

The Treasure in the Forest by H.G. Wells

Notes, Summary, Questions and Answers

(Exam focused Questions)

Class 12 English

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Summary

The Treasure in the Forest is a mystery short story by H.G. Wells. The story follows two British treasure hunters, Evans and Hooker, who travel by canoe toward a tropical coral island in search of buried gold.

Evans and Hooker possess an old treasure map that originally belonged to Chang hi, a Chinese man who had discovered gold from a shipwrecked Spanish galleon. Chang hi had buried the treasure again on the island and prepared a map showing its location.

The map is old, worn, and difficult to understand. It contains several landmarks that help Evans and Hooker find the correct location.

However, the men cannot understand the meaning of the mysterious small dashes marked around the treasure.

During their journey, Evans falls asleep and has a strange dream about Chang hi and the hidden treasure. The dream creates suspense and gives a warning about the danger connected with the treasure.

After reaching the island, Evans and Hooker follow the map through a thick tropical forest. They find palm trees, bushes, flowers, rocks, and a small river that match the landmarks shown on the map. Near the

treasure, they discover the swollen and purple body of a Chinese man.

The men ignore this warning and continue searching for the gold. They eventually find a hole containing gold ingots. Their greed becomes stronger than their fear, so they begin carrying the gold back toward their canoe.

While carrying the treasure, Evans is pricked by a poisonous thorn. His arms begin to ache and he becomes weak and starts convulsing. When Hooker tries to rearrange the gold, he is also pricked by a thorn.

Hooker finally understands the meaning of the mysterious dashes on the map. Chang hi had deliberately protected the treasure with poisonous thorns. The thorns were similar to those used by the Dyaks as poison in their blow tubes.

Evans dies from the poison, and Hooker realizes that he too is doomed. The story ends tragically, showing that greed, violence, and the dishonest pursuit of wealth can lead to destruction.

Understanding the Text

a. Describe the expository scene of the story.

In the expository scene, Evans and Hooker are travelling in a canoe toward a tropical island. They have an old treasure map with them and are trying to understand its markings. They are tired after travelling throughout the night and are approaching a thick green forest with hills and a small river flowing toward the sea.

b. What does the map look like and how do Evans and Hooker interpret it?

The map is very old, worn, folded, and unclear. Evans and Hooker study its different lines, symbols, and landmarks. They interpret the twisting lines as the river and use the star and other markings to identify the place where the treasure is buried. However, they fail to understand the meaning of the small dashes on the map.

c. How did Evans and Hooker know about the treasure?

Evans and Hooker learned about the treasure through Chang hi and the map they obtained from him. Chang hi had discovered gold from a shipwrecked Spanish galleon and had buried it again on the island. He had prepared a map showing the location of the treasure. Evans and Hooker stole the map after murdering Chang hi.

d. Describe Evans dream.

During the journey, Evans falls asleep and dreams about the treasure. In his dream, he sees himself and Hooker in a forest where three Chinese men are sitting near a small fire and talking about the hidden treasure.

Chang hi explains that he had discovered gold from a shipwrecked Spanish galleon and had hidden it on the island. He wants help to recover the treasure. A fight then takes place and Chang hi is killed. Afterward, Evans sees a frightening devil like image of Chang hi sitting among gold and calling his name. The dream creates suspense and foreshadows the dangerous events that follow.

e. What do the two treasure hunters see when they walk towards the island?

When Evans and Hooker move into the island, they see three palm trees, thick bushes, white flowers, and a small river. They also discover the dead body of a Chinese man lying face down in a clear space among the trees.

f. In what condition did the treasure hunters find the dead man?

The treasure hunters find the dead Chinese man lying among the trees. His neck is purple and swollen, and his hands and ankles are swollen. His condition suggests that he has been poisoned. A few gold ingots are also visible near his body, showing that he had been searching for the treasure.

g. How did the treasure hunters try to carry gold ingots to the canoe?

Evans and Hooker want to carry as much gold as possible back to their canoe. They place the gold ingots inside a coat and hold the two ends of the coat while carrying the treasure toward the canoe.

h. How were Evans and Hooker poisoned?

Chang hi had protected the treasure with poisonous thorns. The small dashes on the map represented these dangerous thorns. While Evans was carrying the gold, a poisonous thorn pricked him. He soon became weak, developed severe pain, and collapsed.

When Hooker tried to rearrange and carry the gold, a thin poisonous

thorn pierced his thumb. He then understood what the mysterious dashes on the map meant. Unfortunately, he realized the danger too late, and both men were poisoned.

Reference to the Context

a. How do you know the story is set on a tropical island?

The story is set on a tropical island because H.G. Wells describes a hot climate and tropical vegetation. Evans and Hooker travel toward a coral island under the hot sun after paddling throughout the night. The island contains thick green forests, palm trees, thorny bushes, white flowers, streams, and coastal landscapes.

The characters also become tired and thirsty because of the heat and their long journey. These details create a hot and humid tropical setting and also contribute to the mysterious and dangerous atmosphere of the story.

b. Why do you think Evans and Hooker took such a risk of finding the buried treasure on a desert island?

Evans and Hooker take such a great risk because they are driven by greed and the desire to become wealthy. The treasure is believed to have come from a shipwrecked Spanish galleon, so they expect it to be extremely valuable.

Their desire for wealth becomes so strong that they ignore moral values and obvious dangers. They even murder Chang hi to obtain the map and continue searching for the treasure despite finding the dead body near

it. Their greed prevents them from recognizing the warning signs and ultimately leads to their deaths.

c. Do you think the narrator of the story is racist? If yes, what made him feel superior to other races?

The narrator can be interpreted as showing signs of racial bias in the way the characters are presented. Evans and Hooker are given proper names and receive greater attention, while the Chinese characters are given comparatively less importance and fewer individual details.

The English characters are presented as the main active figures in the story, while the Chinese characters mainly appear in connection with the treasure. This unequal treatment can create an impression that one group is being presented as more significant than another. However, readers may interpret the narrator's attitude differently.

d. What do you think is the moral of the story?

The moral of the story is that greed and the dishonest pursuit of wealth can lead to destruction. Evans and Hooker become so obsessed with finding the treasure that they ignore morality, commit murder, and refuse to recognize the warnings around them.

The treasure does not bring them happiness or wealth. Instead, it becomes the cause of their suffering and death. The story teaches us to avoid greed and to consider the long term consequences and moral responsibilities of our actions.

Reference Beyond the Text

a. Interpret the story as a mystery story.

The Treasure in the Forest can be interpreted as a successful mystery story because it contains suspense, mysterious clues, an unusual setting, unexpected events, and a shocking ending.

From the beginning, the old treasure map and its mysterious markings create curiosity. Evans and Hooker follow different clues to locate the hidden treasure, much like characters investigating a mystery.

Evans dream also adds suspense and foreshadows the dangerous events that later occur. The discovery of the swollen dead body creates further questions about the danger surrounding the treasure.

The mysterious dashes on the map are especially important. Evans and Hooker understand most of the map but fail to understand these markings. At the end, Hooker realizes that the dashes represent poisonous thorns protecting the treasure.

The thick tropical forest, hidden paths, strange vegetation, dead body, poisonous thorns, and tragic ending all contribute to the mysterious atmosphere. These elements keep readers curious about what will happen next.

b. Treasure hunting is a favorite subject of childrens stories. Remember a treasure hunting story you read in your childhood and compare and contrast it with The Treasure in the Forest.

One treasure hunting story I remember from childhood is The Hidden Treasure. It is about an old farmer who has three lazy sons. The sons

do not help their father, which makes him sad and worried.

When the father becomes seriously ill, he tells his sons that a treasure is buried somewhere in their field. After his death, the sons dig every part of the field in search of the treasure. They cannot find any gold, but later they plant wheat in the field and receive a good harvest. They eventually understand that hard work is the real treasure.

Both *The Hidden Treasure* and *The Treasure in the Forest* involve people searching for hidden wealth. Both stories contain buried treasure and characters who are strongly motivated by the hope of becoming rich.

However, the outcomes are very different. In *The Hidden Treasure*, honest hard work brings success and prosperity. In *The Treasure in the Forest*, greed, violence, and dishonesty lead to suffering and death.

The comparison shows two different lessons. One story teaches that hard work and patience bring valuable rewards, while the other warns that selfish greed and dishonest actions can destroy people.

Questions and Answers

Who wrote *The Treasure in the Forest*?

The Treasure in the Forest is a short story written by the English writer H.G. Wells.

What is *The Treasure in the Forest* about?

The story is about two British treasure hunters, Evans and Hooker, who

travel to a coral island in search of buried gold. They obtain a treasure map from Chang hi and discover the treasure, but poisonous thorns protecting the gold eventually cause their deaths.

What is the theme of *The Treasure in the Forest*?

The major theme of the story is the destructive nature of greed. Evans and Hooker become so focused on wealth that they commit murder, ignore warning signs, and eventually lose their lives.

How does *The Treasure in the Forest* end?

Evans is poisoned by a thorn while carrying the gold and eventually dies. Hooker is also pricked by a poisonous thorn and realizes that the mysterious dashes on the map represent the deadly thorns. He lies dying beside Evans at the end of the story.

What do the dashes on the map mean in *The Treasure in the Forest*?

The small dashes on the map represent the poisonous thorns that Chang hi planted around the treasure as protection. Evans and Hooker fail to understand their meaning until it is too late.

Simple Question Explanations

Why is Evans dream important?

Evans dream is important because it foreshadows the tragic events that later take place on the island. The dream connects Chang hi with the treasure and creates a sense of danger. It also increases suspense by

suggesting that the treasure will bring death rather than fortune.

What do the mysterious dashes on the map mean?

The mysterious dashes represent the poisonous thorns planted around the treasure by Chang hi. Evans and Hooker misunderstand the markings, but Hooker finally realizes their meaning after both men have been poisoned.

Why do Evans and Hooker ignore the dead body?

Evans and Hooker ignore the dead body because their greed is stronger than their fear. Instead of treating the body as a warning, they concentrate on finding and carrying away the gold. Their decision shows how greed can blind people to obvious danger.

Why is the treasure ultimately worthless?

The treasure becomes worthless because Evans and Hooker do not survive to enjoy it. Although they find the gold, the poisonous thorns cause their deaths. Their experience shows that wealth obtained through violence and dishonesty cannot bring lasting happiness.

Important Lines and Passages

The mysterious dashes on the map

The small dashes initially seem meaningless, but they later become the most important clue in the story. They represent the hidden danger surrounding the treasure and show how people can overlook important

warnings when they are blinded by greed.

The discovery of the dead Chinese man

The swollen body of the dead Chinese man is an early warning that the treasure is dangerous. Evans and Hooker see the evidence but ignore it because they are more interested in the gold.

Evans frightening dream

Evans dream creates suspense and foreshadows the tragic ending. The frightening image of Chang hi among the gold suggests that the treasure is connected with danger rather than happiness.

Hookers final realization

Hooker finally understands that the mysterious dashes represent poisonous thorns. His realization comes too late to save either man, making the ending tragic and ironic.

Exam Focused Questions

1. How does H.G. Wells create suspense in *The Treasure in the Forest*?

H.G. Wells creates suspense through the old treasure map, mysterious symbols, the dangerous tropical island, Evans dream, and the discovery of the dead body. The unknown meaning of the map's dashes keeps readers curious. The final revelation that the dashes represent poisonous thorns creates a shocking climax.

2. Why are Evans and Hooker considered tragic characters?

Evans and Hooker are tragic characters because their own greed causes their downfall. They murder Chang hi, steal his map, ignore the dead body, and continue searching for wealth despite the warning signs. Their deaths show how selfish ambition and greed can destroy people.

3. What is the significance of Chang hi in the story?

Chang hi is important because he discovers the treasure, buries it again, prepares the treasure map, and protects the gold with poisonous thorns. Although he dies before the main events of the story, his actions determine the fate of Evans and Hooker.

4. Why is the ending considered ironic?

The ending is ironic because Evans and Hooker finally find the treasure they have risked everything to obtain. However, instead of becoming rich, they die before they can enjoy their discovery. Their greatest achievement becomes the direct cause of their destruction.

5. What is the central message of the story?

The central message is that greed, dishonesty, and violence cannot bring lasting happiness. People who ignore morality in their pursuit of wealth can ultimately create their own downfall.

6. How does nature become an enemy in the story?

Nature initially appears beautiful through palm trees, flowers, streams,

and thick forests. However, the forest also hides poisonous thorns that become deadly. This contrast makes nature an important source of danger in the story.

7. What role does the treasure map play in the story?

The treasure map serves as both a guide and a warning. It successfully leads Evans and Hooker to the buried gold, but the mysterious markings on it also contain a warning about the poisonous thorns. The men fail to understand this warning until it is too late.

Commonly Confusing Points

Who originally owned the treasure?

The treasure originally came from a shipwrecked Spanish galleon. Chang hi later discovered it and buried it again on the island.

Who owned the treasure map?

The treasure map originally belonged to Chang hi. Evans and Hooker obtained it after murdering him.

Did the poisonous thorns grow naturally?

No. Chang hi deliberately planted the poisonous thorns around the treasure to protect it.

Why does the dead Chinese mans body matter?

The dead mans swollen body provides evidence that the treasure is surrounded by danger. Evans and Hooker ignore this warning because their desire for gold is stronger than their concern for safety.

What is the purpose of Evans dream?

The dream acts as foreshadowing. It connects Chang hi with the treasure and hints that danger and death are associated with the gold.

Why is Hookers realization important?

Hooker finally understands that the mysterious dashes on the map represent poisonous thorns. However, he realizes this only after both men have already been poisoned. This makes the ending more tragic and ironic.

Quick Revision

Author

H.G. Wells

Genre

Mystery short story

Main Characters

Evans, Hooker, and Chang hi

Setting

A tropical coral island with a dense forest, palm trees, streams, rocks, and hidden poisonous thorns.

Beginning

Evans and Hooker travel by canoe with a stolen treasure map after murdering Chang hi.

Conflict

They search for buried gold while ignoring mysterious clues and obvious warnings.

Climax

Both men are poisoned by hidden thorns while carrying the treasure toward their canoe.

Ending

Evans dies first, and Hooker realizes the meaning of the map's dashes before facing the same fate.

Major Themes

Greed

Crime and punishment

Mystery

Suspense

Nature's hidden dangers

Justice

Important Symbols

Treasure It represents greed and false hope. Map It represents both guidance and hidden warning. Poisonous thorns They represent the consequences of greed and dishonest actions. Evans dream It represents foreshadowing and approaching danger.

Key Lesson

The story teaches that greed can blind people to danger. Wealth gained through dishonesty and violence ultimately brings suffering instead of happiness.

One Minute Revision

Evans and Hooker are two British treasure hunters who travel to a tropical island with a stolen treasure map after murdering Chang hi. They follow the map and discover a dead Chinese man near the buried treasure. Instead of treating the body as a warning, they continue searching for gold. When they begin carrying the treasure back to their canoe, poisonous thorns prick both men. Hooker finally understands that the mysterious dashes on the map represented the deadly thorns, but his realization comes too late. Evans dies and Hooker is left facing the same fate. The story shows that greed, violence, and dishonest pursuit of wealth can ultimately lead to destruction.

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