**Themes**

[**Tragedy**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragedy) - Adela rebels against the tyranny of her mother and pays with her life. There is also tragic irony in the fact that her suicide is out of grief for Pepe's death, who is then revealed to be alive.

**Oppression of women** - Bernarda represents the view that 'a woman's place is home'.

**Tradition** - Bernarda is desperate to uphold tradition, both in her observance of the funeral rites, and the differences between men and women.

**Class prejudice** - Bernarda uses money as a means of making herself superior, and views the villagers as unworthy of her daughters.

**Reputation** - Bernarda is preoccupied with the reputation of her family and is horrified by the idea of scandal and gossip, shown at the end of the play, when she demands it be known that Adela died a virgin.

**Authoritarianism** - Bernarda exercises a tyrant's will over the household.

**Beauty** — Beauty becomes corrupted, Lorca suggests, in an environment where people are not permitted to pursue their desires and passions. Pepe el Romano is passionate for Adela, but is bound by economic necessity to court Angustias instead. "If he were coming because of Angustias' looks, for Angustias as a woman, I'd be glad too," Magdalena comments, "but he's coming for her money. Even though Angustias is our sister, we're her family here, and we know she's old and sickly."

**Symbols**

**Water/Thirst** - is normally a reference to sexual desire. At one point, Adela rushes downstairs to meet her lover when she is spotted by Poncia. She explains by saying that she is thirsty and needs a drink of water. The horse (pinned up) kicks when it is thirsty. The town doesn't have rivers, only wells. The wells are a symbol of death since their water is still while river water and the sea are seen as pure.

**Heat** - in this case, often mentioned and referred to at the height of Bernarda's oppression and fury. Therefore, a symbol for Bernarda's dominating nature. Heat is also another reference to sexual desire represented by the fans and lemonade.

**Black and white** - The common Western connotations. Black represents everything bad (death, mourn, oppression, being closed in...) while white represents all things good (the truth, life, freedom). Black is mainly associated with Bernarda and all the daughters who wear black throughout the play, except Adela. White is mainly shown through María Josefa who appears dressed in a [wedding gown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_gown). As is already said above, in her craziness she says what all the girls won't dare to say. Another possible interpretation is that white represents sterility or purity, as in the "pure" and "immaculate" appearance of Bernarda's home, and black represents oppression.

**Green** - The symbol of future death and, in Hispanic culture, hope: it is worn by Adela when she confesses her love for Pepe el Romano. Also represents the jealousy between the sisters as they find Adela is the lover of Pepe el Romano, and over Angustias' engagement with Pepe. The passionate personality of Adela as well. In addition, for Lorca, green represents erotic passion.

**The fan** - Adela gives Bernarda a round fan decorated with red and green flowers - a symbol of Adela's uniqueness.

**The cane** - Symbolizes the power and sovereignty of Bernarda over her daughters. Adela finally breaks it near the end of the play.

**The characters' names** -

* + Amelia - From Latin and Old German for 'industrious'
  + Martirio - Means 'martyrdom'
  + Angustias - Means 'anguish' or 'torment'
  + Adela - From the Spanish verb 'adelantar' meaning to go forward or overtake.
  + Magdalena - It is another name of anguish, because it has the connotations given by the Spanish saying "llorar como una Magdalena" ("to weep like Magdalene").
  + María Josefa - From the names of Jesus' parents, [Mary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_(mother_of_Jesus)) and [Joseph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Joseph)
  + Prudencia - Suggesting the virtue of [prudence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prudence).