

Heart of Darkness

Joseph Conrad

Why does Marlow describe the Company's city as something clean on the outside and corrupt within?

CONTENT NOTE · Colonial violence and racist/imperialist language.

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	The 'whited sepulchre' city
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Part I
START	In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre.
END	Not many of those she looked at ever saw her again—not half, by a long way.
PASSAGE ID	sec-hod-01

THE MOVE

Read biblical allusion against outward respectability

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Marlow's 'whited sepulchre' allusion invokes a biblical image of something outwardly clean but inwardly corrupt. That makes the city's respectable appearance part of the criticism: the polished surface does not hide corruption accidentally; it helps disguise it.

MARK

Underline the details that make the city appear orderly, clean, or respectable. Circle the phrase 'whited sepulchre' and note what the biblical comparison suggests is hidden beneath that surface.

NOTICE

- What does the city look like before Marlow applies the allusion?
- Why is corruption more disturbing when it is covered by respectability?
- How does the allusion prepare the reader to distrust appearances associated with the Company?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why does Marlow describe the Company's city as something clean on the outside and corrupt within? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why does Marlow describe the Company's city as something clean on the outside and corrupt within? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The 'whited sepulchre' allusion makes outward cleanliness part of the accusation. The city looks respectable and civilized, but the biblical image suggests corruption and death concealed beneath that surface.
EVIDENCE	Use details of order, whiteness, respectability, or official business and contrast them with the sepulchre image and ominous language around the Company.
WATCH FOR	Do not answer only that the city is hypocritical. Explain how the clean exterior actively helps conceal the moral reality.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

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Why does Marlow describe the Company's city as something clean on the outside and corrupt within?

START ANCHOR	In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre.
END ANCHOR	Not many of those she looked at ever saw her again—not half, by a long way.

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. **MARK** - Underline the details that make the city appear orderly, clean, or respectable. Circle the phrase 'whited sepulchre' and note what the biblical comparison suggests is hidden beneath that surface.
2. **NOTICE** - What does the city look like before Marlow applies the allusion? Why is corruption more disturbing when it is covered by respectability? How does the allusion prepare the reader to distrust appearances associated with the Company?
3. **THINK** - Answer provisionally: Why does Marlow describe the Company's city as something clean on the outside and corrupt within?
4. **WRITE** - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.