

“Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway

Vocabulary

Ebro – a river in northern Spain

Barcelona – a city in north-eastern Spain

Madrid – a city in central Spain

Reales – Spanish money

Anis – a strong liqueur made from anise that tastes like liquorice

Absinthe – a strong liqueur that is 68% alcohol – also tastes of liquorice

White elephant – A possession that is useless or troublesome, especially one that is expensive to maintain or difficult to dispose of. The term has its origins in the story that the King of Siam (now Thailand) gave such animals as gifts to courtiers they disliked, in order to ruin the recipient by the great expense incurred in maintaining the animal.

This story was written in 1929—keep this in mind as you interpret it.

1. Draw the **setting** (use the entire story for this, not just the first paragraph.) – a bird’s eye view. What purpose does it serve in the story? Consider what *everything* symbolizes. Be prepared to share your drawing with the class.
2. The main topic of discussion between the man and the girl is never named. What is the “awfully simple operation”? What different attitudes do the man and woman take towards it? Provide specific textual evidence for your response.