

Short Story Note Taking Sheet

Title: "The Guest" – Significance?

- The title "The Guest" is ironic in the fact that it has a double meaning depending on which lens you view it. If you view the title from Daru's eyes, the title is fitting for he views the issue of the Arab as really none of his concern. He feels as though the task was forced upon him and he is ambivalent towards the outcome. Although he has the pressure of society (Balducci) trying to change his perceptions on the Arab and the outcome, he sticks to his moral beliefs and does what he thinks is right. Ie. NO man has the right to chose another's demise!
- On the other hand the title "the prisoner" would be fitting if the story was told through Balducci's point of view. His views are a direct parallel of societies, and therefore he is nothing more than a humble servant of society and authority.

Author: Albert Camus

Protagonist

Trait

1: *Lonely, defiant*

2: Generous

3: Independant

Antagonist

Balducci, he represents society. Or Daru is his own antagonist, as he tries to decide what to do.

Other Characters

The Arab

Conflict

Man v.s. Society. Camus is an existentialist and Balducci represents society and Daru is the opposition and goes against society's ideas which are also something that happens today. Daru doesn't feel like it is up to him to decide his fate, so he gives the decision to the Arab.

In choosing to resolve the conflict the way he does, Daru isolates himself from both realms of the world he is a part of – French colonial and indigenous Algerian. This is how the conflict and its resolution contributes to his loneliness at the end.

Point of View

- Limited omniscient
- descriptions of all the characters are present but we don't know their thoughts
- we see their actions
- makes the reader more curious because they don't know what the prisoner is thinking
- *Perspective is limited to Daru, as his choice is the most significant element in the story. In understanding his loneliness the reader comes to know the significance of his decision.*

Setting

Physical: Mountainous area in Algeria, often in school house
Emotional: Daru is lonely and also isolated in the schoolhouse.
Daru is also situated on a plateau, between the desert and the mountains. This middle ground can also represent his position and isolation in the larger conflict. Daru takes no sides, he is left in the middle geographically and morally. It is this moral neutrality that perhaps contributes to his loneliness.

Foreshadowing

- Note on the chalkboard foreshadows a future conflict. Revenge?
- Daru felt like they were being watched when escorting the prisoner.
- *Daru has also decided from the beginning he would not hand the prisoner over. His choice is foreshadowed, and stands up to the pressure that society's will places on him.*

Climax-

The climax of the story would be when Daru takes the Arab for the walk to the prison but then stops at a fork in the road and lets the Arab decide his fate. When connecting this to the last sentence Daru alienates himself from society because he lets the prisoner decide what to do. This makes Daru realise he is alone because society would want him to take him to prison but in the end the Arab makes the final choice.

Also that in making the choice he does, he alienates himself from the indigenous population. Not only does he end up going against French society, but the society of the indigenous population he felt a part of.

Symbols & What They Represent

Blackboard drawing of rivers in France – the drawings suggest that learning about the river is more important to the children of Algeria than learning about the geography of their own country.

The isolated plateau – symbolizes Daru's isolation as an Algerian born Frenchman caught between belligerent factions. Untying of the prisoner – symbolizing a step Daru takes toward freeing himself from bondage to the ideas of others. When he unbinds the prisoner, Daru begins the process of his philosophical revolt against French authorities.

The crossroad on the way to Tinguit symbolizes the choice to be made, a choice that Daru ultimately leaves to the Arab. In witnessing what Daru decides to do for himself, the Arab comes to understand the value in personal choice, and chooses the road to jail. It is this choice that ultimately dooms Daru and alienates him from all that he knows, but it is worth it to know that it is a choice he made because HE thought it was right.

Irony

Irony – The irony comes from the title because “The Guest” is actually the prisoner and not really a guest. Daru is as much of a prisoner as the Arab because he could have been punished for

not turning him in, which is also ironic.

Ultimately Daru WILL be punished by the Arab tribesmen. Daru made the RIGHT choice for him, but still gets punished. This absurdity is what serves to isolate him, or at least reinforce the idea that nothing is valuable unless WE determine it to be so.

Theme

A theme statement for this story should reflect the importance of personal choice, and maybe even the loneliness that can accompany people acting based on what they think is right.

Other

Character Foil with Balducci. Daru's opposition to the social values and ideas that Balducci accepts serves to isolate Daru.