

Need Help With *Heart of Darkness*?

Basic Information:

Narrator: There are two narrators: an anonymous passenger on a pleasure ship, who listens to Marlow's story, and Marlow himself, a middle-aged ship's captain.

Point Of View: The first narrator speaks in the first-person plural, on behalf of four other passengers who listen to Marlow's tale. Marlow narrates his story in the first person, describing only what he witnessed and experienced, and providing his own commentary on the story.

Tone: Ambivalent: Marlow is disgusted at the brutality of the Company and horrified by Kurtz's degeneration, but he claims that any thinking man would be tempted into similar behavior.

Setting (Time): Latter part of the nineteenth century, probably sometime between 1876 and 1892

(Place): Opens on the Thames River outside London, where Marlow is telling the story that makes up *Heart of Darkness*. Events of the story take place in Brussels, at the Company's offices, and in the Congo, then a Belgian territory.

Major Conflict: Both Marlow and Kurtz confront a conflict between their images of themselves as "civilized" Europeans and the temptation to abandon morality completely once they leave the context of European society.

Rising Action: The brutality Marlow witnesses in the Company's employees, the rumors he hears that Kurtz is a remarkable and humane man, and the numerous examples of Europeans breaking down mentally or physically in the environment of Africa.

Climax: Marlow's discovery, upon reaching the Inner Station, that Kurtz has completely abandoned European morals and norms of behavior

Falling Action: Marlow's acceptance of responsibility for Kurtz's legacy, Marlow's encounters with Company officials and Kurtz's family and friends, Marlow's visit to Kurtz's Intended

Themes: The hypocrisy of imperialism, madness as a result of imperialism, the absurdity of evil

60 Second Recap: <http://www.60secondrecap.com/decoder/heart-of-darkness/>

This site has a set of 60 second videos that can help you as you struggle to understand the book, its importance, themes, and motifs. The narrator is relatable and much easier to understand than Joseph Conrad! =)

I just can't understand the way he writes! **Translation**, please!

<https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/lit/heart-of-darkness/>