

Lindsay realism plot: oin the first chapter



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Lindsay Mott's Walden Journal Author – Henry David Thoreau D. O. B-

07/12/1817 oDate of Death- 05/06/1862 Date of Publication: 1854 Literary

Period: Realism Plot: oIn the first chapter it's announced that Henry David

Thoreau spent two years in Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts oIt's

devoted to discussing how people try to acquire wealth, but doesn't lead to

happiness oHe likes to enjoy nature, and explains that those who own a lot

have to take care of things, but those who don't can do whatever they

want oDiscusses the energy that it took for him to build his house.

Finished in spring of 1845, moved in July 4th oBorrowed/salvaged building

materials from other sites nearby. The land that he built his house belongs to

Ralph Waldo Emerson oThoreau makes a bean field for extra money,

occupying his mornings, Thoreau leaves the afternoon for reading, writing

and his thoughts oHe believes in being a minimalist, simplicity and solitude.

Contrasts his life with those who are materialistic oThoreau ponders the

power of technology because the Fitchburg Railroad passes Walden pond,

and it interrupts his thoughts. oDiscusses his contact, Alex Therien, a

Canadian Woodcutter who is grand and sincere in his character, though

modest in intellectual attainments. oMakes constant trips to Concord for

meeting his friends, and scattered business. Spends the night in jail on one

of his trips. Refused to pay bail, because the gov't approves slavery. oOften

spends his time paying attention to nature, the changing of seasons, and

creatures that share the woods with him.

The idiot that he plays hide and go seek with for instance, becomes a symbol

of the playfulness of nature and its divine laughter at human endeavors.

Another example of animal symbolism is the full-fledged ant war that

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Thoreau stumbles upon, prompting him to meditate on human warfare. His observations of nature are not like a biologist/scientist, he doesn't observe them scientifically, but gives them a moral/philosophical view, as if they could teach him something. o Starts to prepare for winter as it becomes fall.

Listens to the rabbit, squirrel, and the fox, as they gather food. Thinks about how the ice will melt and come back to Walden Pond. Watches ice fisherman cut ice blocks and send them to larger cities.

oFor the most part Thoreau is alone but receives visits from William Ellery Channing or Amos Bronson Alcott. oAs he becomes more knowledgeable about Walden Pond and neighboring ponds he wants to measure their depths, and map their layouts. Discovers that Walden Pond is no more than 100 ft. deep, rebutting common thought that it was bottomless. Looks at the pond as a symbol of the unknown that people need in their lives. oWinter eventually ends and along comes the spring season. Thoreau sees spring as a transformation in the face of the world when all sins are forgiven. Announces his project at the pond is over, and returned to civilized life on 09/06/1847.

Argues that everyone should live their lives to their full potential. Major characters and their significance oHenry David ThoreauoLiberal side of him is most rememberedoSolidified the American model of conscientious objection-said no to anything he didn't care foroAlso has a conservative side-viewed as godfather of hippie movement, and the anti-technology movementoStatements about a humble lifestyle lead him to isolation from his neighbors-sees them as beasts, but likes their simplicityoPraises Alex

Therien, only to dismiss him later as being too immersed in animal nature that makes us wonder if he would dismiss other poor workers. oMight want to instruct/guide poor workers but doesn't want to be their friendooAlex TherienoThoreau's occasional visitor-only one closest to being one of Thoreau's friendsoBoth are of French Canadian descent, and like the backwoods lifeoLacks a formal education, and social customs, but can appreciate artDoesn't understand Homer's Iliad, but can appreciate itoThoreau doesn't call him a friend, but separates him from everyone elsePoint of View- aligned with Henry David ThoreauSetting-Summer 1845 through summer 1847, however book combines the two years into one year. Its place is Walden PondMajor Symbols: o Animalso Ice oWalden PondContribution to American Letters/Literature: