

"World On Fire" by Sarah McLachlan

[FOR EDUCATIONAL USE ONLY]



World On Fire Lyrics • By Sarah McLachlan From the 2003 Release "Afterglow"

Hearts are worn in these dark ages
You're not alone in this story's pages
Night has fallen amongst the living and the dying
And I try to hold it in, yeah I try to hold it in

[Chorus]

The world's on fire and
It's more than I can handle
I'll tap into the water
(I try to pull my ship)
I try to bring more
More than I can handle
(Bring it to the table)
Bring what I am able

I watch the heavens and I find a calling
Something I can do to change this moment

Stay close to me while the sky is falling
Don't wanna be left alone, don't wanna be alone

[Chorus]

Hearts break, hearts mend
Love still hurts
Visions clash, planes crash
Still there's talk of
Saving souls, still the cold
Is closing in on us

We part the veil on our killer sun
Stray from the straight line on this short run
The more we take, the less we become
A fortune of one that means less for some

Blue Song Guide “World On Fire”

Vocabulary:

Dark Ages
 “Saving Souls”
 “Pull My Ship”
 Stray from the straight line
 Myriad

Imagery
 Double Entrandre
 Extended Metaphor
 Metaphor
 Figurative Language (saving souls & bring it to the table, stray from the straight line)
 Symbolism
 Paradox

Literary Terms:

1. What does McLachlan mean when she says “You’re not alone in this story’s pages?” Why is this an interesting image and what does it call attention to for the listener?

2. McLachlan uses some very clear and symbols in the song. In the grid below, read the lyrics from the song, pick out the symbolic word and explain what the symbol is.

Lyric	Symbolic Word	Meaning
“Night has fallen amongst the living and the dying		
“...still the cold is closing in on us.”		
“World’s on Fire”		

3. There are a myriad of contrasts in the song where McLachlan paints pictures by contrasting two opposite images to create a unique idea, this is known as a paradox. List at least three of these contrasts and explain their effects on the reader.

Image #1	Image #2	Effect of paradox on listener/reader

4. Name at least three common figures of speech that can be found in the song lyrics and explain them.

5. Are there any images in the song that might be read as religious? List at least 3 and explain your answer?

6. "World on Fire" has many lyrics that show that the narrator is overwhelmed like "And I try to hold it in, yeah I try to hold it in." List two other lines in the song that add to the narrator's sense of being overwhelmed. What do you think is the cause of this emotion for the narrator?
7. Are there any lines in the song that you think might have a double meaning? Why?
8. The title of the song "World on Fire" is used to create an extended metaphor in the song. Explain what images that McLachlan uses to extend this metaphor.
9. McLachlan's song speaks in generalities, that is to say there are not a lot of specific details explaining who and what the song is about. Explain how you could use this song to explain a day in your life using specific lyrics to support your answer.
10. Knowing that "World on Fire" was written after September 11, is it possible to read the song as being about the attacks on New York City and Washington D.C.? Prove your answer using at least three specific lines from the song.
11. Create a storyboard or music video for "World On Fire." Sample storyboards can be found at <http://www.thestoryboardartist.com/links.html>. Choose a scene to create a storyboard for. You do not have to be a great artist, and you may use stick figures but make sure your drawings are neat. The storyboard should be a minimum of ten shots (meaning ten cells or squares.) Be sure to make indications as to camera movement and be sure your shots (CU, MS, LS, etc.) are clear to the reader.

"World On Fire"

LitLink Extension Guide – *Hamlet*

Connecting "World On Fire" to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

Lit Link Vocabulary:

Anachronism

1. In *Hamlet* many character's world 's are on fire, in the chart below choose four characters and explain why their world might be symbolically "on fire."

Character	Why their world is "on fire"

2. What character in *Hamlet* could have "stray[ed] from the straight line on this short run?" What could the short run be a metaphor for?

3. McLachlan sings "a fortune of one ... means less for some." In the first three acts of the play what characters seem to have inherited a "fortune" and how has that meant less for other characters in the play.
4. What character in *Hamlet* would McLachlan's chorus best apply to and why?
5. The song "World on Fire" is filled with spiritual imagery. Provide examples of spiritual imagery from the song and what characters they might refer to in *Hamlet*.
6. McLachlan sings "Still there's talk of/ saving souls, still the cold is closing in on us." Who's soul needs to be saved in *Hamlet* and how would this line apply to that character?
7. If you were to read "World On Fire" as a song totally about *Hamlet* what words are a surprisingly good fit and what word sticks out as an **anachronism**?
8. While analyzing the "World on Fire" as a song about Hamlet how could you interpret the line "We part the veil on our killer sun" as a double entendre?
9. **How could this song be read as:**
 1. **A Monologue from Hamlet**
 2. **A Monologue from Ophelia**
 3. **A Dialogue between Hamlet and Ophelia**

Choose one character and explain what the song could mean from their perspective.

"World On Fire" Video Questions

Optional: The Following terms and activities are to be used with Sarah McLachlan's "World's on Fire" video. You can view the video online at <http://www.worldonfire.ca/> along with the complete list places that money was donated to. If you would prefer to a copy of the music video on DVD you can visit www.mediathatmatters.com and find the video on the Media Matters Film Festival 5 DVD. Mindblue editors highly recommend this collection of teacher friendly short films for use in the classroom.

Video Vocabulary

Production assistant
Sound playback
Monsoon
Bicycle ambulances
Union fees
Refugee
Film stock
Production supervisor
Widows
Rural
Irrigation
Livestock
Cataracts
Editor
Editing and post

Video Geographic Vocabulary:

Ethiopia
Afghanistan
Bangladesh
Nepal
Ghana
Kenya
Cambodia
Angola
Niger
Sierra Leone
Calcutta
Tanzania
Kiberia, Kenya

Print out a world map at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/> and label all the countries mentioned in the music video.