The Inn of Lost Time
by Lensey Namioka

Feature Menu

Introducing the Story

Literary Skills Focus: Setting and Mood

Reading Skills Focus: Sequence in Stories

Writing Skills Focus: Think as a Reader/Writer
What is the most precious thing a person can wish for?
The Inn of Lost Time
Introducing the Story

Click on the title to start the video.
Wealthy merchant Tokubei and his hired samurai, Zenta, are on a difficult journey into the hills. All they want is a hearty meal at a cheap, comfortable inn.

What will a good night’s sleep really cost them?
Setting is a story’s description of time, place, and social custom. Mood is the story’s atmosphere.

Writers create settings and moods to help us enter the worlds of the story’s characters.
The Inn of Lost Time
Literary Skills Focus: Setting and Mood

Writers use **setting** to build background for a story.

- location
- time
- weather
- time period
- customs

Coach Rivera scanned the **dusty baseball field** for signs of her players as the **sun beat down overhead**. The **2 p.m. game** was going to be a **hot one**. Daisy and Lucy warmed up **on the sidelines**. They were excited to be part of their town’s first **all-women team**.

When writers create a setting, they include details that help you visualize the surroundings.
**Mood** is the overall feeling you get when reading a story.

A story’s setting and the writer’s word choice help create mood.
The story you’re about to read is full of details that create **setting** and **mood**.

**Behind the boys** the **farmer’s wife took up** a pair of **iron chopsticks** and **stirred the ashes** of the fire **in the charcoal brazier**. **A momentary glow brightened** the room. The **lean faces** of the two ronin [warriors], **lit by the fire, suddenly looked fierce and hungry**.

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What do the details in the passage above reveal about the story’s time, place, customs, and mood. 

As you read “The Inn of Lost Time,” look for other details of its setting and mood.
This story is based on a folk tale.
As you read, recall folk tales that you have heard.
Most stories tell events in the order or sequence in which they take place, one after the other.
“The Inn of Lost Time” has a more complicated structure than most stories.

It contains a **frame story**, a story that contains at least one other story. In this case, the frame story contains two other stories.
Into Action: Create a chart like the one below for each of the three stories in "The Inn of Lost Time." Record the important plot events of each story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame Story:</th>
<th>Event 2</th>
<th>Event 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A farmer tells his sons a bedtime story in which . . .</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Inn of Lost Time
Writing Skills Focus: Think as a Reader/Writer

Find It in Your Reading
The **mythic** and the **historical** meet in this story.

As you read, note some of the descriptive words Lensey Namioka uses to create the haunting mood of “The Inn of Lost Time.”
The Inn of Lost Time
Writing Skills Focus: Think as a Reader/Writer

**Mythic** stories feature elements of myth, or fantasy.

Myths are traditional stories about heroes or supernatural beings. Myths often serve to explain nature and human behavior.
The Inn of Lost Time
Writing Skills Focus: Think as a Reader/Writer

**Historical** stories are based on facts from the past.

Stories about people and places from history help explain actual events from the past.
Vocabulary
The Inn of Lost Time
Vocabulary

**desolate** adj.: lonely; miserable.

**poignant** adj.: causing sadness or pain; touching.

**ruefully** adv.: with regret and shame.

**grueling** adj.: very tiring; demanding.

**traumatic** adj.: emotionally painful.
The word **desolate** is often used to describe landscapes, settings, or situations.

When you hear **desolate**, you might think **lonely, barren, or miserable**.
The Inn of Lost Time
Vocabulary

Which of these settings looks **desolate**?
People often refer to sad books or movies as **poignant**.

Can you think of a story you’ve read or a movie you’ve seen that you would describe as **poignant**—a “tear-jerker”? 

The Inn of Lost Time
Vocabulary
The Inn of Lost Time
Vocabulary

Your grandmother walks in the door and says she’s just seen a **poignant** play at the theater. ▼

What do you do? ▼

a. Pat her on the back and laugh heartily.

b. Shrug your shoulders and go outside.

c. Hand her a tissue and ask her to tell you about the play. ▼
Ruefully is another way to say regretfully, or with regret.

“I made a terrible mistake,” he said ruefully.
When you think of the word *ruefully*, what other words come to mind? 

**Examples:** 
- regretfully 
- remorsefully 
- repentantly 
- sorrowfully 

**Word:** ruefully 

**Definition:** 
*adv.*: with regret and shame.

**Sentence:** 
He *ruefully* returned the stolen gem.
**The Inn of Lost Time**

**Vocabulary**

*Grueling* is another word for *tiring, demanding, or exhausting.*

What can you think of that might be *grueling*?

- a journey
- an exam
- a race
- an interview
Which mountain would be more grueling to hike?
The Inn of Lost Time
Vocabulary

*Traumatic* is another way to say -

- shocking
- disturbing
- painful
- upsetting
- distressing
- shocking
- hurtful
Sylvia couldn’t go out on stage because the traumatic events of the day before had ______

... upset her so deeply.

[End of Section]
The End
Make a list of things in life that most people think are important.

Then, number the list in order of importance to you.
Meet the Writer
Lensey Namioka was born in Beijing, China, and moved to the United States when she was a child. Before she became a writer, she studied and taught math.

Her award-winning novels explore a range of subjects—from growing up in America to medieval Japanese samurai culture.
Build Background
The Inn of Lost Time

Build Background

“The Inn of Lost Time” is set in sixteenth-century Japan, when samurai warriors roamed the land.
"The Inn of Lost Time" uses an age-old storytelling technique—the frame story, or story within a story.

**FRAME STORY**
Introduction to story

**INNER STORY**
Story within a story

Father tells children a story.

tale about samurai warriors
The Inn of Lost Time

Build Background
One of the stories within the frame story is an ancient Japanese folk tale about a man who falls asleep for fifty years. What American folk tale does this remind you of? ◄

Rip Van Winkle

[End of Section]
Preview the Selection
"The Inn of Lost Time" recounts the adventures of Zenta and Matsuzo, a pair of wandering warriors.

Searching for work, these samurai travel around long-ago Japan.

In this story, the two stop for the night at a farmhouse, where Zenta tells a tale about a time he unraveled an intriguing mystery.
The Inn of Lost Time

Build Background
The samurai were proud, disciplined warriors who lived centuries ago in Japan.

They lived a life of duty and sacrifice, showing obedience to their lords.

These warriors also produced many of Japan’s famous arts.