall in love" with Hana—not just waited to marry her—shows the extent to which he bends to his father's will.

Sadao and Hana met at their college professor's house. The kindly professor and his wife had been "anxious to do something for their few foreign students" and invited them over. Sadao had almost skipped the gathering—the professor's house was small, the food was bad, and the professor's wife was too chatty. He had gone anyways, though, and the moment he saw Hana, he "had felt he would love her if it were at all possible."

The college professor is one of the many American characters that Sadao reflects upon ambivalently. The professor seems kind and well-intentioned in wanting to make his international students feel accepted, but Sadao meets this kindness with sharp criticisms of the professor's house, food, and wife, revealing Sadao's own arrogance.

Although they "had talked everything over beforehand," Sadao and Hana waited to marry until they had both finished school, returned to Japan, and ensured that Sadao's father could arrange the marriage according to "the old Japanese way." They've been happily married for several years now and have two children.

Once again, the story illustrates the ways in which its characters cleave to their duties. Here, Sadao and Hana have a duty to their families and to their heritage, preserving "the old Japanese way" of doing things.

Back in the present, Sadao and Hana suddenly notice "something black" in the mist and realize it's a man. He slogs through the breaking waves and stumbles onto the beach, soon falling to his knees and crawling across the sand before going unconscious. Thinking the man is a washed-up fisherman, Sadao and Hana rush down to the secluded beach.

The man—later revealed as a white American named Tom—is ironically introduced here as "something black," even though his whiteness is the crux of his identity and the reason he is deemed an enemy. Meanwhile, Hana and Sadao's impulse to run and help the man—whom at this point they assume to be a Japanese fisherman—shows the human impulse to be kind and helpful to others.

When they reach the beach, Sadao realizes the man is badly wounded, as his blood is already seeping into the sand. He turns the unconscious man's head and peers into his face—with a gasp, Hana and Sadao see that he is white. The man's soggy cap falls off, revealing a head of scraggly blonde hair. On "his young and tortured face" is an unkempt blonde beard.

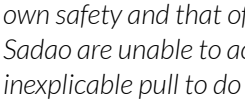
The story subtly uses the word "tortured" here as a way of foreshadowing Hana's later meditations on political antagonism and Japanese torture methods. Meanwhile, the details of the man's long, disheveled hair and beard suggest that he's been wandering on his own or kept as prisoner for a long time.

Sadao's "expert fingers" look for the man's wound. Sadao finds that the man has a gunshot wound in his lower back, and that the wound was inflicted only a few days ago. Sadao thinks that one of the jagged rocks on the coastline reopened the wound, which is why the man is bleeding so profusely now. Sadao wonders aloud what they should do with the man, "But his trained hands seemed of their own will to be doing what they could to stanch the fearful bleeding." After packing the wound sufficiently with sea moss, Sadao turns to Hana and declares that "the best thing" would be to toss the man back into the sea. She agrees, but neither she nor Sadao moves.

Interestingly, there is a discrepancy between what Sadao says and does, which is a thread that runs throughout the story. This reveals Sadao's divided loyalties—as a surgeon, he feels compelled to save the man, and his "expert fingers" and "trained hands seemed of their own will." Meanwhile, as a Japanese citizen, Sadao knows that he shouldn't have anything to do with the white man.

Sadao says that if they brought the man into their house, both Sadao and Hana would be arrested; however, if they turned the man over to the Japanese authorities, the man "would certainly die." Hana agrees that the "kindest thing" they could do would be to push him back out to sea. Hana and Sadao remain motionless, peering down at the injured white man. Sadao thinks the man looks American and picks up the man's cap. Stamped across the front in fading letters is "U.S. Navy." They realize that the man is a prisoner of war who had narrowly escaped, and that is why he was shot in the back.

Even though the man is a political enemy, Hana is concerned with doing the "kindest thing" for him (throwing him back into the sea rather than turning him over to the police) while still preserving her own safety and that of her family. Once again, though, Hana and Sadao are unable to act on convictions, suggesting a deep, inexplicable pull to do something even kinder for the man.



After a moment, Hana says they need to put the man back into the sea, though she refuses to be the one to do it. Sadao feels he can't do it either; he thinks that he could easily hand the man over to the authorities if he weren't wounded. Sadao tells his wife, "I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy." He adds that the man is clearly just a "common fellow," too, judging by his "foolish" face. However, "since he is wounded…" Sadao trails off, and Hana says the only thing left to do is take the white man into their house.

Here, Sadao voices the conflict between his duty as a surgeon and his duty as a Japanese citizen. His status as a surgeon means that it is his responsibility to save lives whenever possible, even if that life has a "foolish face" and is an American. As the story goes on, it's clear that Sadao's occupation is an inextricable part of his identity. Thus, his duty as a surgeon to save his patients' lives is also largely a duty to himself, which is why his conviction is so strong.

Sadao wonders what they'll tell the servants; Hana says they "must" tell the servants that they're only bringing the man into the house to then turn him over to the police—"as indeed we must." She says that they "must" consider what would happen to the children if they didn't turn the man in. Sadao agrees, firmly declaring that he "would not think of doing anything else." They hoist the man up and carry him into the house and through the many passageways.

Hana's repeated use of the word "must" reveals that duty is also important to her. As the mistress of the house, she "must" be open with her servants and make sure they respect her. As a Japanese citizen, she "must" follow the law. As a mother, she "must" prioritize her children's safety. And, as a wife, it's her duty to recite all of this to Sadao, ensuring that her husband makes the proper choice.

Sadao and Hana bring the man to the room that once belonged to Sadao's father. The room is still in immaculate condition, outfitted only with Japanese goods—"Everything here had been Japanese to please the old man, who would never in his own home sit on a chair or sleep in a foreign bed." Hana pulls a delicate silk blanket from the cupboard but hesitates, seeing how dirty the man is. Sadao says he will wash the man, but Hana objects, declaring, "I cannot bear for you to touch him."

Even though Sadao's father doesn't appear in the story outside of Sadao's earlier flashbacks, the old man's presence is palpable. His perfectly preserved room suggests that perhaps his nationalistic sentiments have also been preserved and will live on in the household. This seems likely, as Hana's earlier compassion dissolves into racism when she tells her husband not to touch the white man.

Sadao and Hana agree that Yumi, the servant who tends to the children, should be the one to wash the man. Sadao stoops down to check the young man's pulse; it's fainter than ever, and Sadao announces that the man requires surgery this instant. Shocked, Hana cries out, "Don't try to save him! What if he should live?" Sadao simply replies, "What if he should die?"

Sadao and Hana's interaction succinctly sums up the theme of humanization, kindness, and antagonism. Although Sadao has nationalistic sympathies and is deeply racist, his status as a surgeon compels him in this moment to simply see the man as a life that needs saving. Meanwhile, the fact that this man is an outsider leads Hana to believe that his life has no value and is not worth saving.

Sadao swiftly leaves the room, and Hana follows, not wanting "to be left alone with the white man." Although she went to college in America, this is the first white man she's seen since, and "now he seemed to have nothing to do with those whom she had known there." "Here," though, the white man is "her enemy, a menace, living or dead."

Here, Hana's thoughts explore the geopolitical boundaries that frame the story. The word "Here" points to Japan and the climate of World War II, suggesting that time and place is what dictates the white man's status as an enemy. Hana's thoughts also seem uncharacteristically mechanical and cold here, implying that she's parroting a political ideology that's been drilled into her.

Meanwhile, Sadao tells the gardener about the white man. When Sadao is out of earshot, the gardener firmly tells Hana that Sadao "ought not to" help a white man, and that the man "ought to die." He explains that the man was shot, and "Then the sea caught him and wounded him with her rocks." If Sadao undoes the wounds that the gun and rocks inflicted, the sea will "take revenge" on their household.

Like Hana's earlier repetition of the word "must," the gardener's repeated use of "ought" also reveals his commitment to duty. The old gardener suggests that it's their duty to nature to not undo the wounds "she" inflicted upon the white man.

Hana and Yumi go to the white man, and Hana instructs the servant girl to wash him. She refuses, declaring that she has "never washed a white man" and will not start now. Hana yells at Yumi to do as she's told, but Yumi still refuses and leaves the room. Enraged, Hana begins cleaning the white man herself, thinking, "Stupid Yumi [...] Is this anything but a man? And a wounded helpless man!" She thinks these tender thoughts, "though not really liking the man." She puts the silk blanket on him in case he gets cold.

It seems that Yumi's blatant racism gives Hana a clear view of her own narrow judgments and opinions about the white man. Moments ago, Hana ordered Sadao not to touch the man, but she now compassionately thinks of the prisoner as just "a man," "And a wounded helpless man" at that. She even willingly sacrifices the silk blanket, which she was previously concerned about soiling, just to make the man more comfortable. Hana's attitude is ambivalent, as she feels this strong impulse to be kind to the man despite "not really liking" him.

Sadao enters dressed in his surgeon's coat and carrying his tools. He tersely orders Hana to get towels, and she does so "obediently." She also runs to get extra blankets with which they can protect the expensive floor coverings in Sadao's father's room. When she returns, however, the floor is already soaked with blood. "As if he did not care," Sadao simply says, "Yes, it is ruined." He instructs his wife to give the man an anesthetic, and Hana protests that she's never done that before. As he pulls back the sea moss he had stuffed into the man's wound, Hana begins to gag. Sadao crisply tells her not to faint, as his fingers swiftly tend to the wound.

Here, Hana's duty as a wife—and specifically the wife of a surgeon—tests the limits of what she can stomach, as she steps in as an obedient assistant. Sadao's indifference toward the ruined floor coverings in the otherwise immaculate room that once belonged to his father shows the priority he places on his responsibility as a surgeon and the wellbeing of his patients. It's also significant that the expensive floor coverings in Sadao's father's room (in which every product is Japanese) are now soaked with an American man's blood.

Hana runs out of the room, and Sadao hears her throwing up in the garden. He realizes that she's never seen an operation before, but her reaction makes him feel "impatient and irritable with this man who lay like dead under his knife." Sadao quickens his pace, feeling "ruthless." He thinks that there is "no reason" that this man should live. The unconscious man groans in pain, and Sadao tells him to keep groaning: "groan if you like. I am not doing this for my own pleasure. In fact, I do not know why I am doing it."

Sadao is volatile in this scene, as a reminder of his conflicting duties makes him "impatient and irritable." As a husband, he should go comfort and support his wife, but as a surgeon, he has to be rooted to the spot and continue with the operation to save the patient. Sadao's ambivalence toward the white man begins to take shape, as he speaks of the man's life as if it has no value while simultaneously straining to save it.

Hana returns, and Sadao teaches her how to administer the anesthetic. As she brings the saturated cotton ball to the man's nose, she wonders if there's any truth to the rumors she's heard about how the Japanese torture their prisoners of war. She thinks about how the media confidently claims that everyone loves the Japanese, and "that wherever the Japanese armies went the people received them gladly."

Here, Hana reveals a whisper of doubt about her country's perfect goodness and superiority, wondering if her beloved country is truly capable of committing atrocities like those she's heard of through the rumor mill. As a historical note, the Japanese were notorious for their inhumane torture methods during World War II, considering torture a necessary means to gain intelligence from prisoners.

Hana also thinks of General Takima, who is now a celebrated war hero in public even though he beats his wife viciously in private. Ever since his victory at the battle in Manchuria, no one talked about the way he abuses his wife. Hana wonders, "If a man like that could be so cruel to a woman in his power, would he not be cruel to one like this for instance?" She hopes to herself that the white man has not endured such torture. At that moment, though, she notices dark crimson **scars** on the man's neck, right below his ears.

The man's scars, though not explained in detail, indicate that he has endured Japanese torture firsthand, forcing Hana to grapple with her dangerously wavering loyalty to a country that demands her wholehearted devotion. She also conflates the injured man with General Takima's abused wife, depicting both General Takima and Japan more broadly as forces that are praised in public but inhumane in private.

Meanwhile, Sadao continues with the operation. Suddenly, his fingers hit something hard—it's the bullet, and it's lodged "dangerously close near the kidney." Sadao's American anatomy professor had meticulously trained Sadao so that he was intimately "familiar with every atom" in the human body. Sadao's anatomy professor used to drill into his students that "To operate without as complete knowledge of the body as if you had made it—anything less than that is murder."

Sadao's anatomy professor is the only American that Sadao isn't scathingly critical of in the story. It seems that the man's impressive knowledge of medicine and surgery eclipsed his Americanness in Sadao's eyes.

Sadao talks quietly to his unconscious patient during the operation. It is Sadao's "habit" to talk to his patients as he operates on them, and he "always" calls his patients "my friend." Completely absorbed in his work, Sadao talks to his "friend," "forgetting that this was his enemy." Suddenly, the white man sputters but then falls silent. Afraid the man has died, Sadao takes up the white man's wrist, "hating the touch of it," to check his pulse. The man's pulse is faint, but it is "enough" if Sadao "want[s] the man to live." He firmly tells himself he does not want the man to live.

In the context of the surgery, all political and racial boundaries fall away, as Sadao and the man become a surgeon and a "friend." This speaks to the way Sadao becomes completely absorbed in his operations, placing his duty as a surgeon above all else. The man's sputtering snaps Sadao out of his trancelike absorption in his work, and the boundaries between the two men return; Sadao "hate[s] the touch" of the white man's wrist and affirms that he wants the man to die.

Sadao sharply tells Hana to stop administering anesthetic. Meanwhile, Sadao fills a vial with liquid and stabs it into the man's wrist. The man's pulse grows stronger, and with a sigh, Sadao announces that the white man "will live in spite of it all."

Just as it seems as if Sadao is going to kill the man—administering what appears to be some sort of drug or poison—it turns out that Sadao is actually continuing to save the man's life. Sadao's sigh reveals how torn he is about fulfilling his duties as a surgeon versus as a Japanese citizen.

The white man's eyes open, and he looks terrified. Hana feeds him by hand, since none of the servants will do so. As she lifts the spoon to his mouth, Hana tells the white man he will soon grow strong, "not liking him and yet moved to comfort him."

Once again, Hana treats the man tenderly while "not liking him," showing the conflicting impulse to be kind to a fellow human versus the pull to see him as an enemy because of his whiteness and Americanness.

Several days later, Sadao checks on the white man and finds him sitting up in bed, "his face bloodless with the effort." Sadao commands the man to lie back down, lest he is trying to kill himself. The boy, who looks to be only seventeen years old, nervously asks Sadao what he's going to do with his prisoner. After a moment, Sadao says he's unsure, though he "ought" to turn the boy over to the police.

This is one of the smaller ways in which Sadao saves the prisoner's life. The man—who appears as a young boy now that he's been cleaned up—could accidentally kill himself by straining too hard after the surgery. Sadao could simply let the boy kill himself, but he chooses to save his life again by sharply instructing him to lie back down. Meanwhile, Sadao's use of the word "ought" again brings the duty to one's country to the forefront of the story.

Later, Hana anxiously tells Sadao that the servants have threatened to quit if the white man stays any longer. According to the servants, Sadao and Hana spent so much time in America that they "have forgotten to think of [their] own country first" and now actually *like* Americans. Sadao objects severely, affirming that Americans are the enemy and that he has simply "been trained not to let a man die."

The harshest criticism the servants can muster is that Hana and Sadao actually are fond *of Americans. Folded into this accusation is a criticism of the couple's lack of patriotism, which the servants see as disrespectful and dangerous.*

Snipping a bud off of bush, the gardener proclaims that his "old master's son knows very well what he ought to do." The old gardener has been dedicated to his craft and to the household for a long time. He once created "one of the finest moss gardens in Japan" for Sadao's father, and swept it so frequently that not even a single pine needle touched its perfect surface.

The gardener's old age and loyal ties to Sadao's father suggests that the two are similar in their narrow, prejudiced view of the world. It seems as if the gardener feels he has a duty to his "old master," more so than to his "old master's son," and is thus more critical of Sadao as a result.

The cook says that their "young master," Sadao, is painfully arrogant—he's "so proud of his skill to save life that he saves any life." The cook skillfully splits the neck of a bird they will have for dinner, carefully saving the blood for the gardener to use, since "Blood is the best of fertilisers." Meanwhile, Yumi says that Sadao and Hana are failing to consider their children's wellbeing: "What will be their fate if their father is condemned as a traitor?"

The way that the cook and the gardener share the blood from the fowl links them to the "old Japanese way" of doing things, which Sadao's father was so committed to. The phrase "Blood is the best of fertilisers" is ominous, suggesting that Tom's blood spilt on Japanese land is a good thing for Japan's growth.

Hana knows that her servants are right, but there's also a strange part of her that feels differently. This impulse is "not sentimental liking of the prisoner." Even the other day, when the white man bravely introduced himself as Tom, Hana purposefully ignored him and saw the "hurt in his eyes."

This is the third time that Hana affirms she doesn't like the prisoner—an internal argument that's beginning to sound defensive. This is also one of two times in which Buck uses the word "sentimental" (meant to convey something that is overly emotional or saccharine), which is the very word Buck's critics use to classify and criticize her work.

After a week, the servants band together and all leave on the same day. Hana is devastated but doesn't show it. The servants are all crying—the cook and the gardener have been part of the household since Sadao was a child, while Yumi is distraught to leave the children—but Hana politely thanks them for their service and pays them off. That night, Hana asks Sadao, "Why are we different from other Japanese?"

The servants' concerns are somewhat understandable, as they would perhaps be considered traitors and sentenced to jail (or even death), too, if Tom's presence were made known to the authorities. However, the servants' past jabs at Tom's race and country of origin make it clear that they're also leaving due to prejudice.


Later, Sadao permits Tom to spend a few minutes on his feet per day so that he regains his strength quickly. Tom nervously thanks Sadao for saving his life; Sadao tersely says not to thank him quite yet. Tom looks terrified, and the **scars** on his neck are flushed. Sadao wonders what they're from but doesn't ask.

Tom's scars—evidence of his brutal treatment at the hands of Japanese authorities—appear throughout the story whenever Sadao and Hana are going out of their way to help Tom. In this way, the scars transition from signaling inhumanity to signaling human kindness.

That afternoon, a messenger in uniform arrives, sending Hana into a panic—the servants must have told the authorities about Tom. However, the messenger tells Sadao that he's needed at the palace: "The old General is in pain again." When the messenger leaves, Hana admits that she thought Sadao was going to be arrested. Looking into his wife's "anxious eyes," Sadao says he "must get rid of this man for [her] sake."

Here, Sadao begins thinking further about his duty as a husband. Tom's presence in the house is making Hana extremely anxious, and it's Sadao's responsibility to do what he can to alleviate her anxieties. However, this is at odds with his duty as a doctor, which is to care for the man. Over and over, Sadao finds himself in the position of having conflicting duties, which shows the absurdity of all the characters who define duty in a straightforward and ideological way.

After treating the General, Sadao confides in him about Tom. The General is sympathetic to Sadao's plight, explaining, "I understand fully. But that is because I once took a degree in Princeton. So few Japanese have." Sadao reaffirms that he "care[s] nothing" for the American, but that as a surgeon, he simply had to save the man's life. The General says that this ability to "save anyone" only makes Sadao "more indispensable." The General asks if he will be able to survive another "attack" like he had earlier that day, and Sadao says yes, but only one more. With this in mind, the General says that he must protect Sadao at all costs—"Suppose you were condemned to death and the next day I had to have my operation?"

Although the General says, "I understand fully," and attributes his understanding to his American education, the narrative doesn't reveal what, exactly, the General understands. It seems that Sadao has just explained why he felt compelled as a surgeon to save the man's life. The General's concerns about Sadao's safety are almost comically selfish, as he reveals that he primarily wants to protect Sadao because he needs access to Sadao's surgical skill.

Sadao tells the General that there are other surgeons who could perform the operation. The General admits that the Germans are skilled surgeons, but he doesn't trust them. After all, they "would consider the operation successful even if [the General] died." He wishes that it were possible for the Japanese to "combine the German ruthlessness with the American sentimentality." If that were the case, Sadao could unflinchingly turn Tom over to the police, and the General could be certain that Sadao would take care of him while he was unconscious during his surgery.

Here, the General extends the characters' racist sentiments to Germans, caricaturing and generalizing all Germans as smart but "ruthless" people with no value for human life. Meanwhile, he paints Americans as "sentimental" and soft, existing on the other side of the spectrum. He wants the Japanese to take the perfect middle ground but implies that it's impossible for the Japanese to combine two elements from other cultures—a comment that points back to Sadao's father's overwhelming concern with Japanese purity.

Growing serious, the General says that Tom must be murdered, albeit secretly. He asks Sadao for permission to send a few private assassins in the night to soundlessly kill Tom and do away with his body. Sadao agrees and privately decides not to tell Hana about the plan, as the idea of having assassins in the house would only increase her already profound anxiety. He also thinks about how assassins are "essential in an absolute state such as Japan was. How else could rulers deal with those who opposed them?"

Even though Sadao has struggled to keep Tom alive, he now agrees to have Tom killed, undoing all of his hard work. Sadao's thoughts about Hana reveal that he's making this decision for her sake, trying to perform his duty as a husband to protect and care for her. Meanwhile, Sadao's belief that assassins are "essential in an absolute state" so that people in power have a way to "deal with those who opposed them" reinforces the danger of Sadao's decision to illegally shelter and care for Tom.

When he returns home, Sadao "refuse[s] to allow anything but reason" into his mind. Tom says that he's feeling better, though the muscles on one side of his body are fairly stiff. Instantly "forg[etting] all else," Sadao begins to examine the side of Tom's body, muttering to himself that he thought he "provided against that." He tells Tom that a combination of massage and exercise might help.

Sadao instantly loses himself when the conversation turns medical, emphasizing that his occupation as a surgeon is a deeply engrained part of his identity. Throughout the story, Buck implies that this is why Sadao's convictions as a surgeon are so strong—he has both a duty to his patients and to himself to save lives.

Tom thanks Sadao again for saving his life, claiming, "If I hadn't met a Jap like you—well, I wouldn't be alive today. […] I guess if all the Japs were like you there wouldn't have been a war." Sadao curtly accepts Tom's thanks and tells him to go back to bed.

Although he's trying to be kind and demonstrate his gratitude, Tom uses the slur "Jap" to refer to Sadao and then insults Japanese people as a whole. This shows that prejudice runs both ways in this scenario.

Sadao tosses and turns all night, wondering if the assassins will come. In the morning, though, Tom is still there. On the second night, Sadao again listens carefully, but Tom is still there in the morning. On the third night, Sadao awakens to the sound of a loud crash; he sharply tells Hana to stay put and not investigate the sound. In the morning, Sadao peeks into the guest room, certain Tom will be gone. Once again, Tom is still there, happy and healthy as ever.

As Sadao waits for assassins night after night, his anxiety is palpable. Once again, he tries to live up to his duty as a husband by protecting Hana from the source of the crash—which he thinks is the assassins but the story never explains the cause of.

Sadao is exhausted and tells himself that he can't just sit around and wait for the assassins—"not that he cared for this young man's life. No, simply it was not worth the strain." Sadao quickly formulates a plan and tells Tom about it: Sadao will fill his boat with supplies and leave it on the shore. Later tonight, Tom must take the boat out to the nearest island—it's so close to the mainland "that it has not been worth fortifying." The island is also uninhabited since it is fully submerged during some seasons. Tom is to wait at the island until he sees a Korean fishing boat, which will then take him to safety. Tom is hesitant but knows he doesn't have much of a choice.

Like Hana, Sadao carefully affirms to himself that he does not *like Tom. Sadao's actions say otherwise, though, as he goes out of his way to protect Tom from the assassins and from the Japanese authorities by helping him out of the country.*

At nightfall, Sadao drags his boat to the shore and fills it with supplies. He then returns home as if he has just returned from work. Hana serves him his dinner (even though she is "so modern," she doesn't eat with her husband). Afterwards, Sadao checks on Tom. The boy's pulse is irregular, but Sadao attributes it to "excitement." Tom is otherwise healthy, and "only the **scars** on his neck were red."

Once again, the scars reappear at a moment in which Sadao is going out of his way to help Tom. Once a symbol of Tom's torture at the hands of Japanese authorities, Tom's scars now draw attention to moments of profound (if somewhat reluctant) kindness.

Tom tells Sadao, "I realise you are saving my life again." Sadao sniffs that it's merely "inconvenient" to continue to host the American. Sadao gives his own flashlight to Tom and instructs him to flash it twice at dusk if he runs out of food before catching a ride on a fishing boat. He should not shine the flashlight at night, as it will certainly be seen. Likewise, Tom should not try to cook any of the fish he catches over a fire, as that would also betray his location. Sadao dresses Tom in traditional Japanese garments and covers the boy's blonde hair with a black cloth. The two men shake hands in silence, and Tom leaves.

Although Sadao haughtily says otherwise, it's obvious to both Tom and the reader that Sadao is inexplicably committed to saving Tom. Sadao claims that Tom's presence is "inconvenient," and yet Sadao goes out of his way to gift Tom his own flashlight, boat, supplies, and clothing. If Sadao were truly worried about convenience, he could have just handed Tom over to the police and wiped his hands of the prisoner.

Soon the servants return to the household. Yumi insists on burning Sulphur in Sadao's father's room to purify it and get rid of "the white man's smell." Besides this, no one speaks of Tom.

Yumi rushes to rid the house of any trace of the white man, which is perhaps a way to cover their tracks after illegally housing a prisoner of war—or yet another racist moment and a way to preserve Japanese purity.

That week, Sadao is called to the palace to do emergency surgery on the General. His "gall bladder [is] much involved," and, for twelve hours, Sadao is uncertain if the General will survive. The surgery is a success, though, and once the General begins to regain his strength, Sadao brings up Tom. He tells the General that Tom has escaped. With a sinking feeling, the General realizes that he forgot to arrange for the private assassins to kill Tom. The General hastily declares that it wasn't "dereliction of duty" or a "lack of patriotism" that led him to go back on his word—he simply forgot, as he was selfishly caught up in his own problems.

The General's explanation of why he forgot to send the assassins is longwinded, and his declarations of his own patriotism and commitment to his country and role as General feel over the top and insincere. Buck leaves this moment up to interpretation, challenging her readers to decide if the General really did forget to have Tom killed (wrapped up as he was in his own health) or if he, too, wanted to spare the young prisoner's life.

Sadao insists that he understands entirely; privately, he feels relieved, knowing that the General's own anxieties at appearing incompetent or unpatriotic mean that Sadao is safe, and that the General wouldn't dare tell anyone about Tom. Sadao declares, "I can swear to your loyalty, excellency [...] and to your zeal against the enemy."

The interaction between Sadao and the General continues to feel inauthentic, suggesting that perhaps the General did intentionally let Tom get away.

That night, Sadao gazes out at the island at dusk and is relieved to see that it is completely dark; there is no flash of light, which means Tom is no longer on the island. Sadao thinks Tom is "undoubtedly" safe now, since Sadao had carefully instructed him to wait specifically for a Korean fishing boat.

Sadao seems genuinely relieved that Tom is safe—not because Sadao and Hana will no longer be "inconvenienced," but because Tom has survived against all odds, living through the war, Japanese torture, being lost at sea, emergency surgery, and then escaping the country.

As Sadao looks out at the sea, he thinks about all of the other white people he's known over his lifetime. There was the "dull" professor and his "silly talkative" wife who had hosted the foreign students at their home (the night Sadao met Hana), as well as his anatomy professor, who had been emphatic about "mercy with the knife."

Strangely, Sadao lumps his anatomy professor in with all of the Americans he's disliked over his lifetime. His one criticism of the anatomy professor—if it can even be considered that—is the professor's commitment to "mercy with the knife." Even though Sadao himself has shown Tom "mercy with the knife," perhaps he considers this another reflection of American sentimentalism.

Of course, there was also the "fat and slatternly landlady." It had been a struggle for Sadao to find housing in America, and this "ignorant and dirty old woman" was the only one who would accept a Japanese tenant in her "miserable home," though she had been hesitant at first. Sadao thinks about how "Americans were full of prejudice and it had been bitter to live in it, knowing himself their superior." He also thinks about the time that he caught the flu, and his landlady nursed him back to health—but "she was no less repulsive to him in her kindness." Sadao then thinks about Tom's "white and repulsive" face and wonders why he couldn't kill him.

Sadao is most critical of his landlady in America, who was the only landlord willing to take on a Japanese tenant (though Sadao implies that she did have some initial hesitations). Sadao depicts the landlady as being generally kind, if somewhat unrefined, which makes her seem undeserving of his harsh and antagonistic words. It seems that Sadao hasn't been changed profoundly. He thinks about Tom's "white and repulsive" face and seems genuinely puzzled as to why he let Tom live. The story resists a clean ending, suggesting instead that Sadao is a deeply nuanced, human character with the capacity for both cruelty and kindness. Though he has returned to his prejudiced mindset, his actions over the course of the story give readers hope that he will turn toward kindness again.

HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Weeks, Rachel. "*The Enemy.*" *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 29 Nov 2018. Web. 21 Apr 2020.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Weeks, Rachel. "*The Enemy.*" LitCharts LLC, November 29, 2018. Retrieved April 21, 2020. https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-enemy.

To cite any of the quotes from *The Enemy* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

MLA

Buck, Pearl. The Enemy. National Council of Education Research and Training. 2015.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Buck, Pearl. The Enemy. New Delhi: National Council of Education Research and Training. 2015.