

CLASS NOTES

Name _____
Eng. Foundations III – Silver

Date _____
Short Story Unit

“Lather and Nothing Else”
By Hernando Tellez

Narrator and Point of View

1. From what point of view is the story told?

1st person narrator

2. Describe the narrator. What are his two priorities in life?

Being a barber and being a revolutionary → “conscientious barber”, hardworking, passionate, dedicated, driven, values his career and reputation → doesn’t want to become a murderer

3. How would the story be different if told from a third-person point of view?

Readers wouldn’t be able to feel the barber’s indecisiveness (angel/devil argument)

Setting and Mood

4. What kind of mood does the scene in the barber shop create for the reader?

A mood of suspense, curiosity, fear

5. Identify specific details that contribute to creating this mood.

Diction → ex. “executioner” “my hands began to tremble” “I had never had him so close”

Repetition → lather

Conflict

6. What is the internal conflict that the barber experiences?

Whether or not to kill the captain

7. Much of the tension in the story stems from the narrator's above internal conflict. Complete the Pro/Con chart below indicating the reasons the barber considers killing the captain (the *pros*) and the drawbacks he imagines for choosing murder (the *cons*).

Pros	Cons
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "...it would be so easy to kill him."2. He'd be the "avenger" of his people, fighting for his cause3. "I could cut his throat" (very easily)4. The captain would be dead and the rebels would have the upper hand5. Barber would feel relief (not having to worry about CT anymore)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The barber is "secretly a revolutionary, but at the same time...a conscientious barber."2. He doesn't want to be a murderer, just a barber3. Doesn't know where he'd hide the body4. Cares about staying true to his own job (murderer isn't part of it)5. "I don't want my hands stained with blood. Just with lather, and nothing else."

Characterization & Resolution

8. How is the major conflict resolved? What does this reveal about the narrator?

Narrator understands that killing isn't an option

He does what's best for himself, not for the revolution

He wants to be known only as a barber, not a murderer

9. What is Captain Torres's real purpose in coming to the narrator for a shave? What does this reveal about his character?

CT is brave for sitting with the enemy → shows trust, bravery, foolishness?

He knows the barber is the enemy, wants to see if he'll go through with murder

10. What does Torres admit at the end of the story? What does this reveal about his character?

"it's not easy to kill. I know what I'm talking about." → Honest, understands what the barber is going through, maybe he doesn't like his own job

Analysis

11. How come the story is titled "Lather and Nothing Else"? What is the significance of this phrase? (Think about the narrator's statement about his hands at the end.)

Barber's job is to be a barber, not to kill

Only wants lather on his hands, not blood → lather symbolizes peace, purity, cleanliness → Blood = filth, guilt, savagery