

Study Guide for Heinrich Heine's "Die Lorelei"

"Die Lorelei" is one of Heinrich Heine's most famous poems. It was written in 1823 and tells the story of a beautiful woman who sits on a rock by the Rhine River and lures sailors to their deaths with her enchanting song. The poem has been set to music by many composers, including Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann.

This study guide will provide you with a detailed analysis of the poem, including its structure, imagery, and symbolism. You will also find a number of discussion questions that can help you to understand the poem's meaning and significance.



Study Guide for Heinrich Heine's Die Lorelei by David Milgrim

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Structure

"Die Lorelei" is a four-stanza poem with a simple, regular rhyme scheme. The first and third stanzas rhyme (ABAB), and the second and fourth stanzas rhyme (CDCD). The poem's meter is trochaic octameter, which means that each line consists of eight trochees (stressed-unstressed metrical feet).

The poem's structure is straightforward and logical. The first stanza introduces the setting and the main character, the Lorelei. The second stanza describes the Lorelei's song and its effect on the sailors. The third stanza describes the sailors' reaction to the Lorelei's song. The fourth stanza provides a moral to the story.

Imagery

Heine uses a variety of vivid and evocative imagery in "Die Lorelei." The poem is full of images of nature, including the Rhine River, the rocks, and the forest. These images create a sense of atmosphere and setting, and they help to establish the poem's mood.

Heine also uses a number of images of death and destruction in the poem. The sailors are described as being "pale" and "dead," and they are said to be "drawn" to the Lorelei's rock like moths to a flame. These images create a sense of danger and foreboding, and they help to emphasize the poem's tragic ending.

Symbolism

"Die Lorelei" is a highly symbolic poem. The Lorelei herself is a symbol of beauty and danger. Her song is a symbol of temptation and seduction. The sailors are a symbol of those who are drawn to danger and destruction. The Rhine River is a symbol of life and death.

The poem's title, "Die Lorelei," is also symbolic. Lorelei is a legendary figure who is said to have drowned in the Rhine River. Her name is often associated with danger and death. The title of the poem suggests that the Lorelei in the poem is a dangerous and seductive figure who is capable of causing death.

Meaning and Significance

"Die Lorelei" is a poem about the dangers of temptation and seduction. The Lorelei is a beautiful and alluring figure, but her song is a deadly one. Those who are drawn to her are doomed to destruction.

The poem's moral is clear: do not be tempted by appearances. Beauty can be deceiving, and danger can be lurking beneath the surface.

"Die Lorelei" is a powerful and haunting poem that has resonated with readers for centuries. It is a poem that warns us about the dangers of temptation and seduction. It is also a poem that reminds us that beauty can be dangerous.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the poem's structure contribute to its meaning? 2. What is the significance of the imagery in the poem? 3. How does Heine use symbolism in the poem? 4. What is the poem's moral? 5. How has the poem been interpreted by different critics? 6. What are your own thoughts and feelings about the poem?

Further Reading

* Heine, Heinrich. "Die Lorelei." Translated by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Poetry Foundation. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/54472/die-lorelei> * Gilman, Sander L. "The Lorelei and the Modern: Heine and the Anxiety of Femininity." *New German Critique*, no. 43 (1988): 3-24. * Keefe, Terry. *Heinrich Heine and the Romantic Tradition*. Camden House, 2008.

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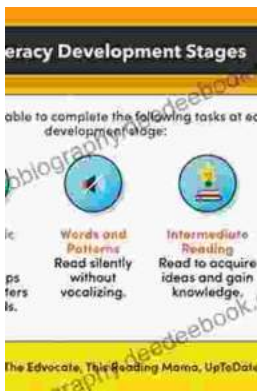


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