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Sample MonkeyNotes

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Exodus

by

Leon Uris (1958)



MonkeyNotes by Laurie Lahey

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KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

The Primary setting is Palestine (Israel), post-World War II.

However the novel makes use of many other settings including the U.S., England, France, Russian,.....

CHARACTER LIST

Major Characters

Ari Ben Canaan - Ari is the major protagonist of this novel. He is a sabra, a native of Palestine. He eventually becomes a brigadier in Israel's army. He is a brilliant commander who has a difficult time expressing his emotions.

Kitty Fremont - Kitty is an American nurse who works with orphans throughout World War II. She eventually goes to Palestine and is a major force in the success of Gad Dafna, a village where Jewish orphans are raised.

Minor Characters

Karen Hansen Clement - Karen is a Jewish girl from Germany raised in secret by Danish Christians during the war. Following the war she seeks out her father in Palestine.

Dov Landau - Dov is a concentration camp survivor. He is a brilliant forger and scholar. He.....

CONFLICT

The conflict of a plot is the major problem experienced by the protagonist. Because this novel is of epic stature, its conflict is a bit unusual. In *Exodus* the major conflict is the plight of

Protagonist - The protagonist of a story is the main character who traditionally undergoes some sort of change. He or she must usually overcome some opposing force. There are many characters in this novel that.....

Antagonist - Traditionally, the antagonist of a story is the character that provides an obstacle for the protagonist. In this story there is not one antagonist. The forces that try to keep Ari and the other Jews.....

Climax - The climax of this novel is found in the whole of Book 4. While the UN has ratified the.....

Outcome - The outcome, resolution, or denouement occurs throughout Book 5. In this last book, Israel.....

SHORT PLOT/CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

Book 1

Mark Parker visits his old friend, Kitty Fremont, in Greece where he comes to suspect the British are involved in questionable activities involving Jewish refugees. Meanwhile, the Mossed Aliyah Bet, a Palestinian group lead by Ari Ben Canaan, is staging a mass escape of the Jewish prisoners from the refugee camps. Ari and his comrades successfully gather three hundred children aboard a ship called the *Exodus* and convince the British to allow them into Palestine.

Book 2

Book 2 takes us back to the Pale in Russia at the end of the 19th Century. Jossi and Yakov Rabinsky must flee this Russian ghetto because Yakov has avenged his father's murder and they are wanted by the authorities. The brothers travel by foot, for years, to Palestine. When they arrive they become involved in harvesting the land so

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they, and other Jews, can live from it. The brothers marry and have children. They take Hebrew names- Jossi becomes Barak and Yakov becomes Akiva. The men are chased from their homes as World

THEMES

Major Theme

The spirit of the Jewish people in the face of impossible odds

Throughout the entire novel we are given stories about individual Jews or groups of Jews who have been oppressed and tormented; however, they continue to fight even when it looks like they.....

Minor Themes

The helpful American

Throughout the novel we meet many American characters who are always aide the Jewish cause. Mark Parker reports on the *Exodus*. Kitty works as a nurse for the orphans and for Ari. Bill Fry loses his life piloting a ship to Palestine. Harriet Saltzman loses her life working in Palestine. Harry Truman is the.....

Israel as the new America

In telling the story of Israel's birth, there are many parallels to the stories Americans tell about the American Revolution. There are characters like Barak, who resembles the American, Benjamin Franklin. Barak, like Franklin, relies on his diplomatic skills rather than his fighting skills. Barak panders.....

MOOD

The prevailing mood of the novel is somber. The narrator uses a serious, somber tone in recounting this.....

GENRE

Historical Fiction. Historical Fiction is a genre of literature which uses actual historical events, but creates a fictional plot. *Exodus* revolves around the historical events of the Jewish conquest for

BACKGROUND INFORMATION / BIOGRAPHY

Leon Uris was born in Baltimore, MD in 1924. His father was a Polish immigrant and his mother was a first-generation American. Uris failed high school English three times and never graduated; although, he did later receive an honorary doctorate from Lincoln College. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps. at age seventeen and served in World War II. In 1945, Uris married wife, Betty Beck. As a writer and newspaper.....

LITERARY/ HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This novel encompasses the difficult history of the Jewish people from the inception of the Zionist Movement through the establishment of the State of Israel. While there is a breadth of historical information covered in this novel, the reader should keep in mind that all history is presented from the perspective of the writer. Eminent scholar, Hayden White addresses the issue of the fictional nature of history, and points out that historical facts are constituted rather than given. White finds a story-telling element in.....

CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES / ANALYSIS

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER 1

Summary

The year is 1946. Mark Parker arrives at the airport in Cyprus, Greece. Katherine (Kitty) Fremont, who was supposed to meet him, has been detained. A government tourist host tells Mark a car will be arranged for him.

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Mark is relieved that Kitty has not come; he is nervous to see her after so many years. Mark, apparently a reporter, meets a man who remembers him from a bar. Mark does not recognize the man and thinks about how he could have met him in any bar accompanied by any number of women. Mark politely takes the man's business card and, later, discards it.

Mark's thoughts turn to Kitty. Kitty was the quintessential girl next door. Mark and Kitty grew up together and he watched her transform from a little girl into a beautiful woman. Kitty married Tom Fremont—Mark's best friend since they were babies. Tom and Kitty broke up when Tom went to college. However, when Kitty entered the same college, a few years later, they fell in love again. Tom and Kitty married secretly with only Mark and Ellen (Mark's girlfriend) in attendance at the ceremony. Tom adored Kitty. Kitty became a pediatric nurse and Tom got a great job with a public relations firm. Mark and Ellen married shortly after Kitty and Tom's wedding. However, Mark and Ellen's marriage was less than blissful. Their inevitable divorce was stayed by Kitty's devotion to helping them try to resolve their problems. Mark moved East after the divorce and became a reporter. Tom and Kitty wrote him letters weekly.

When the war (World War II) broke out, Mark was sent all over Europe. Tom enlisted in the Marines and was killed in Guadalcanal. Two months later, Sandra, Tom and Kitty's daughter, died of polio. Mark took an emergency leave. When he returned to the United States he could not find Kitty.

Mark arrives at the Dome Hotel. Kitty has arranged adjoining rooms for them. When he gets to his room, Mark finds a note from Kitty saying, regretfully, that she will be in Famagusta until nine o'clock. Mark stretches out on the bed for a nap. Mark is awakened by Major Fred Caldwell of the British Army. Mark does not care for Caldwell. They have met only a couple of times. Caldwell wants to know what Mark is doing in Greece, as he knows that Mark is a reporter. This spurs suspicion in Mark. Mark asks if the British are up to something on the island. Caldwell tells him the British own the whole island and they can do whatever they want there. Mark tells Caldwell that he is there visiting Kitty Fremont, whom he has known for twenty-five years. Caldwell knows who she is; she has become quite well-known as a nurse in the area.

Notes

This chapter is a classic exposition. The exposition of a plot supplies the reader with background information about the main characters so the reader can understand what is happening. Typically, the exposition also hints at plot's major conflict. In this chapter we learn that the main character and protagonist of the plot is Mark Parker, an American reporter. Mark became well-known during World War II for his coverage in Europe. Mark is visiting an old friend, Kitty Fremont. Kitty is beautiful and an excellent pediatric nurse. Her husband Tom, also Mark's childhood friend, was killed in the war. Her daughter died of polio shortly after Tom's death. Mark has not seen Kitty in years. The reader also learns that there may be a problem concerning the British.

Uris provokes the reader's curiosity with a visit from Major Fred Caldwell of the British Army. It is apparent that Mark does not like Caldwell, and it seems that Caldwell does not care very much for Mark either. Caldwell is suspicious of Mark's presence in Greece; Mark is suspicious of Caldwell's actions in Greece.

The chapter opens with a famous quote from William Shakespeare's play, *Othello*: "Welcome to Cyprus." Mark tries to remember the rest of the quote throughout the chapter. When Caldwell leaves Mark's room, Mark finally remembers the whole quotation: "Welcome to Cyprus, goats and monkeys." The quotation is actually "You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.--Goats and monkeys!" from Act IV, Scene I. *Othello*, essentially, is a play about a man (Othello) who is driven to insane jealousy when he is tricked into believing his wife loves another man. When Othello utters this statement he is enraged and he uses "goats and monkeys" and an expletive. This phrase signifies his collapse. The play ends in murder and destruction. This quote is important to this novel in

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two ways: first, it foreshadows the themes of violence and deceit that pervade the novel; second, by recalling the association of Cyprus with “goats and monkeys” Uris is referencing the type of men in charge of the island (British). In the same manner that Shakespeare originally intended, monkey and goat are derisive labels. Consider how monkey is used in contemporary language – to “make a monkey” out of someone, “monkey see monkey do.” Goats are associated with stupidity and foul smell.

CHAPTER 2

Summary

David Ben Ami and a Greek Cypriot wait in a white house for Ari Ben Canaan, a member of

OVERALL ANALYSES

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Ari Ben Canaan - Ari is the main character and protagonist of *Exodus*. As the protagonist, Ari must overcome the novel’s major conflict, which is to establish the official State of Israel. Of course, Ari does not accomplish this task alone; however, he exemplifies the sacrifices many Jews made to bring the Zionist dream.....

Kitty Fremont - Kitty Fremont is an American nurse who inadvertently gets involved with the Zionist movement. Through her eyes, the reader learns about the Zionist movement and about the Jewish culture. Because Kitty is uncomfortable and unfamiliar with Jews, Uris is able to show how people can.....

PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

Exodus is the epic story of how Israel went from a dream to a reality and of all the tragedy experienced along the way. The novel is divided into five books which span approximately fifty years. The protagonist is Ari Ben Canaan, a Palestinian born Jew. Ari spends his life fighting for Israel. When the State of

Exposition - The exposition of a plot is the place where the reader is introduced to the main characters and any important information to understand what is presently occurring. Because this novel treats such

Rising Action - Rising action is the action that will lead to the climax (or the major turning point in the plot). The Rising action in *Exodus* occurs in Book 3. In this book, the future of Israel is uncertain. Barak and.....

Climax - The climax is the point in the plot where something happens to change the course of action of the main character. It is a decisive moment that will determine the outcome of the plot. In this novel, the climax occurs in Book 4. In Book 4 the United Nations agrees to the.....

Outcome - The outcome of the plot is when resolution occurs. The outcome of *Exodus* is that even though Israel legally exists, the Jews must continue to fight. Ari overcomes his emotional distance.....

THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS

The indomitable spirit of the Jewish people in the face of impossible odds

In virtually every story told in this novel, the major theme is that Jews have had to overcome immense oppression and that they never give up. The individual stories of Karen, Dov, Jossi, Yakov and Ari provide varied examples of how different Jews have overcome different problems—however, in each case the character was unfairly and terribly oppressed. They each have very little working for them, but no character ever.....

QUOTES - IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Edition used: Bantam, 1986

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1. “Welcome to Cyprus, goats and monkeys.” – Mark, recalling the phrase from Shakespeare’s *Othello*, p.11
The quotation is actually “You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.--Goats and monkeys!” from Act IV, Scene I. *Othello*, essentially, is a play about a man (Othello) who is driven to insane jealousy when he is tricked into believing his wife loves another man. When Othello utters this statement he is enraged and he uses “goats and monkeys” and an expletive. This phrase signifies his collapse. The play ends in murder and destruction. This quote is important to this novel in two ways: first, it foreshadows the themes of violence and deceit that pervade the novel; second, by recalling the association of Cyprus with “goats and monkeys” Uris is

SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / SYMBOLS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS

Many of the names in this novel are symbolic:

Karen Clement - “Clement” is symbolic of clemency, which means mercy. Karen is always kind and teaches the same to Dov. When Karen is murdered, Dov says he will not hate the Moslems because

Dov Landau -“Landau” is a carriage. This symbolizes Dov constant

Barak and Sarah - Barak and Sarah are symbolic of the Biblical Abraham and Sarah. Abraham and Sarah left their homes to begin God’s great nation in Canaan (modern day Israel). Sarah had problems conceiving but God promised she would bear a child. Later God tests Abraham’s faith by asking him to.....

IMPORTANT / KEY FACTS SUMMARY

Title: *Exodus*

Author: Leon Uris

Date Published: 1958

Setting: The Primary setting is Palestine (Israel), post-World War II. However the novel makes use of many other settings including the U.S., England, France, Russian, Poland, Denmark, Germany and Yemen. The novel extends back as far as the late 19th century through the early 1950s.

Genre: Historical Fiction

Meaning of the Title: Exodus is the second book of the Torah, purportedly written by Moses. The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land marks the end of their oppression at the hands of the Pharaoh. In the novel, the *Exodus* is the name of the ship that carries three hundred children to Palestine. This emmigration is significant because it marks the beginning of the end for the British in Palestine; thus, this event marks the beginning of the Jews acquisition of Israel.....

VOCABULARY LIST

Zephyr - gentle breeze

Subrosa - secretly

Noisome - offensive

Fetid - offensive odor

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Opine - to state an opinion.....

STUDY QUESTIONS / MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ

Multiple Choice (answer key after next section)

1. What is Mark's profession?
 - A. Soldier
 - B. Journalist
 - C. Spy

2. What was the original name of the *Exodus*?
 - A. *Aphrodite*
 - B. *Star of David*
 - Bevin.....

ESSAY QUESTIONS / ESSAY TOPIC IDEAS / BOOK REPORT TOPICS

1. Write an essay describing the first encounter between Kammal and Jossi from Kammal's perspective. Make sure to include any fears or observations he might have about interacting with a Jewish man.

2. Write an essay from the perspective of a 15-year-old British girl on May 14, 1948. What does she think about the new State of Israel and the declining British Empire?.....

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