

## **B.A. I SEM II Study Material on**

### **Understanding Short Story**

#### **The Lottery Ticket**

by Anton Chekhov

Anton Chekhov was a Russian playwright and short-story writer. Anton Chekhov wrote the short story "The Lottery Ticket." The writing style and storytelling are interesting. The Lottery Ticket focuses on a middle-class couple named Ivan and Masha Dmitritch. They bought a lottery ticket. Now, they begin to form dreams and hopes about the possibility of winning. The story explores themes of greed, disillusionment, and the fragility of human relationships.

Ivan and Masha appear to lead a regular life in Russia. While going through the paper, Ivan comes across the lottery numbers. They have got a ticket. They might win 75000 with the lottery ticket. He checks a series of the ticket in the newspaper. He found out that there was a series 9499. He didn't confirm the full digits. Then he tells his wife. Both of them began dreaming. They are considering where and how they will spend the money if they win. Ivan has his own ideas, while Masha has hers. They are in a state of imagination. Just the thought of winning that much money and spending it makes them look at each other suspiciously.

Initially, Ivan and Masha consider how they might spend their winnings together. The story is about their goals and dreams. They expect to do more in their life than the ordinary. This pleasant feeling does not last long. Soon, greed sets in, and they begin to consider how they may spend the money separately. They begin to imagine how the money would benefit them as individuals. Further, their greed and selfishness pit them against one another.

Ivan believes Masha should spend the money on a new estate. Then, he will deposit the balance amount in a bank. Ivan is considering living at St. Martin's. He will take a vacation every time the hard fall arrives. Ivan then becomes enraged and considers how his wife may desert him. He even thinks she will make him do what she says. For some strange reason, Ivan begins to quarrel with his wife about what might happen if she takes all of the lottery ticket money.

After a long argument, Ivan goes to the newspaper and reads the lottery number. The series is correct, 9499, but the number is 46, not 26. The anger at each other and the hope they had for winning the lottery now ends. Ivan complains about how his life is terrible. Further, he says that he is going to hang himself on the tree outside.

Ivan and Masha seem to be a happy and understanding couple. But just the idea of winning the lottery turns them suspicious of each other's intentions. They don't even check all the numbers and start imagining their richer future. The idea of just the potential of maybe winning the lottery corrupts their heart. Selfishness and greed start taking root, damaging their relationship with each other.

The Lottery Ticket by Anton Chekhov is a wonderful short story. It is crisp and deep. The writing style and storytelling are interesting.

# **The Cop and the Anthem**

**By O' Henry**

"The Cop and the Anthem" is a beautiful short story written by an American writer O' Henry. His stories have surprising ends. The title of the story is apt and very suggestive. The anthem represents the life Soapy used to have, and wants to have again. The anthem represents a path where Soapy can live a good life on his own terms. It explores themes of poverty, survival, dream, hope and homelessness.

Soapy is the main character in the story. He was jobless as well as homeless. He restless because winter was approaching. He had a desire for shelter during winter. He planned to get arrested and go to prison.

Soapy then made attempts to get himself arrested for three months. Accordingly, Soapy came to a restaurant where only the rich people came every evening. The head waiter saw the broken shoes of Soapy and forced him out. Hence, his first attempt was a failure.

Soapy then came to a second restaurant. After eating the food there, Soapy said that he had no money to pay. The waiter then threw him out instead of calling the cop.

He had another idea to break a glass window with a stone. Soapy stopped after seeing a policeman arriving there. The policeman thought that guilty people usually try to escape, but Soapy did not run, it means he was innocent and did not arrest him.

Soapy made another attempt for his arrest. This time he began shouting like a drunk man in front of the theatre. The cop thought that he was a college boy and hence left him.

Soapy saw a man's umbrella and decided to steal it. He took the umbrella, but the man noticed and started following him. Soapy then told him to call the cop who was standing at a corner. The man refused to call the cop because he himself had stolen the umbrella.

Soapy then gave up all hopes of getting arrested and visited his childhood home. Then a sudden change came in his soul and decided to turn his life for better. He decided to fight the challenges of life. Soapy found work from the very next day.

Just then a cop came there and asked Soapy that what he was doing there. Soapy then began to argue with him due to his new confidence. However, the cop took him and the judge gave him three months prison sentence on Blackwell's Island.

Thus, the story "The Cop and the Anthem" teaches us that despite the wrong things we do, there are times when we can realize our wrongdoings and change our lives. O' Henry teaches us a moral that our goals and dreams, our hopes, and our plans for future might play a big role in determining the course of our lives.

## The Tongue-Cut-Sparrow

The Tongue-Cut Sparrow is traditional Japanese a story. It is also known as a fable. It is the story of a mean old woman and her kind husband. The angry old lady cut off the bird's tongue when it ate her starch. This story conveys the themes of kindness, greed, and consequences of one's action. It teaches that a kind and honest person is rewarded while a greedy or dishonest person is punished.

The old man was good, kind, and hardworking, but his wife was cross, mean, and bad-tempered. They had no children, so the old man kept a tiny sparrow as a pet. Every day when he came home from working in the woods, he loved to pet the little bird, talk to her, and feed her food from his own plate. The sparrow's sweet singing brought happiness into the old man's life. But his wife did not like the sparrow. She complained that her husband paid too much attention to a silly bird.

One morning, when the old man went away to cut wood, his wife prepared to wash clothes. On this day, she had made some starch, but the sparrow ate some of the starch. When the old woman saw the sparrow, she got so mad that she grabbed a pair of scissors and cut off the sparrow's tongue and asked her to go away. The poor bird flew away to the woods. When the old man returned home and heard what had happened, he felt very sad for his pet. The next morning, he went to the woods to look for the sparrow. It was the thick and dark wood. He worried that he would not see the sparrow again. And, to his great surprise, he heard the sparrow speak. The old man begged the sparrow sorry and requested to return home. The sparrow took the old man to her a pretty, little house with a bamboo garden and a tiny waterfall.

The old man entered the sparrow's house and met her family. Inside, many sparrows were singing sweet songs. They served the old man a delicious meal, with rice cakes, sweet candies, and plenty of hot tea. Then they did a wonderful dance that brought joy to his heart. That was a a magical day for him. As old man returned to his house, the sparrow placed before him two baskets. One was big and heavy, while the other was small and light. He was asked to choose one of them and told not to open the basket until he reaches home. The old man was not greedy, so he chose the small basket. When the old man arrived at this home, he told his wife all that had happened. Then they opened the small basket. It spilled over with jewels, gold and silver coins, and other treasures. The old man was delighted, but his wife

cried and scolded the old man that why he had not taken the big basket. Then, without another word, she hurried into the woods to find the sparrow's home.

When she at last arrived at the sparrow's house. The polite sparrow invited her into the house, and served her some hot tea. She took one sip and then said that she ready to leave. The sparrow again brought out two baskets, one big and one small and asked to choose one of them and requested not to open it until she returns home. The old woman grabbed the big basket and ran out the door. She sat down to rest. She cried that the big basket is so heavy and opened it. Instead of gold and silver, it was filled with toads that leaped into her hair, snakes that glided around her arms and legs, and wasps that stung her all over. The old woman screamed and ran as fast as she could. When she reached home, she fell into the old man's arms. He took care of her, and when she got better, she admitted that she was too greedy. He felt sorry that she hurt the sparrow.

Thus, the old woman learned her lesson, apologized, and changed her ways. She started helping her husband feed birds, and their home was filled with sweet songs.

# The Lady or the Tiger?

by Frank Stockton

‘The Lady or the Tiger?’ is beautiful story written by American writer Frank Stockton. He was a popular novelist and short story writer. The main themes of "The Lady, or the Tiger?" are actions and their consequences, the limits of love, the randomness of life, barbarism vs. civilization, justice, and human assumption.

The story begins with a description of a king who ruled long ago. The king is somewhat barbaric in his rule, but he is also calm and genial to his subjects. Only slightly influenced by the Romans, who ruled nearby, this king did not have gladiator battles or killings of religious prisoners in his amphitheater to amuse his subjects. Instead, this king conducted criminal trials there, and in a very distinctive way. These trials were very popular in his kingdom.

The king’s amphitheater contained two doors. Behind one door was a tiger, and behind the other was a lady. Whenever a man was accused of committing a crime, he was sent into the amphitheater to choose one of the two doors. If he chose the door with the tiger behind it, he died a gruesome death at its claws and teeth, and was therefore deemed guilty of the crime. If he chose the door with the lady, he was deemed innocent and was married to the lady then and there by a waiting priest. It didn’t matter if the man was already married, since the king demanded his own form of reward be enacted regardless of the newly innocent man’s circumstances.

At a certain time, the king becomes aware of a scandal involving his own daughter, the princess, and he finds that she is engaged in a love affair with a young man of low social standing. In the king’s eyes, this is a crime of the highest order, and he demands the trial of her lover in the usual fashion. This time, the most ferocious tiger that could be found is put behind one door, and the most beautiful lady in the kingdom behind the other. The crowds are massive, and even those who cannot gain access to the amphitheater press inward to catch a glimpse of the trial.

The princess, being in love with the young man on trial, has discovered which door holds the tiger and which holds the lady. She also knows that the lady is one from the king’s court, and one whom she hates for her amorous attention to the princess’s lover. The princess becomes viciously jealous at the thought of the woman anxiously awaiting her marriage to the young man.

At the trial, the young man enters the amphitheater in the usual way and bows to the king. But as he does so, he looks to the princess for some kind of sign about which door he should choose, suspecting that she has used her influence to find out which door holds which fate. The princess makes a quick gesture to the right, and the young man goes directly to open the door on the right. But it is not known which fate the princess has chosen for him and for herself. On the one hand, she may have saved his life but also condemned herself to endure the heartbreak of seeing him happily married to another woman. On the other hand, she may have chosen his brutal death, which they will both suffer through but will eventually enjoy a reunion in the afterlife.

The story ends without revealing what was behind the door on the right. The question is left to the audience of the story: Did the princess choose life or death for her lover?



# Artist

By Rabindranath Tagore

"Artist" is a short story by Rabindranath Tagore, a renowned Bengali writer and Nobel laureate. Here's a brief summary:

The story revolves around a young artist named Gagan, who is struggling to find his place in the world. Gagan is a talented painter, but his work is not appreciated by society. He is criticized for his unconventional style and lack of commercial appeal.

One day, Gagan meets a young woman named Suchitra, who is impressed by his art. She encourages him to continue pursuing his passion, despite the criticism. Gagan is inspired by Suchitra's words and begins to paint with renewed vigor.

However, as Gagan's art gains recognition, he starts to compromise his values to please his patrons. He begins to paint what is commercially viable, rather than what is true to his artistic vision. Suchitra is disappointed by Gagan's transformation and distances herself from him.

The story ends with Gagan realizing his mistake and returning to his true artistic self. He understands that true art cannot be compromised for fame or fortune.

Through "Artist," Tagore explores themes of creativity, identity, and the tension between artistic integrity and commercial success. The story is a reflection of Tagore's own experiences as an artist and his struggles to maintain his artistic vision in the face of criticism and societal pressure.

## ***The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Andersen**

***The Ugly Duckling*** was written by **Hans Christian Andersen** (1805-1875) in Denmark in 1845. He is the beloved author of many well-known children's stories, including *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Tinderbox*, and *The Princess and the Pea*. He was often called ugly as a child due to his large nose and feet. He considered his story *The Ugly Duckling* to be autobiographical because of his awkward appearance as a child, and because he grew up to be a well-known author.

The Ugly Duckling story is one among the classic bedtime stories for kids, which mentions a duckling who faces indifference from his siblings because of his odd appearance, but gradually grows up to become a beautiful swan. The Ugly Duckling moral is that we shouldn't judge a book by its cover.

### **THEMES**

The Ugly Duckling is about the search for personal identity. It asks the question - Where do I fit in? Rather than conforming to what is thought to be normal, one little duckling stands out. The book explores themes of belonging, isolation and togetherness, acceptance and kindness. The moral of the short story *The Ugly Duckling* is that people should not judge others based on their appearance. The story also explores themes of acceptance, kindness, and belonging.

Once upon a time, there was a duck. She lived on an islet in the middle of a lake surrounded by tall poplars. Not only did many duck families live on the lake, but also swans, frogs, and fish. The duck couldn't wait to have her own family. She would often dream of what it would be like swimming with a bunch of little ducklings trailing behind her. She sat on her eggs and waited impatiently for them to hatch. Soon, a tapping sound started coming from inside the eggs. One by one, the eggs started cracking and tiny beaks started to push themselves out into the world. Mama Duck cheered them on with loud, excited quacking. Six eggs hatched and the ducklings waddled back and forth, yellow like six shiny suns. Each one was prettier than the next! They were very impatient and excited to see what was beyond the reeds, but mama duck would stop them with her beak when the curious little ones got too close to the edge. She waited nervously

for the seventh egg to hatch. It was somewhat larger than the other six, and the duckling didn't seem to want to come out. After a while, she heard tapping sounds again. First, a little crack appeared, and then the whole egg cracked open as a head forced its way out. This head was bigger than the others, and grey like ashes. The duckling tumbled out of his egg and they saw that he was chubby, clumsy and stodgy, and had no trace of yellow feathers.

As soon as the other ducklings learned to speak, they started to mock their grey brother. They told him he was ugly. Mama Duck just sighed and hoped he would eventually turn yellow and look like the others. When old Mrs. Goose swam by, she gabbled loudly, "How pretty they are! Except that last one, he's ugly! You'd better get rid of him, Mrs. Duck." "No way! I don't care if he's grey; he's mine! Someday he'll be pretty," Mama Duck said.

The duckling sighed sadly and walked toward the others with his head bent. He was already too used to hearing such words. Every time they crossed the yard, all the animals laughed at the duckling, poking him and teasing him. One day, the duckling couldn't stand it any longer, so he headed to the bushes and hid there, knowing that he'd rather be alone. The duckling was very upset about being so ugly. Every time he looked at his reflection in the lake, he saw a grey, chubby, ugly duck. He walked sadly along the lake, when suddenly he came across a family of wild ducks. The duckling wanted to join them as they were as gray as he was. They greeted him warmly, without a thought to the fact that he was ugly. The duckling became friends with them, and they started to swim around and take little trips on the lake together. Then, one day, the wild ducks took off for a long flight to the south. The sky wasn't as sunny anymore and the leaves were slowly disappearing and floating about through the air. Every day the wind grew stronger. The duckling didn't dare fly so far, and so he stayed by the lake with the other animals. He missed his friends, and he started to feel ugly and misunderstood again.

The days grew colder and rainier. One day the rain began slashing down on the feeble shelter he had built for himself. Going back to the yard wasn't an option though. He couldn't stand to hear any more mocking. Soon, a cruel winter came. Snow swirled through the air. The wind was cold and the ugly duckling

shivered all over. He snuggled up in the bushes, and almost felt like he would freeze when, suddenly, a farmer walked by. He saw the poor stiff little duckling on the ground, so he picked him up, wrapped him in a blanket and took him home. The farmer gave him food and water, and sat him by the oven, and the children started playing with him. It was warm by the oven and the duckling felt alive again! Then, one of the children proposed that they play a hunting game. The duckling got so scared that he ran away, escaping through an open window in the bedroom!

It was freezing cold outside and the duckling couldn't walk in the deep snow. He hid in a cave nearby filled with whistling bats. After a while, the sun started shining a little more every day, and nature began to wake up again. The ugly duckling didn't want to spend all his time in the cave anymore, and he started to search outside for food. One day, he was swimming on a lake and met a family of swans. They were beautiful, with long white necks, and they swam gracefully in a group. "They're going to laugh at me for being ugly," the duckling thought, and started to swim away. "Hey, why don't you swim with us?" one of the swans called out to the duckling. "We'd be glad to accept you." The duckling couldn't believe his ears. "Why do you want to be friends with me?" he asked, suspiciously. "Are you going to laugh at me for being ugly? I'd rather be alone." "You're not ugly! Look at your reflection," the swan said.

The duckling hesitated and then looked at the water. He couldn't believe his own eyes. He wasn't an ugly grey duckling anymore - he was a beautiful white swan! Excited, he joined the other swans and swam with them toward the shore, where a group of children were playing. One of them looked at the swans and shouted, "Look, look! There's a new swan on the lake! And it might be the prettiest of them all!" The young swan swam proudly on the lake, feeling like the happiest bird in the world. And from that moment on, whenever he saw a young animal who didn't fit in, he made sure to be kind and tell them that they, too, were special.

### **A Horseman in the Sky- Ambrose Bierce**

The year: 1861. The place: A cliff overlooking a forested valley in the western part of Virginia. The event: The American Civil War. A Union Soldier named Carter Druse is posted at his sentry site on this particularly sunny afternoon. It is the kind of summer day in Dixie that can easily send a siren song to anyone, anywhere, serving any duty to lie down and rest. So restful is Druse that anyone observing him prostrate as he was would have assumed—considering the circumstances—that he was dead. It was much worse than that, of course. He had committed a crime far worse than death: falling asleep on guard duty. Had he been so discovered; he would soon know both the sin and the punishment since a breach of regulations could only justifiably be disciplined through execution.

The story is divided into sections and Part I is primarily descriptive prose outlining the topographical features of the setting and how those features are essential to the dramatic tension marking the narrative trek. The central element of this narrative trek is the strategic implementation by the Union forces to send somewhere between five and ten thousand men currently hidden from sight by the Confederate forces occupying the ridges bordering either side of the forest valley. Victory is almost assured provided the Union troops can maintain the element of surprise: it's a simple ambush. The tricky part is that maintenance of the surprise element. And a sentry falling asleep on duty is most assuredly not a helpful tactic.

Part II takes the narrative away from its forward trek so that it moves backward in time to situate context explaining the dramatic tension of the present circumstances of Carter Druse. Like many families in Virginia during this period—indeed, like the state itself—allegiances often split among friends and families as easily as among enemies and strangers. For the Druse clan, the fissure is especially tough: Carter enlisted on the side of the Union, freedom and preservation of the country. His father went in the opposite direction, choosing Confederate protection of slavery and secession. Because the topographical layout of this particular area of Virginia is so essential to successfully pulling off the planned ambush, Druse is given the responsibilities of sentry duty as a

result of his familiarity with the region. Back in the present, the narrative stages the scene which will drive the story to its climax: Druse spots a breathtaking sight on a cliff across the way: a statue of a man and horse, bound together in exquisite dignity. The man almost appears to have been a god of ancient Greek carved out of a block of marble. The narrator goes into great detail of the statue as keenly appreciated by the sentry who, for a brief moment, thinks his little nap must have taken him straight through to the end of the war. What else could account for such a magnificent work of art in such a strange location? Only one thing, of course. What he is looking at is not a statue at all. The man on the horse is obviously a Confederate scout and his position on the cliff likely can mean just one thing: the Union forces currently enjoying the advantage of not having yet been discovered either just have been or are just about to be. Druse picks up his rifle and aims his sight on figure across the distance.

Part III opens by tossing the reader into a jarring dislocation of time and space. Another Union soldier—an officer—is described making his way through the valley and wondering the purpose of pushing any further. He stops, looks up to a rocky cliff one-quarter of a mile in the distance and gasps at spectacle which plays out seemingly for his eyes only: a man astride a horse...both falling helplessly yet almost beautifully through the air to the unforgiving ground waiting below. The narrator describes the officer's reactions upon seeing this extraordinary thing and conveys his reaction through apocalyptic imagery and the stunning loudness which sudden absolute silence can bring.

The opening line of Part IV provides the necessary missing context without which the entirety of Part III seems to co-exist with the earlier narrative, but also simultaneously to exist apart from it. Almost as if Part III chose to occupy one side of the story in opposition to Part I and II. The weirdness of what the officer saw—the absolutely improbability and implausibility of a man on a horse almost gliding through the air in their downward trajectory is connected to the story of Carter Druse by virtue of it having been the trajectory of the bullet from Druse's rifle which stimulated the otherworldly apparition seen in its entirety only by the officer. Ten minutes after firing the fatal shot, a Union sergeant crawls quietly and with great caution

toward Druse who had been trained, of course, to recognize the approach of another soldier without betraying his position by seeming to have noticed anything at all. The sergeant whispered query to Druse about whether it was he who fired his rifle. Druse confirms and then answers the follow-up question: "At what?"

Druse is the very model of discipline and duty and betrays little hint of the emotional toll that this shot has taken on him aside from one very curious and very evident change in his physical appearance. Druse's face, the sergeant notices, seems to have been drained of every ounce of blood within. Aside from the fact that his face is now paler than pale, whiter than white, however, the sergeant can detect nothing else out of the ordinary. Still, the way Druse simply and quietly turns away from the sergeant after his almost rote answering the necessary inquiries is off; something is not quite right, but the sergeant is at a loss to understand why. He presses the young man further and then finally orders him to fully report: "Was there anybody on the horse" which Druse has just described as having been on the cliff but, clearly, is not any longer. Druse replies to the affirmative, but still offers no explanation for his bizarre appearance:

"Well?"

"My father."

The sergeant, stunned and a bit dazed himself, can think of nothing else to do but rise from his kneeling position, mutter "Good God!" and leave.

## **CHARACTERS**

### **Carter Druse**

Druse is a private enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War despite being a Virginian. Like so many actual families, the Druse clan is torn apart by loyalty: Carter's father enlists on the side of the Confederacy. Because of his familiarity with the Virginia territory in which his regiment is station, he is

given the position of standing sentry on watch for any Confederate troops on the surrounding hilltops that might discover the Union soldiers hiding in the valley below preparing for a secret ambush.

### **The Horseman**

After having fallen asleep while on duty, Carter awakens and looks across the valley to spot what looks like a statue of a soldier astride a horse on the cliff above. Shaking aside his drowsy phantasms, he realizes that it is not a statue, but an actual Confederate on a horse. Realizing that this can only mean be a scout who is, like himself, familiar with the terrain, he has only once choice if he is to save his fellow Union soldiers from being spotted and slaughtered. So he raises his rifle, sets his sight on the target and fires.

### **The Union Officer**

An unnamed Union officer is conducting his scouting. As he pauses to consider whether it is advantageous enough to continue forward, he looks up and sees an amazing sight: a man aboard a flying horse. Both fall through the air straight upright and the sight is so fantastic that he briefly wonders if it a horseman come to warn of the apocalypse. His search for the falling horse and horseman fails to turn up evidence of their existence. When he later returns to camp to report to his commander on his scouting expedition, he leaves out the part about the flying horse.

### **The Sergeant**

A sergeant within hearing distance of Druse's sentry points crawls over to ask about the rifle shot. Druse tells him about the horse on the cliff across the way. When the sergeant presses him on whether there was a ride on the horse, Druse finally answers that was and that the horseman was his own father.

### **Themes in A Horseman in the Sky**

#### **Civil War Revisionism**

Bierce published this story in 1889, nearly thirty years after shots fired at Fort Sumter ignited the Civil War. Having volunteered with the Union forces at age nineteen, Bierce had plenty of first-hand eyewitness experience with the reality of war and he never played it for mythic heroic status in his writings. His realism may have been tempered with irony and even allegorical fantasy at times, but he never portrayed the war anything less a brutal, bloody, dirty clash having little to do with artistic depictions of nobility. In the years between his



time as a soldier and his publishing his story, monuments to Civil War “heroes” had popped up on both sides of the playing field, most commonly in the form of soldiers—usually officers—on horseback. The result, in Bierce’s opinion, was that the reality of the war was being revised and transformed into something it was not. And thus his story becomes allegory as a soldier on horseback temporarily transforms into a statue of a man on horseback before being shot to death and turning into a mythic figure of man on horseback flying through the air as seen by a non-participatory observer far away from the action.

### **Familial Division**

Bierce could just as easily have made his point about the revisionism of the reality of the war into some mythically heroic showdown of titans without the victim of the sniper’s rifle being the sniper’s own father. Even if the man on horseback had been a complete and total stranger, the allegorical point would stand. That he specifically chose to make it a father and son tragedy also points to his discomfort at the direction the collective memory of the war was taking among Americans. By 1889, too family members personally impacted by a division of loyalties were gone as a result of aging. Old wounds had healed and angry memories had softened and the reality of so many brothers fighting brothers and sons fighting fathers in battle no longer seemed quite as viscerally real. Through the choice that Bierce made, the story also becomes thematically richer as a counter to revisionism with its reminder that families really had been torn apart in a way Americans had never seen before and had not seen since.

### **Duty**

Duty is a prevailing theme that enters the story directly as a result of the experiences of the author. The soldier in Bierce plays out as his protagonist not necessarily because of any autobiographical connection to the central event of the story, but because his military service impressed upon him the vital and perhaps life-saving imperative to understand and carry out one’s duty. The story begins with Carter Druse failing in his duty to stay away during sentry duty; a failure punishable by death if he’d been discovered. So the story becomes on a certain level one of redemption for that failure. That redemption

can only come by completely fulfilling his duty at the next opportunity and that opportunity arrives in the form of his instructions upon spotting an enemy combatant during sentry post: “The duty of the soldier was plain: the man must be shot dead from ambush—without warning.” This theme is given an ironic and tragic dimension with the introduction through flashback of the words of advice which were among the last his father ever spoke to him: “whatever may occur do what you conceive to be your duty.”

**Best of Luck**

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