

Sunrise: A Story of Two Humans Film Summary

Sunrise: A Story of Two Humans by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau

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Context

Sunrise: A Story of Two Humans tells the story of humanity. As the film begins, these words appear on the screen: "This song of the Man and his Wife is of no place and every place...(everywhere) life is much the same: sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet." Human emotion and experience are somewhat universal and the film seeks to share this experience with the audience through the use of easily understandable characters and circumstances.

The Man is having an affair with the Woman of the City. This Woman is mysterious and tempting and the two of them create a plan for the Man to murder his Wife so that they can be together. The Wife is terribly upset about her husband's frequent disappearances, so she is elated when he suggests that they spend some time alone. Although he intends to kill her, the Man cannot bring himself to do the terrible deed. Instead the Wife forgives him and they spend a beautiful day in the city, falling in love all over again. On their way home they are caught in a life-threatening storm; the Wife, feared dead, miraculously survives. The Man and Wife rejoice over their good fortune and go on to live a happy life together.

F.W. Murnau is one of the greatest directors of all time, ranked #33 by *Entertainment Weekly*. During the 1920s, Murnau was one of the top three German directors; the other two were Ernest Lubitsch and Fritz Lang. Before *Sunrise*, Murnau also directed *Desire* (1921), *Nosferatu* (1922), and *Faust* (1926). *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* is one of his best-known works, winning several awards at the first Academy Awards presentation.

George O'Brien, as the Man, is a classic face of the silent era. Starring in dozens of movies, O'Brien created a name for himself in the industry. Before his excellent performance in *Sunrise*, O'Brien also performed in *The Roughneck* (1924), *The Fighting Heart* (1925), *Rustling for Cupid* (1926) and *Paid to Love* (1927).

Beautiful and innocent, Janet Gaynor, playing the Wife, is another well-known face from the era of silent films. Gaynor first gave an excellent performance as Anna Burger in the *Johnstown Flood* (1926). She also demonstrated her talent in such films as *The Blue Eagle* (1926), *The Midnight Kiss* (1926), *The Return of Peter Grimm* (1926), *Seventh Heaven* (1927) and *Two Girls Wanted* (1927).

Margaret Livingston plays the Woman of the City, a temptress who tries to take the Man away from his Wife. She appeared in many movies, including *Wandering Husbands* (1924), *I'll Show You the Town* (1925), *After Marriage* (1925) and *Married Alive* (1927).

Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans was a popular film at the first Academy Awards. Janet Gaynor won an Oscar for Best Actress in a Leading Role not only for her role in *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* but also for her roles in *Seventh Heaven* (1927) and *Street Angel* (1928). Charles Rosher and Karl Struss won the Oscar for Best

Cinematography, while the film won the award for Best Picture, Unique and Artistic Production. Rochus Gliese was also nominated for Best Art Direction.



Summary and Analysis

"This song of the Man and his Wife is of no place and every place...(everywhere) life is much the same: sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet." The film begins during summer vacation time.

We see the picture of a train moving through a city. As the train continues on to the country, we also see ships and many different types of people. On a dock, some fashionable people wave to family and friends on a boat. The Woman of the City arrives for a country vacation.

Next we see the Woman enter a room and begin to fix her hair. She changes her clothes while people in the other room eat dinner. Another woman shines the Woman of the City's shoes. Then the Woman leaves and walks through the streets.

She stops by the Man's window and he walks toward her as he watches his Wife set the table for dinner. He looks from the table to the window, appearing to consider his next move. He puts on his coat and goes out. When his Wife realizes he is gone, she sadly places the bowl on the table and falls into a chair.

A woman tells her husband that the Man and his Wife used to be like children, happy and laughing. We see a scene where the Wife holds the baby until the Man, who is plowing the fields, comes to play with him. The woman tells her husband that the Man now ruins himself with the Woman of the City while the moneylenders get the farm and the Wife sits home alone.

Inside, the Wife slowly gets up and walks into her son's room, hugging the boy as she weeps. Outside, the Man goes off the path and climbs over fences to meet the Woman of the City. As she waits, she touches up her makeup and perfume. Finally he arrives and they embrace passionately.

At home, the Wife plays with their child and cries. Meanwhile the Man tells the Woman of the City that he is all hers. She begs him to sell the farm and return with her to the City. He mentions his wife and the Woman just laughs; then an evil look crosses her face and she says, "Couldn't she get drowned?"

She tells the Man to overturn his boat when his Wife is on it but to make it look like an accident. At this, the Man begins to strangle the Woman, but she pulls him back and wrestles him to the floor with kisses. Again and again she asks him to leave it all behind and move to the city. We see scenes of many different city activities as the pair embrace beneath a full moon.

Next we see the Woman gathering bulrushes. She tells the Man that he should float along on them after the boat capsizes, but should discard them along the shore so that the sinking appears accidental.



The Man returns home to find his Wife sleeping. He places the bulrushes in the bottom of the boat. His Wife continues to sleep soundly as he lies down in his bed across the room. He watches her and sighs deeply.

The next morning, the Wife gazes at her sleeping husband, stroking his hair. She covers him with a blanket and leaves the room to start her day. The Man wakes up and sees some bulrushes on the floor. He holds his head and watches his wife as she feeds the chickens. In his mind he sees visions of both women and cannot choose; he tries to shut out the thoughts. Then he walks toward his Wife as she enters the room and offers his hand. She is overjoyed and takes his hand as they embrace.

The Wife tells the Maid that they are going for a trip across the water and may not be back for a bit. The Man watches as the Wife gathers her things while he picks up the bulrushes. The Wife hugs their child before they leave.

A dog barks as they pass by on their way to the boat. The Man hides the bulrushes in the boat before his Wife boards; the dog continues to bark, seemingly condemning the Man. As the Man and his Wife pull away from the shore, the dog swims after them and meets their boat. This causes the Man to return to the shore to tie the dog up as the Woman watches quietly.

The couple again takes off from the shore as bells ring. The Wife watches the Man carefully as he struggles to row; we can see how much she loves him. However, she suspects that something is wrong because he refuses to look at her. When the birds, the only other creatures on the water, fly away, the Wife becomes increasingly nervous.

Suddenly, the Man stops rowing and the Wife leans over to see if he's okay. He stands up and moves toward her as she retreats to the edge of the boat and pleads with him. Then he sits back down and begins rowing quickly as she cries. They finally get back to shore and the Wife runs away across the fields. The Man tells her not to be afraid.

The Wife continues to run until she sees a trolley and boards it. The Man, however, follows her. He sits beside her and tries to calm her as she cries again. The trolley is headed for the dusty, dirty city.

As the Wife stays huddled in a corner, the Man begs her not to be afraid; but when the trolley stops, she hurries off and he follows her. The Man protects her as cars speed by. Not used to the busy streets, they quickly enter a restaurant, but the Wife remains sorrowful.

The Man gets up and brings back food for his Wife. She begins to eat but soon breaks down crying. She gets up and leaves the restaurant while the Man follows her.

He offers her flowers but once again, she dissolves into tears. They continue walking, the Man's arm around his Wife's shoulders, but she refuses to be comforted. He strokes her arm and finally she stops crying.



They walk through a building and as they exit, they see a bride entering a church. They follow her inside to witness the wedding. The Man's conscience is pricked when he hears the words, "Keep and protect her from all harm." Then he breaks down crying and his Wife holds him. He begs for forgiveness and she offers it with a kiss. They walk outside together, happy as newlyweds. They embrace in the middle of a street, causing a traffic jam.

The couple continues to walk through the City, where they see many portraits of happy couples. They decide to go to a salon for haircuts. While in the salon, a beautiful woman walks in and begins flirting with the Man. He sends her away and the Wife is happy.

While she sits watching the Man, another man sits next to the Wife. He tries to cozy up to her but she refuses his advances. When the Man's haircut is finished, he goes over to his Wife and embraces her as he steps on the other man's foot. Both men reach for their knives. The Man threatens the other man with his knife and then walks away.

The couple leaves to have their photograph taken. While waiting for the Photographer to come back with their pictures, they play around and knock over a headless statue. However, they didn't know that it had no head and think that they broke it.

The Photographer then returns and the two are nervous. The Man grabs a toy ball and puts it on the statue for a head. They hurry out of the studio without getting all their pictures. The Photographer notices the statue and laughs at their foolishness. Outside, they laugh and look at their photographs before exploring the city some more.

Meanwhile, we see the Woman of the City circling a newspaper ad for farmers who want to sell their land for cash.

The Man and his Wife get in line for a carnival near a restaurant. They play several games, one of which involves throwing a ball at a pig. They see people inside the restaurant dancing and the Wife wishes they were in there too.

When one of the pigs gets loose, the couple goes inside to catch it. The chef is in the back, drinking, and thinks that the pig, which is covered in a sheet, is a ghost. He drops his wine and the pig begins to drink it. After the Man catches the pig, he and his Wife start to dance. A couple to the side is having problems: the woman's dress strap keeps falling and the man keeps pushing it back up. As the Man and his Wife twirl around, everyone admires them.

Then they sit down at a table and begin drinking and kissing. When their bill arrives, they are shocked at the cost: the Man has run out of money. Fortunately, the Wife has brought some of her own. As they prepare to leave, the Wife can't stand up straight because she's tipsy.

The couple leaves the restaurant and watches the fireworks at the carnival. Finally they board the trolley to return home. When they arrive at their boat they say, "We'll sail home by moonlight - another honeymoon." They sail toward their home, embracing one another until the Wife falls asleep.



A terrible storm begins while they are still on the water. Their boat is tossed about and the man begins to row them quickly toward home. The Wife wakes up and is frightened. The storm worsens and they cling to each other as their boat begins to fill with water. At home, the Maid holds their child as the storm rages. The Man pulls out the bulrushes and straps them to his wife as he holds her tight. Then their boat capsizes, sending them both into the water.

At last the storm ends and the moon comes out. We see the Man climb out of the water. He calls for his Wife but there is no response. In her room, the Woman of the City, who had been sleeping soundly, wakes up when she hears people running about. She looks out the window to see people hurrying to the water. The people are going to help find the Wife; the Woman of the City follows them in secret.

The Man is unable to find his Wife's body; he is grief-stricken. The Woman watches from behind the bushes as the townspeople help the Man walk back to his home. There the Maid and the child weep at the news. The Man walks into his room and looks sadly at his Wife's bed.

As he lies in his bed, weeping, the Woman of the City comes to the door. When the Man sees her, he chases her angrily and begins to strangle her. The Maid calls out to him and the Man stops before he kills the Woman.

Suddenly the Man sees his Wife running toward him. She had followed the tides to save herself and had finally been found. The Maid tells everyone to be quiet so that the Wife can rest.

Soon after, the Woman of the City leaves to return home. Above the couple's house, a new day is dawning as the Wife lies in bed with their son and the Man holds her hand. As the sun rises, they kiss.



Characters

The Man, played by George O'Brien

Description

The Man loves his wife and son but is captivated by the Woman of the City. The Man makes plans to murder his wife so that he can be with the Woman of the City. As he begins to carry out the plan, he tries but cannot bring himself to murder his Wife. Instead, she runs away and he follows her to the city.

In the city, the couple finds love again. They spend time laughing and talking. By the end of the day, the Man has completely forgotten about the Woman of the City. As they sail home, a storm blows up and the Wife is almost lost in the water. Fortunately she is rescued and the grateful couple begin their life together again.

Analysis

The Man is like many other men: he is tempted by a beautiful, mysterious Woman of the City. His Wife seems simple and dull compared to her, so he decides to start a new life with the Woman. The Man struggles with a common temptation for many people and nearly succumbs to it.

However, the Man confronts his true feelings when he realizes that he cannot kill his Wife. Later he understands how much he loves her when he believes he has lost her. When she is found and returns to him, the Man embraces her and they begin to put their lives back together.

The Wife, played by Janet Gaynor

Description

The Wife is passive and naïve. Although she realizes that her husband is up to something, she does not confront him about his infidelity; instead she remains silent and cries alone. The Wife has no idea that the Man plans to kill her when they go out on the lake. She is horrified and begs for her life as he moves toward her.

Although she initially runs away from the Man, the Wife forgives him after they enjoy a happy day together in the city. They fall madly in love all over again and she looks forward to their return home.



Analysis

The Wife has a very simple mindset. While she is upset by the Man's unfaithfulness, she seems to think that there's nothing that she can do about it. The Wife is the stereotypical "good woman" of the time who suffers her husband's infidelity in silence but somehow miraculously wins back his love.

The Woman of the City, played by Margaret Livingston

Description

On vacation in the country, the Woman of the City tempts the Man away from his Wife. She convinces him to murder his Wife so that they can be together.

Analysis

The Woman of the City is the mysterious temptress who steals the Man from his loving Wife. She symbolizes all that a wife fears when her husband appears to be seeking pleasure elsewhere.

The Maid, played by Bodil Rosing

Description

The Maid takes care of the Man's and Wife's house as well as their son.

Analysis

The Maid is a kind, caring woman. She fears for the couple's safety when the big storm begins.

The Photographer, played by J. Farrell MacDonald

Description

The Man and his Wife visit the Photographer to have their portrait taken. After he photographs the pair, he laughs at their naïveté.

Analysis

The Photographer helps the viewer see the Man and his Wife through the eyes of the world.



The Barber, played by Ralph Sipperly

Description

The Barber fixes the hair of the Man and his Wife.

Analysis

Like the Photographer, the Barber helps the viewer see the simplicity of the Man and his Wife compared to the sophisticated denizens of the city.

The Son, played by uncredited

Description

The Son seems to spend most of his time with the Maid but is obviously loved by his parents.

Analysis

The Son represents a happier time in the couple's marriage when they wanted to be together and start their family.



Themes

Universality of Life

As *Sunrise: The Story of Two Humans* opens, the words on the screen tell us one of the primary themes of the film: "This song of the Man and his Wife is of no place and every place...(everywhere) life is much the same: sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet." We are reminded that no one's life is without troubles and that the stories of people throughout the world are similar.

Although we often believe that our personal situations are unique and more difficult than the situations of others, the truth is that life is somewhat the same for everyone. Of course specific experiences vary from person to person but in general, everyone is affected by problems involving love, hate and uncertainty.

In *Sunrise*, the Man and his Wife encounter problems similar to those any married couple might experience. Although their difficulties are a bit more extreme, since the Man actually plans to murder his Wife, the general situation is experienced by many couples.

Viewers realize that, although the details of their situations may differ, they are part of one big world in which all people experience very similar realities. Despite the Man's murderous plan, viewers actually end up feeling closer to the characters because of the general universality of their situation.

Abiding Love

Too often couples separate because they just don't feel "in love" anymore. In this film, however, we see a couple go through terrible crises but continue to love each other in spite of everything. No matter what happens in their relationship, they fall in love with each other over and over again.

One of the most surprising turns in the film is when the Wife forgives her husband after he threatens to kill her. The Man wants to be with the Woman of the City, who has convinced him that their best option is for him to drown his Wife. The trusting Wife, however, is excited that her husband, who has been absent a great deal recently, wants to take her out for a day in the city.

Little does the Wife know that the Man plans to murder her. Only when he stands up in the boat and walks toward her does she finally grasp his intentions. As the Wife begins to scream, the Man comes to his senses. She runs away from him but he follows her and ultimately, she forgives him. They spend a beautiful day in the city renewing their love. Even though the feeling of love, at least on the Man's part, has faded during part of the film, the couple eventually realizes that their abiding love is stronger than any adversity.



Innocence

The Man and the Wife are symbols of innocence in this film. Living out in the country, they seem to know little of the dangers of life and the city. The couple is carefree and happy until the Woman of the City shows up. After seducing the Man, the Woman of the City devises an evil plan to kill the Wife. She wants the Man all to herself and believes that she can only achieve this by eliminating his Wife.

Throughout this scenario, the viewer always has the sense that the Man is just as innocent and naïve as his Wife. He is manipulated by the Woman of the City into making the decision to kill his Wife. As he attempts to follow through with the plan, his resolve fails completely; when he begins to lose his innocence, he breaks free of the Woman's manipulation.

The Wife is also very innocent. She knows her husband is frequently away from home and has some inkling of the reason for his disappearances, but she still retains an air of innocence. Each time he returns, she tries to pretend that nothing is wrong. Despite her fears, she never imagines that he would actually try to kill her.

Both the Man and his Wife are innocents in the city. As we watch them try to figure out how to pay for what they buy and how much to pay, we realize that they are just simple country folks who do not understand the ways of the world. The two are innocents who fall in love again as they navigate the challenges of the city together.

Dangers of Infidelity

The Man finds the Woman of the City more desirable than his Wife. He meets the Woman in the evenings when he should be having dinner with his family. While he runs off to be with the Woman, his heartbroken Wife is home alone with their son. Unknown to the Wife, the Man is even willing to drown her in order to be with the Woman.

In fact, at the whim of this Woman of the City, the Man nearly does murder his Wife and abandon his son. After spending the day with his Wife in the city, however, he realizes just how much he would have lost if he had murdered her. Later that night, when the storm hits and his Wife cannot be found, the Man is terrified that he actually has lost her.

When men and women betray their marriage vows, they risk losing everything: not only their true selves but also the people and things they love the most. The Man almost loses both his devoted Wife and the son that he loves.

Style and Cinematography

Modern viewers may have difficulty sitting through a viewing of *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*. While the long silent film has no major chase scenes or explosions, it does feature stunning cinematography that remains impressive over time.

The use of light and dark in *Sunrise* is especially noteworthy. The filmmakers use varying amounts of light to create feeling and atmosphere. When the Man moves toward his Wife in order to kill her, the light suddenly becomes dim and feelings of fear and foreboding enter the scene. On the other hand, when the Man and his Wife enjoy their time in the city, the sun shines brightly upon them, creating feelings of love, romance and optimism.

The filmmakers also make heavy use of symbolism in this film. The storms in the film are both motifs that help tell the story and symbols of the characters' feelings at those times. When the Man and the Woman of the City embrace beneath a full moon, the moon symbolizes freedom from restraint. Since no sound was possible, everything had to be communicated through symbols.

The actors also make use of extreme facial expressions to convey their emotions. Although to the modern eye they seem to be overacting, in the absence of sound, this type of acting is necessary in order to telegraph feelings to the audience. The actors skillfully bring the story of the Man and his Wife to life on the silent screen.



Motifs

The Woman of the City

Humans are tempted in many ways. Men tend to be tempted by women, just as the Man in this film learns. The Woman of the City is the catalyst for the rest of the events in the film. She is the archetypal temptress who enters the scene simply to break up a marriage. The Woman of the City seems to have little interest in the Man as anything more than an amusement during her vacation.

Although the Woman of the City may not have deep feelings for the Man, she does want him all to herself. She begs him to leave his Wife and he finally agrees. She proposes that he drown his Wife so that he can live with the Woman. Neither of them considers the consequences of their plan, particularly its impact on the Man's child.

As the film progresses, we see that the Man's love for his Wife is renewed. As they reunite, the Woman of the City hides in the shadows and watches the Man leave her behind. While the Woman is not terribly upset, she does feel that she has lost something that she once controlled.

Weather

Especially in silent films, the weather is used to help alert viewers to the emotions of the characters. As the film begins, the sky is clear but there are distant clouds, suggesting to the viewer that a storm is brewing. Then the rain begins and the Man meets with the Woman.

When the Man and his Wife are having fun in the city, we see that the sun is shining brightly. The sunshine reflects their playful mood. They are finally getting to know one another again and are forgiving each other for their past problems. The sunshine reminds us that their love is also shining brightly.

On their way home, the couple is caught in a terrible storm on the lake. As they struggle to stay afloat, the boat capsizes and the woman is almost lost. The dangerous weather helps depict the end of their story. When he fears his Wife is dead, the Man finally realizes how much he loves her and is desolate at her loss. Then the Man and his Wife are happily reunited as the Woman of the City watches from the shadows. The next morning, the sun rises over their renewed love.

Under the Cover of Night

Darkness is a strong motif in *Sunrise: Song of Two Humans*. The early scenes in the film occur on a dark night with only a dim moon to light the world. Under cover of darkness, the Man meets the Woman of the City to carry on their clandestine affair. The



night is hurtful to the Wife and to her relationship with the Man. It is at night that the Man and the Woman of the City create a plan to drown the Wife and run off together.

As we watch them concoct their plan, we observe the impact of the darkness on them. They become more foolhardy when hidden by the night. As they plot in the dark, the Wife is home crying because she fears that she is losing the Man.

After their happy day in the sun-dappled city, the Man and his Wife head home on the lake in the darkness. When a powerful storm moves in, the two are nearly separated for good as the Wife is missing in the lake and feared dead. In contrast to the previous night, this darkness terrifies the Man as he fears that he has lost his beloved Wife forever. The difference, however, has nothing to do with the darkness; rather, the Man's different reactions reflect his changing feelings for his Wife and the Woman of the City.

Backdrop of Words

At different points in the film, the filmmakers utilize a backdrop of words to convey their message. Since the film is silent, the actors must convey the meaning of the characters and the film with body language; however, at times words are still needed to fill in the gaps.

In order to meet this need, the filmmakers use a black backdrop with white writing. For example, the first scenes of the movie are simply white words against a black backdrop: "This song of the Man and his Wife is of no place and every place...(everywhere) life is much the same: sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet."



Symbols

Boat

The boat is symbolic of the journey of the Man and his Wife. Their marriage has hit a rocky point and they are struggling to stay afloat when we first meet them. However, after the Man visits with the Woman of the City again, he is ready to give up on his marriage and even kill his Wife.

When the couple first gets into the boat, the Man has every intention of murdering his Wife by drowning her in the lake. The dog barks furiously as they get into the boat, as if to warn the Wife of what is to come. Their journey across the water is fraught with danger, especially for the Wife: the Man attempts to kill her. Although he can't bring himself to carry out the act, his terrified Wife runs away from him as quickly as possible. He eventually asks for forgiveness and they rekindle their romance in the city.

The couple's return journey on the boat is much happier than their first. They laugh and talk as they happily row across the water. This journey, too, becomes life-threatening. When they are surprised by a terrible storm, their boat fills with water and overturns. They are able to overcome these external dangers as well; the couple survives and returns home. The boat symbolizes the couple's journey and their assault by both internal and external forces. We feel great hope as they are able to survive these challenges intact.

Trip to the City

The couple's trip to the city is symbolic of their rekindled romance. Before the trip, the Man is having an affair with the Woman of the City and plans to murder his Wife so that he and the Woman can be together. The Wife is upset by the Man's frequent absences and simply stays home crying. After the Man tries to kill his Wife, she runs away and jumps on a trolley. The Man follows her and apologizes to his Wife for his behavior.

On the way to the city, the Wife starts to forgive the Man. She decides that she loves him enough to overlook his actions, so they begin to repair their relationship. While in the city, they visit a Barber and have their hair done. Then they visit a Photographer to have their picture taken. Watching them, they appear very young and innocent to the viewer.

By the time the couple returns to their boat after their trip to the city, their love has been renewed. They have enjoyed their time together; the Wife has forgiven her husband and the Man has completely forgotten the Woman of the City. Their relationship becomes stronger and happier because of their trip.



Dog

As the couple leaves to go on their day trip, the Wife is smiling happily and the Man appears only slightly concerned about his deadly plan. Although the Wife is unaware of the Man's true intentions, a dog watching nearby seems to sense what is happening.

When they board the boat, the dog begins to bark furiously at the Man; it seems to know that the Man is a threat. The dog highlights the Man's near-descent into evil. As the dog barks, our sense that the Wife's life is in danger is heightened, even though we already know that the Man intends to kill her.

The dog also helps us recognize the Wife's naïvete. Despite both the dog's efforts to warn her and the Man's odd behavior, she remains blindly optimistic that the Man still loves her. The Wife does not understand his true intentions until they are far out on the lake, when he begins to move toward her menacingly.

Full Moon

When the Man first leaves home to see the Woman of the City, the night is dark and rainy. After they meet, though, a full moon shines brightly. The Man and the Woman feel free to be together; they experience no remorse for their actions or for the pain they cause the Wife.

The full moon symbolizes absolute freedom from restraint. Neither person is concerned with anything beyond the other; they embrace passionately without a care in the world. In addition, the full moon can also symbolize danger. The Man and the Woman place themselves in a dangerous position by making plans to kill the Wife. Their lack of restraint and uncontrolled desires lead them to plot the Wife's murder.

Church Scene

When the Man and his Wife are in town, they wander into a church. They see a young couple exchanging their vows and preparing to spend their lives together. The couple recalls their own wedding day as the Man reaches over and takes his Wife's hand. They hold hands as they watch the ceremony and listen to the words.

The church scene is symbolic of a renewal of the relationship between the Man and his Wife. Their relationship was almost destroyed by the Man's adultery and by his plan to kill his Wife. Holding hands, they renew their vows as the newlyweds take their vows for the first time.

The church scene also symbolizes a renewal in the way the Man thinks of his Wife. Rather than thinking that she is no longer attractive, he once again sees and appreciates her beauty. He realizes all that she means to him and expresses his deep love for her as he takes her hand and looks into her eyes.



Essay Questions

Why does the Woman of the City stay?

Explain the reasons for the Wife's sadness.

What does the Man decide to do?

How does the Wife react to the plan to go out on the boat?

When does she finally realize that things are not what they seem?

How does the scene at the church affect the couple?

Describe the trip to the city.

What unexpected event happens during their trip?

How does the husband react when he believes that his wife is dead?

What is the couple's attitude on their way home?