

The Lamp at Noon by Sinclair Ross - Worksheet

Questions and Answers - The Lamp at Noon – Set 1

1. What is the short story The Lamp at Noon about?
 - “The Lamp at Noon” by Sinclair Ross explores the psychologically devastating effects that the environmental devastation of the dust bowl has on the psyches and relationship of a married couple living on a farm on the Canadian plains during the Great Depression.
2. What is the message of The Lamp at Noon?
 - In the short story, “The Lamp at Noon,” the author Sinclair Ross develops the idea of the negative impact of isolation on individuals. The author suggests that isolation can cause an individual to feel emotionally detached and frustrated which may drive them to act irrationally.
3. What does the lamp in The Lamp at Noon symbolize?
 - Firstly, the land symbolizes the state of the marriage of the protagonists, Ellen and Paul,. Next, the violent winds outside embody the conflict between Ellen and Paul. Finally, the lamp represents Ellen and Paul's hope for a better future.
4. What is the point of view of The Lamp at Noon?
 - In the short story “The Lamp at Noon” It is a third person, omniscient point of view. The person reading the story is not directly involved with the characters in the story. We as the readers don't know everything that is happening in the story, we only get to see one side of the story at a time.
5. What happens at the end of The Lamp at Noon?
 - At the end of the short story, Ellen and Paul had lost their baby son. This is when Paul realizes how his decisions affected the family and Ellen remained insane and in shock. Isolation is the complete separation of others.

Questions and Answers - The Lamp at Noon – Set 2

1. What is the irony in The Lamp at Noon?
 - Paul and Ellen used one lamp to guide them through the storm when they would definitely have more lights to use if this was as big a storm as described. Paul said that he did not want to depend on “Charity” in order to survive but he took out loans in order to make ends meet.

2. What does the red sky symbolize in The Lamp at Noon?
 - The reader is finally told by the author about Ellen's change of perspective when she says is talking to Paul. She told him he was right, that the storm would go down, and a red sky, meaning that "tomorrow will be fine."
3. Is the ending of The Lamp at Noon optimistic or pessimistic?
 - Hope was restored in Ellen for the small family's crops to grow and for them to finally have rain. She realizes that living with pessimism wouldn't help anything, so in the end this ending was optimistic.
4. What is the foreshadowing in The Lamp at Noon?
 - Ellen says, "I'm so caged - if I could only break away and run." This foreshadowed Ellen later running away with the baby.
5. What is the flashback in The Lamp at Noon?
 - The drought and sandstorms lasted several years and Ellen wanted to leave but she couldn't persuade him. - When Paul is in the stable thinking, he gets many flashbacks of what Ellen told him and they keep coming to him.
 -

Questions and Answers - The Lamp at Noon – Set 3

1. What are the two winds in The Lamp at Noon?
 - There were two winds: the winds in flight, and the wind that pursued. The one sought refuge in the eaves, whimpering, in fear; the other assailed it there, and shook the eaves apart to make it flee again
2. Why does Ellen finally run away in The Lamp at Noon?
 - Ellen exclaims that she feels caged in and just wants to leave. The sand has been getting to her head and she is sick of it. At the end of the story Ellen is pushed past her breaking point and decides she is going to leave, just as she mentioned in this passage.
3. What are the character traits of Ellen in The Lamp at Noon?
 - Ellen is a farmer's wife who is living in harsh conditions, and wants to escape the farm life and move to the city to build a better life for her and her child. Although Ellen is kind and thoughtful she displays acts of selfishness and impatience. Ellen is the protagonist in the story.
4. What is the relationship between Ellen and Paul in The Lamp at Noon?

- In *The Lamp at Noon* by Sinclair Ross, Paul and Ellen's relationship is strained. They are mentally isolated from each other. Paul becomes accustomed to this isolation and does not sympathize with Ellen's need for companionship and purpose.