

“The Enemy” by Pearl S. Buck

TEXTUAL QUESTION ANSWERS

(From Vistas Supplementary Reader)

Reading with Insight

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

Answer: In *The Enemy*, Dr. Sadao faces a moral conflict between his duty as a patriotic Japanese citizen and his duty as a doctor. When he finds an injured American soldier (his country’s enemy) on the shore, his conscience as a doctor does not allow him to let the man die. Though harboring the enemy is a treasonous act, Sadao treats him, risking his own life and reputation. This conflict reflects how human compassion can transcend national boundaries, even in wartime. Ultimately, Sadao chooses humanity over blind nationalism.

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 the open defiance of the servants?

Answer: Though Hana was initially shocked at the sight of the enemy soldier, she stood by her husband’s decision to save the man’s life. Despite the servants leaving in protest, Hana remained loyal to her husband’s sense of duty and helped him care for the soldier. Her compassion grew as she witnessed the soldier’s suffering. Her actions reflect her inner strength, loyalty, and humanity.

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

Answer: The American soldier was weak and recovering, but his

reluctance to leave also stemmed from fear. He trusted Dr. Sadao and felt safe in his home. He knew the outside world, especially in wartime Japan, could be fatal for him. His hesitation shows how, even in war, bonds of trust can form between individuals on opposite sides.

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

Answer: The General's attitude was mainly driven by **self-absorption**. Though he promised to send assassins to kill the soldier, he forgot due to his own illness. His concern was more about his health than patriotism. He let Dr. Sadao handle the situation, not out of compassion, but because he couldn't afford to lose his personal physician. His actions reflect selfishness more than any higher moral or patriotic concern.

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

Answer: Compassion, morality, and human values help individuals rise above narrow prejudices. In *The Enemy*, Dr. Sadao overcomes the hatred for an enemy because he is a doctor first. His ethical duty and empathy drive him to save a life, regardless of nationality. This shows that humanity can prevail even amidst war and hatred.

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

Answer: Yes. Dr. Sadao arranged for the soldier to escape by boat instead of killing him or handing him over. It allowed him to uphold both his moral duty and avoid legal/political consequences. Though risky, it was a peaceful and humane solution that preserved his integrity as a doctor and a human.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (SHORT & LONG ANSWERS)

◆ Short Answer Questions (30–50 words)

1. Who was Dr. Sadao and where was he living?

Answer: Dr. Sadao was a Japanese surgeon and scientist. He lived in a house by the sea in Japan with his wife Hana and children during the Second World War.

2. How did Dr. Sadao meet his wife Hana?

Answer: Dr. Sadao met Hana in America where both were studying. They waited until they returned to Japan and confirmed Hana's Japanese heritage before marrying.

3. Why did the servants leave Dr. Sadao's house?

Answer: The servants disapproved of sheltering and treating an American enemy. They considered it treason and believed the family would face danger, so they left in protest.

4. What dilemma did Dr. Sadao face after discovering the wounded American?

Answer: Dr. Sadao was torn between saving the soldier's life (his duty as a doctor) and reporting him (his duty as a citizen). Helping the enemy could be considered betrayal.

5. How did Dr. Sadao save the soldier's life?

Answer: Dr. Sadao operated on the soldier and removed the bullet from his body. He gave him medical care and protection until the man recovered enough to escape.

6. What role did Hana play in helping the soldier?

Answer: Hana, though hesitant at first, helped Dr. Sadao clean and feed the soldier. She even nursed him while Dr. Sadao was away, showing her humanity.

7. How did the General react to Dr. Sadao's confession?

Answer: The General promised to have the soldier killed using his

private assassins but later forgot due to illness. He never punished Sadao, valuing his medical skills more.

8. Why was Dr. Sadao afraid after the General didn't send the assassins?

Answer: He feared exposure and punishment for hiding an enemy. The delay made him anxious about what action to take and the safety of his family.

9. How did the American soldier leave the doctor's house?

Answer: Dr. Sadao gave the soldier a boat, food, and instructions to escape to a nearby island where he could be rescued by an American ship.

10. What does the title "The Enemy" signify?

Answer: The title is ironic—it refers to the wounded American, seen as an enemy. But the story shows he is just a helpless human, challenging the concept of enmity in war.

◆ **Long Answer Questions (120–150 words)**

11. Explain the internal conflict faced by Dr. Sadao.

Answer: Dr. Sadao is torn between his **professional duty** as a doctor and his **patriotic duty** as a Japanese citizen. Finding a wounded American soldier, he knows sheltering him could be dangerous and illegal. But his conscience and medical ethics compel him to save the man. This moral dilemma intensifies as servants leave and the General gets involved. Ultimately, he chooses humanity over nationalism, helping the soldier escape safely.

12. How is the theme of humanism portrayed in the story?

Answer: The story highlights how **human values** can surpass **national prejudice**. Dr. Sadao, despite being a Japanese during WWII, saves an American soldier's life. He treats him with compassion, endangering his own family. Even Hana, initially hesitant, supports him. The story

shows that in times of war and hate, individual acts of kindness and humanity can shine through.

13. Discuss the character of Dr. Sadao.

Answer: Dr. Sadao is intelligent, compassionate, and principled. Though a loyal Japanese, he chooses to help an enemy because of his ethics. He is brave, risking his career and life for what is right. He handles the situation carefully, eventually ensuring the soldier's escape. He is a symbol of moral strength.

14. What role does Hana play in the story?

Answer: Hana is Dr. Sadao's supportive and empathetic wife. Though initially scared and reluctant, she chooses to help her husband care for the soldier. Her character reflects emotional strength, loyalty, and moral integrity. She balances her fear with compassion, embodying the spirit of humanity.

15. How is the title "The Enemy" ironic?

Answer: The title suggests hostility, yet the story portrays the so-called "enemy" as a helpless, young, and polite man in need. Dr. Sadao, despite being from the enemy country, saves him. The soldier shows gratitude and fear like any human. This irony challenges our definitions of enemies in war.

16. What is the message of the story?

Answer: The story conveys that **humanity is above nationality**, race, or war. It questions blind patriotism and emphasizes the moral courage required to do the right thing even in conflict. It upholds ethical responsibility and compassion in a world divided by hate.

17. How does Pearl S. Buck use contrast in the story?

Answer: The author contrasts **war and peace, hatred and compassion, duty and morality**. Dr. Sadao, a loyal Japanese, chooses kindness toward an American. The General, though powerful, is weak in character. The "enemy" turns out to be innocent. These contrasts highlight the complexities of human nature.

18. Why didn't the General take action against Sadao?

Answer: The General was selfish and concerned about losing his personal doctor. Though aware of Sadao's actions, he chose to ignore them. He planned to send assassins but forgot. This shows his self-absorption and disregard for patriotism.

19. How does the story depict the futility of war?

Answer: The story shows how war creates enemies out of humans who have no personal hatred. The American soldier is a victim of circumstances. Dr. Sadao's compassion proves that people on opposite sides can still be humane. War is senseless; humanity is natural.

20. What does the story teach about moral courage?

Answer: *The Enemy* highlights that moral courage is standing up for what is right, even when it's risky. Dr. Sadao helps an enemy because it is the ethical choice. His decision is driven by compassion, not convenience. True bravery lies in kindness and humanity.