

# The Enemy

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## Supplementary Reader : Vistas

Reading with insight :

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

Ans : The central idea of the story 'Enemy' written by Pearl S. Buck is humanity versus national loyalty of a citizen. The hero of the story. Dr. Sadao an eminent Japanese surgeon found himself caught between the Devil and the deep sea. When the wounded young man arrived at his house, sadao knew that he was American prisoner of war and an enemy of Japan. As a Japanese it was his loyal duty to handover the youngman to police or any other state authority in Japan. He knew that as a loyal citizen he should have treated the young man as an enemy. But he could not do so. As a doctor his duty was to treat a patient irrespective of caste and creed of a patient. A doctor's primary duty is to cure and not to kill.

It was his normal obligation to patient who came seeking his treatment. The wounded American youngman was dying for want of proper health care. A doctor is like a

Demi God and his primary duty to treat and save life of a patient without considering him as enemy. A doctor should treat a patient disregarding his caste, creed and nationality.

On the contrary a doctor or surgeon is also an individual member of a society and nation. He can not neglect his service and duty to his nation. Sadao, the surgeon is a Japanese and he should not do anything against the interest of his nation. He should have handed over the American to the Japanese state authority. But as humanist he thought it to be his normal duty to help a fellow man in distress.

Sadao is not the only person to face such a predicament. Rather he may be called an example. Every man at certain time faces such a situation.

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

Ans : At first Hana did not like the American soldier coming to their house on the rocky shore of the sea. She told Sadao that it would be better if the wounded man died on the shore. Even after he arrived at their house and Sadao attended him, as a doctor should attend a patient, Hana did not like to co-operate him in treating the wounded soldier. The domestic staff also did not help. When Sadao got ready to operate the man and asked Hana to help him in applying anaesthesia to the man

Hana agreed. Sadao asked her to hold the medicated cotton near the nostrils of the patient. Accordingly she leaned over the patient and saw his pitiable thin lips. She felt that no matter the man was conscious or unconscious he was in great pain. Observing the man she thought that the sad stories they have heard about the war prisoners were true. These sad stories came like flashlights and people generally think them as false.

As reported in the newspaper, people generally welcome the Japanese soldiers whenever they are sent. Hana also recollected that people like General Takima beat their wives while they remain at home. But after their victory in Manchuria nobody in the country tells about beating their wives. If the General behaved so cruelly with his wife, why would not he behave cruelly with the enemy American soldier.

Such thoughts moved Hana's mind. She watched the operation carried on by Sadao and was moved by the young man's desire to survive. Ultimately she felt so kind to the man and fed her with spoon as a mother would feed a baby. Thus the pitiable state of the man made Hana sympathetic towards him.

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

Ans : Life is dear to everyone. The American soldier was a prisoner of war and an enemy of Japan. When he arrived

at the sea shore of Japan he was wounded and almost dead. It was the kindness of Dr Sadao, a Japanese surgeon that practically saved his life. The soldier knew that his presence in the house of Dr. Sadao was dangerous for himself and the surgeon. The surgeon practically kept him hidden in his house till he recovered a little. The doctor in the mean time informed the matter that is the presence of the enemy soldier in his house.

The General remarked that he would appoint two assassins to kill the enemy soldier. Sadao waited for two nights. The assassin did not turn up. In the meantime Sadao had arranged to send the enemy soldier to a nearby deserted island from where he would be able to escape in a Korean fishing boat. However, the soldier was reluctant to leave Sadao's house. He knew that his stay in Sadao's house was causing anxiety to himself and to the family.

He was reluctant to leave Sadao's house because he did not know any destination. In the strange land of Japan he was alone without any family and friends. He was aware that in Japan he is an enemy of the nation. As a prisoner of war he might be detected and punished. He had neither any friends nor any patron except Dr. Sadao in that alien country. Naturally he did not like to go away from Dr. Sadao who had very kindly cured him and saved his life. But for Dr. Sadao he had no other protector. Therefore, the soldier was reluctant to leave Sadao's house alone and deserted.

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

Ans : The attitude of the General in the matter of the enemy soldier is best explained by his self interest. The General was a patient of Dr. Sadao. He had unwavering trust on Dr. Sadao who had operated him several times. Dr. Sadao carried on emergency operation of the General even at night time. There were other doctors and surgeon. But the General did not trust them. He had deep trust on Dr. Sadao's expertise. So he did not like to displease Sadao.

When Dr. Sadao informed the General about the presence of the enemy soldier in his home, the General told him that he would appoint two assassins who would kill the soldiers in Sadao's home. But he did not do so. During that time the General was convulsing after a surgical operation and he was absorbed in himself. Naturally, the General was not moved by any human consideration. Nor was there lack of national loyalty and dereliction of duty in his case.

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

Ans : Hatred is a negative trait of human character. It reflects in one's behaviour meted out to others. During war time people get polarised on nationalistic lines.

They think that all the people of the opposite nation involved in the war are hateful. This is a natural and common character of man. People of the opposite nation are guided by hatred and prejudice. So they forget the essential quality of humanity. They forget that man has divided the globe into separate nations on political lines. Man has drawn the boundary lines and decided the human race into groups. This is against Nature's holy plan. God has created one human race and one earth for them.

Humanism is the most essential quality in human heart. It enables man to love his fellow men. It leads man to consider his fellow man as similar human being irrespective of countries and nation. So, it is humanity that makes human being rise above narrow prejudices. In the story, 'The enemy' Dr. Sadao's behaviour towards the enemy soldier remains one of the best examples of humanity. Dr. Sadao treated the enemy soldier and saved his life, considering him first as a fellow man and then only as an enemy.

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

Ans : Yes, the doctor's final solutions to the problem was the best possible one in the circumstances. Dr. Sadao had treated the wounded enemy soldier and saved his life. He knew that he should have handed over the soldier to the Japanese police or army. He also knew that harbouring an enemy in his house he was doing an international act. But guided by the sentiment of

humanity he could not think of any harm to the enemy soldier. So, he kept him hidden in his house and decided to send him away safely. Dr. Sadao examined the soldier and when he found him fit to travel, he arranged a boat, loaded it with food and other essential items and sent away the enemy soldier to a lonely island from where he could escape boarding on a Korean fishing boat. The doctor acted like the best well wisher and best friend of the enemy and there lay his greatness. The only alternative to what he did was to hand over the soldier to the Japanese police or army who have trusted him or might be, killed him.