

**“The Cop and the Anthem” by O. Henry - Study Questions by J. Sulc**

1. What is the setting (place) of the story? How do you know?
2. Explain the significance of the possessive pronoun *his* in the phrase “his bench.”
3. Why is Soapy moving uneasily on his bench? How do you know?
4. Soapy is not interested in exotic European getaways or trips to Palm Beach. What does “the Island” offer him?
5. Why do you think O. Henry chooses to describe Soapy’s newspapers as being *Sabbath* newspapers?
6. Why doesn’t Soapy want to receive charity? Be specific.
7. Why is it “better to be a guest of the law” according to Soapy?

8. Complete the table below in PRESENT TENSE.

| How Soapy attempts to “accomplish his desire” | How Soapy’s attempt fails |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                               |                           |
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9. Based on Soapy's experiences that you outlined in the chart above, what conclusions can you draw about O. Henry's opinion of people, and more specifically, New Yorkers?

10. The following line is reminiscent of a scene from another O. Henry short story. Do you know which one?

11. On his way home Soapy finds himself outside of a church. What is happening inside the church. Be specific.

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11. On his way home Soapy finds himself outside of a church. What is happening inside the church. Be specific.

12. How does Soapy respond initially?

13. Why is the anthem significant for Soapy?

14. What effect does the anthem have on Soapy? Make a note of any words or phrases that are particularly religious in nature.

15. What is the ultimate irony of the story?

16. How many attempts does Soapy make to get to “the Island”?

17. When, exactly, is he told he must go there?

18. Read the following passage from Genesis, the first book of the Bible. Try to make a connection between the passage and the story.

“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good, And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his Work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his Work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

19. What are some of the themes of the story? Try to list at least three.