

Week 4 – Study Questions for Heart of Darkness Chapters 2-3

1. What is the significance of the Eldorado Exploring Expedition?
2. What role does Kurtz play in the Company's ambitions?
3. What is the significance of Marlow overhearing the manager and his uncle's conversation?
4. How does the natural environment reflect the themes of the novel?
5. How does Marlow perceive the native inhabitants?
6. What does Marlow think of Kurtz before meeting him?
7. What role does the Russian harlequin play in the narrative?
8. How does Marlow react to the steamboat attack?
9. What does the Russian trader reveal about Kurtz?
10. How does Marlow react when he finally meets Kurtz?
11. What is the significance of the heads on stakes outside Kurtz's station?
12. Why does Marlow help Kurtz?
13. How does Kurtz's fiancée contrast with the reality of his actions?
14. What does Kurtz mean by 'The horror! The horror!'?
15. Why does Marlow lie to Kurtz's fiancée?
16. How does Marlow change by the end of the novel?
17. What role does the Thames River play in the novel's conclusion?
18. What is the novel's ultimate message about imperialism?

Bonus Question: What is your favourite quote in these chapters, and why?