

Class 12<sup>th</sup> ; Vistas

## Ch. 4 - The Enemy

By - Pearl S. Buck  
(AMERICAN AUTHOR)

**Alternative Titles of the Author :** John Sedges, Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker

**Pearl S. Buck**, née **Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker**, pseudonym **John Sedges**, (born June 26, 1892, Hillsboro, West Virginia, U.S.—died March 6, 1973, Danby, Vermont), American author noted for her novels of life in China. She received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938.

## The Enemy:

### Introduction –

Before you Read:

*It is the time of the World War. An American prisoner of war is washed ashore in a dying state and is found at the doorstep of a Japanese doctor. Should he save him as a doctor or hand him over to the Army as a patriot?*

### Setting:

The story takes place on a coastal town of Japan in the year 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. A war was going on between America and Japan. Japanese were hostile to the Americans and ready to kill any American found in their soil.

### Theme:

‘The Enemy’ gives the message that humanism transcends all man-made prejudices and barriers. Dr. Sadao upholds the ethics of medical profession in treating an enemy. The story is a great lesson of peace, love, sympathy, fellow feeling and humanism.

### Characters:

1. Dr. Sadao Hoki: A Japanese doctor trained by Americans.

2. Sadao's father: much concerned about his son's education, a true patriot.
3. Hana: Wife of Dr. Sadao, met in America, became friends and got married in Japan.
4. Tom: An American prisoner of war, a soldier of U.S. Navy.
5. The old General: a sick Japanese army General, needed an operation, trusted only Dr. Sadao.
6. An officer: A messenger of the General.
7. Gardener: an old gardener in the house of Dr. Sadao.
8. Yumi: Hana's maid servant.
9. The cook: an old cook in the house of Dr. Sadao.

## **Place:**

House of Dr. Sadao: a house built on a narrow beach near the sea.

## **Summary:**

### Dr. Sadao – a surgeon and scientist

Dr Sadao Hoki, a Japanese surgeon and scientist, lived with his wife Hana and two children on the Japanese sea-coast. His house was located on the sea-coast where he had spent his childhood. He was greatly influenced by his father whose chief concern was Sadao's education. At the age of twenty-two, he was sent to America to study surgery and medicine. Sadao too, as an obedient son, fulfilled his father's wishes and came back a famous surgeon and scientist to serve his nation and people.

Although there was a war going on, he was not sent abroad with the troops for two reasons – he was perfecting a discovery on wounds and the old General might need him for an operation.

### Hana – a dedicated wife

With his father's consent, Dr. Sadao had a love marriage with Hana whom he met in America. They now had two children. Hana was a devoted wife and a sympathetic woman. She kept the household in order and cared for every member under its roof.

### A wounded 'white enemy'

Once while the couple was enjoying the mist at dusk on their porch, they noticed some movement near the sea. A man 'flung' out of the ocean, walked few steps and then fell unconscious. He was badly injured. They discover that the white man was an escaped prisoner of war, a sailor from an American warship. He had lost lot of blood due a gun wound and a rock injury.

The couple knew that they would be termed treacherous if they did not inform the police or the army about it, which would eventually kill the man. But, they could not bring themselves to do what seemed the best course of action at that point, i.e., to throw the man back into the sea. After a lot of speculation, the doctor thought of treating the dying man on humanitarian grounds before deciding his fate.

### Saving the 'white enemy'

So, the unconscious American was brought home. The couple apprised their servants of their intention of handing the man over to the police after treatment. But the servants didn't approve of it and remained skeptical of their masters' intention, yet they kept their silence. When the nanny of the Hoki children, Yumi, refused to wash the American, Hana had to do the job herself. Prompted by the doctor in him, Sadao performed a difficult operation and removed the bullet efficiently. Hana helped her husband in whatever way she could. She herself took every possible care of the American, even fed him with her own hands.

Under Hana's care and the expert medical administration of Dr. Sadao, the young American recuperated but remained tensed about his future.

### Servants' rebel

The Hoki family was constantly pressurized by the servants to disclose the secret and get the American caught by the police. Their displeasure at their master's decision made them decide to leave his household. Hana bears all this gracefully.

In the due course of treating the prisoner, Sadao planned to inform the police about the whereabouts of the prisoner but somehow could not execute his plan. He leaves an unfinished letter to the Chief of Police in his drawer.

## Hana's dilemma

Hana was not able to understand why she and her husband were in a dilemma about their next step concerning the fate of the prisoner. When she saw a messenger in an official uniform at her doorstep, she got scared that one of the servants might have informed the police. But the messenger came only to inform Dr Sadao that the General was in pain and wants to see him immediately. Realising Hana's situation, Sadao decided to do something about the soldier.

## Dr Sadao discloses the secret to the General

Tensed and tired of hiding the enemy, Dr. Sadao revealed the secret to the general when he was summoned to his house for medical help. Looking at his present health conditions, General realised that he might need Sadao's surgical expertise at any point of time and is selfish enough to not to let Sadao get into any trouble. He assured Sadao that he would send his personal assassins to kill the American soldier and remove his body from Sadao's house.

Dr Sadao did not reveal the secret of assassins to Hana. For two nights, he remained uneasy and could not sleep soundly. However, every morning when he woke up, he found Tom alive and this made him more uneasy.

## Sadao's Decision

Finally, Dr. Sadao comes up with a plan to get rid off his problems and worries, to save Hana and his family and to save his own reputation – without compromising his duty as a doctor and his duty as a citizen. Now, executing his plans he saves his patient's life, who is a POW (Prisoner of War) and saves himself and his family. Dr. Sadao helps his patient, the White Enemy, escape from his house safely.

## **GIST OF THE STORY:**

- Sadao, a Japanese surgeon finds a wounded American soldier on the beach near his house.
- He is unable to throw him back though he was his enemy as he was a doctor and his first duty was to save a life.
- Hana, his wife, though initially reluctant because it was dangerous for all including the children to keep the enemy in the house, joins her husband in operating and nursing the enemy soldier back to health, even though the servants desert the house.

- Hana assists Dr. Sadao in operating the soldier in spite of her physical discomfort and hesitation.
- Though it was war time and all hands were needed at the front, the General did not send Sadao with the troops as he is an expert surgeon and the General needed him.
- Sadao tells him about the enemy soldier but he does not take any action as he is self-absorbed and forgets his promise that he would send his private assassins to kill the enemy and remove his body.
- Taking advantage of the general's self-absorption Sadao decides to save the soldier's life. After the soldier is out of danger Dr. Sadao helps him to escape from his house to safety.

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