

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
“Lantana”

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AREA 1:
READING & THE STUDY OF TEXTS:
LANTANA

Chapter 1
GENRE

Lantana is psychological drama that explores human relationships in complex character studies. It is clearly an adult drama with middle-aged characters and mature themes about long-term relationships. The four central married couples in the film are all challenged to trust themselves and their partners and they all experience emotional strain and growth as they question their decisions.

The plot of the film is centred on the mystery of the disappearance of Doctor Valerie Somers, which Detective Leon Zat investigates. There are many twists and turns as the investigation of the missing person unfolds and the paths of characters cross. The film shows how small a community can be.

The film is also classified as a thriller. The opening scene of a dead woman tangled in a lantana bush is a conventional aspect of this genre. Another suspenseful sequence is Jane hiding from Nik in the lantana bush, when she finds the woman's shoe.

Lantana is an art house film, which is characterized by dark, cold cinematography and the omission of humour. Like many Australian films, it revolves around characters rather than events and special effects.

Chapter 2

STRUCTURE

The different worlds of the characters intersect in many different settings of everyday life, such as home, work, bars and restaurants. The suspected murder of Valerie Somers connects the quartet of married couples, three of which are experiencing marital strain. The characters are realistic because they are unconventional and multi-layered. Both the male and female characters draw attention and sympathy from the audience.

Ray Lawrence unravels the plot through character revelation, which he controls in order to emphasise the themes and meaning of the film. The film holds many surprises and is unpredictable to the end. The film is not plot-driven, but is effective through characterization. Each of the main four relationships is neatly addressed at the end.

The film is structured with fairly short sequences, which frequently move between the houses of each married couple. This strengthens the technique of multi-layering and intertwining the characters and their circumstances. *Lantana* delves beneath the superficial surface into the mysteries that lie inside the lantana bush and the lives of ordinary married adults.