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Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Island of
Dr. Moreau

by H. G. Wells

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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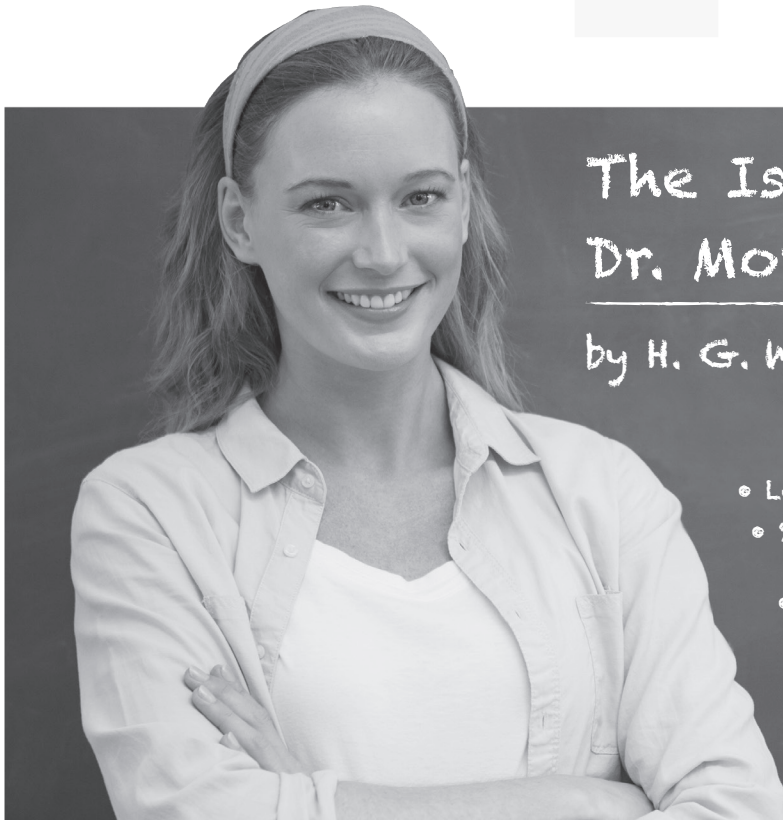
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The Island of Dr. Moreau

Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. infer information about characters and events when the meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. define vocabulary words as they are used in the story.
3. comment on how the author's semi-documentary writing style helps to add realism to the story.
4. cite incidents from the story, which support the following overall theme: Man's sense of morality must keep pace with his scientific advances or these advances will be the cause of his own destruction.
5. point out which incidents in the story that constitute the rising action, climax, and falling action.
6. point out examples of foreshadowing in the story.
7. comment on Montgomery and why he is both physically and morally flawed.
8. discuss the extent to which the following generalizations about life appear in this novel:
 - the events in a man's life are largely due to chance;
 - humans tolerate immoral behavior of others so long as this behavior is concealed from view;
 - despite efforts to alter their natures, man and animals will feel compelled to return to their original character;
 - a man will commit an immoral act to save his own life.
9. comment on how Dr. Moreau justifies inflicting pain on animals and how he views their use for research.
10. discuss how Montgomery and Prendick view using animals for research.
11. cite incidents from the story to support the following theme: man and animals are born with natural desires, and to deny or distort these desires results in unhappy, tortured lives.

The Island of Dr. Moreau

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Define the following nautical terms: Aft, bulwark, fore, gunwhale, piggin, schooner, painter. Why is the painter important to Prendick?
2. Point out how Wells' semi-documentary style of writing helps to make this science fiction novel more realistic?
3. In what way does this novel qualify as part of the science fiction genre?
4. Cite an incident in the story for each of the following plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
5. Write a character sketch of Montgomery. Include the reasons he saves Prendick's life on the ship and why, at the end of the story, Prendick knows he cannot rely on Montgomery's help to escape the island.
6. Cite incidents from the story to support or refute Montgomery's assertion that everything in his life is due to chance.
7. Why is Moreau able to dismiss the suffering he inflicts on his subjects as if their pain is of no consequence?
8. In what ways does Prendick both agree and disagree with the idea of using animals for scientific research?
9. List the Laws of the Beast People. Cite incidents from the story in which many of these laws are broken, even before Moreau's death.
10. Write a brief essay illustrating how the lives of the Beast People on the island is a microcosm for the world. Include the role of religion in their lives, their struggles to conquer their desires, and their social structure.
11. Moreau is dissatisfied with the Beast People, which is why he turns them loose on the island. List the ways he considers his work to be flawed.
12. One passage in the story states, "The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature." Do you believe Prendick might agree or disagree with this statement. Cite incidents from the story to support your answer.

The Island of Dr. Moreau

Chapter The First - In the Dingey of the "Lady Vain"

VOCABULARY

- dingey** – small rowboat
- privations** – the lack of usual necessities and comforts
- thwart** – a seat in a boat
- schooner** – a vessel with two or more masts
- gunwale** – a piece of timber around the top side of a boat, and having oarlocks for the oars
- fore** – the front or bow of a ship
- tacking** – a zigzag course
- soddened** – soaked

1. How did the narrator and the other three men in the dingey try to help Constans? Why does the narrator say it is "lucky" that Constans never reached the men in the dingey?

2. Why do the narrator and the other men in the dingey agree to draw lots? What evidence is there that the narrator is willing to go through with their terrible pact?

3. What do you think Wells is saying to the reader about the lengths that a moral man might sink to in order to prolong life? Cite incidents from the story to support your answer.

Chapter The Eighth – The Crying of the Puma

VOCABULARY

diabolical – devilish, wicked, fiendish

masticated – chewed

resurgence – to rise again

distractedly – without concentrating

crib – to copy

1. One of the overall themes of this story is the question of when and how to apply moral values to scientific research. What does the following passage from the story reveal to the reader about Prendick's moral attitudes concerning a scientist who deliberately inflicts pain on a subject in the name of scientific research?

“It was as if all the pain in the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe—I have thought since—I could have stood it well enough. It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us.”

2. Use the quotation above to state a generalization about life regarding man's apathy toward moral problems that do not directly impact life.

3. What figure of speech is used in the quotation?

Chapter the Seventeenth – A Catastrophe

VOCABULARY

indurated – hardened, made unfeeling
virago – a quarrelsome shrewish woman
abhorrence – hatred
fetters – chains
caricatures – exaggerated images

1. What is the “Catastrophe” referred to in the title of this chapter?

Chapter the Eighteenth – The Finding of Moreau

VOCABULARY

homunculus – dwarf
feral – wild

1. Why is it dangerous for the Beast People to believe that Moreau is dead?

2. In what ways does M'ling begin to behave more like a beast in this chapter?
