

ENGLISH



THE ENEMY

~Summary~

-by Pearl S Buck

Dr Sadao Hoki and his Traditional Father

Dr Sadao Hoki, a famous Japanese surgeon and an accomplished scientist, lived in a house on the Japanese coast. The house was set upon rocks above a narrow beach surrounded by pine trees. As a child, Sadao used to climb these trees. He often visited the South Sea islands with his father. His father believed that the islands were stepping stones to Japan's future to gain perfection. Sadao's father was a very serious and traditional man. He never joked or played with him but took infinite pains for his son. Sadao's education was his chief concern. He even sent Sadao to America to complete his studies. Sadao's father inculcated in him values of patriotism and national loyalty when the latter was quite young and Sadao had always cherished these great virtues.

The Second World War started, but Sadao was not sent with the troops because he was about to make a discovery which would render wounds entirely clean. Also, the General who was old, was being treated by Sadao, and he might require an operation anytime.

Sadao met Hana in America, Waited for his Father's Consent to Marry Her

Sadao had met Hana in America, but he had waited until he was sure that she was Japanese before deciding to marry her. His father would never have approved of her otherwise. Sadao recalled that his meeting with Hana was an accident. Sadao lived in Professor Harley's house and had almost not gone to the Professor's house that night, where he met Hana, a new student.

After Sadao and Hana had finished their studies, they came home to Japan. The marriage was solemnised in the traditional Japanese way according to his father's wishes. They were a happy couple.

The Prisoner is Washed Ashore

One night, Sadao and Hana were enjoying the view of the sea from their verandah when they saw something black coming out of the mists. It was a man. He staggered a few steps and then the mists hid him again. When they saw him again, he was crawling. Sadao thought that he was a fisherman washed ashore from his boat.

The surf beyond the beach was spiked with rocks. The man might be badly hurt. They found the man wounded. Hana realised that it was a white man. The fellow was young and unconscious.

The man was bleeding profusely. Sadao saw that a bullet wound had reopened. Sadao packed the wound with sea moss. The man moaned with pain, but he did not awaken. Sadao wanted to throw the man back into the sea, as he had now realised that he was an American prisoner of war. Hana also agreed. Sadao knew that giving shelter to the enemy would get them into trouble. He was torn between his moral duty as a doctor which urged him to save the dying man and his national duty which required handing him over to the Army as a patriot. Both Hana and Sadao finally decided to take the man home, as he was in need of urgent medical attention.

The Servants React Bitterly

They decided that they should tell the servants also. They would tell them that they intended to hand him over to the police. The man had been starved for a long time and he was light as a fowl. They carried him to Sadao's father's bedroom as his father was no longer alive. The old man had never allowed a foreign object in his room.

The American was very dirty and needed to be washed. Hana said that Yumi, the governess, might wash her. She went to fetch her. When she returned to the kitchen, she found the other two servants frightened at what Sadao had told them. The servants tried to convince Sadao that he must hand over the enemy to the police. Yumi refused to wash the American and Hana had to wash him herself.

Sadao Saves the Enemy's Life

Sadao was ready to operate. He was completely absorbed in his work. He told Hana that she would need to give anaesthetic to the man. Hana probably had never seen an operation and started vomiting. Sadao was irritable and impatient with his enemy, as he was not able to help Hana in her distress. The man groaned with pain.

Interestingly enough, Hana was able to assist her husband in the operation. Hana noticed deep red scars on the neck of their enemy. She wondered if the war torture stories she had heard were actually true. She recalled that General Takima was a ruthless man who didn't even spare his wife.

Sadao murmured while operating, as was his habit. He called the enemy his friend'. Sadao finally succeeded in taking the bullet out. He was sure that the man would live in spite of his sufferings.

The Patient gets Better but the Servants Decide to Leave

Hana took good care of the man. She served him, as the servants refused to enter the room. The man was surprised to see Hana talk in English. Hana told him that she had lived in America for a long time. The enemy revealed his name to Hana. His name was Tom. Sadao was still confused about handing him over to the police.

The servants resented their decision to help the American soldier. Hana told Sadao that the servants would not live in the house if the enemy was still present. The servants thought that the couple liked Americans. Sadao tried to clarify that all Americans were his enemies. They talked about the consequences of harbouring an enemy. Hana could hear what they were talking about. On the seventh day, the servants left.

The General's Messenger; Sadao Goes to See the General

On the same day, a messenger in official uniform came to Sadao's house. Hana was so scared that she was unable to speak. She thought that he was there to arrest Sadao. In fact, the messenger had come to inform Sadao that the General needed him. Looking at Hana in utter distress, Sadao decided to get rid of the man.

Sadao told the whole episode to the General. The General knew that Sadao was indispensable to him. He never trusted other Japanese surgeons. The General promised Sadao that nothing would happen to him.

The General then planned to get the American soldier assassinated. He told Sadao that his private assassins were very competent and would also remove the dead body. Sadao thought that this plan would be the best for his family.

After that meeting, Sadao spent three restless nights waiting for the assassins. But they didn't come. Finally, the torture became too much to bear for him. He planned to get rid of the enemy himself.

Sadao Helps the Enemy

Sadao told the escape plan to Tom. He also warned him that he needed to escape as the news of his presence was not hidden any more. He arranged a boat, food, drinking water and clothing for the young man and also gave him his own flashlight. He told Tom that he should flash the light two times if he needed something, once if everything was fine. He must do this only when the sun dropped under the horizon. He further added that Tom could find many fish to eat but he should eat them raw, lest the fire be seen. Even Hana didn't know about this plan. Sadao had told Tom to wait for a Korean ship.

Sadao went to the General and informed him that the American had escaped. The General informed Sadao that he forgot about the prisoner, as he was unwell. He told Sadao not to leak

out this information to anybody. Back at home, Sadao remembered his days in America and the Americans he met there. He wondered why he could not kill Tom, his enemy.