

The red room, from the ostler and the treasure in the forest



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We have read a range of stories including: The Red Room, From The Ostler and The Treasure in the Forest. 'The Red Room' is about a legendary ghost that lives in a red room of a castle, haunting people if they enter. From the Ostler is about an Ostler who falls in love with a beautiful woman and decides to marry her but his mother refuses to let him; the story is set in the past. 'The Treasure in the Forest' is about two people described as 'scumbag thieves' looking for treasure in an isolated forest.

We have studied the opening of each of the 3 stories; the reason being is because they are important as they are only short stories and have to bring many expectations to what the story is about, what happens next and what kind of genre the story is. In this essay, I will analyse what expectations each story gives out to the audience. From the Ostler was written by Wilkie Collins in 1855. He was famous for writing the first few ever-mysterious novels such as this one.

Ostlers were people who look after horses, which reflects to the time this story was written as we rarely see many around anymore; it also gives an idea that this story is set in a farm. 'From' tells us that it may be set in the point of view of the Ostler and also that he may be the main character.

Collins begins the opening lines of the story with an expectation: "... rather a strange time for an ostler to devote to sleep." Here Collins uses the word "strange" to emphasize that there is something wrong, creating expectations to what this story maybe about e. g.

Ostler has something worrying on his mind or maybe a guilty conscience. As we read on, we begin to understand that the Ostler is having a dream about

his dramatic event from the past: "... dreaming his old dream over again... ". The words " over again" from the quote stress that the ostler has been distressed by his dream for quite some time. His dream maybe about murdering his mother over a drastic row with her about him marrying a woman he's in love with: " Aha! You she-devil, where's the knife? Never mind mother-too late now.

I've promised to marry, and marry I must. Murder! , but many things are left unexplained e. g. did he murder his mother? What was the row about? Who is this woman he wants to marry? Collins creates these expectations to the audience to make them anxious to read on. This part of the story is set in a stable, where the ostler sleeps and has his strange dream, and then outside of a house where the landlord approaches the narrator and explains his dream. This is the only vague expectation Collins leaves the reader that the next part of the story maybe set at the same farm, as the landlord knows what ostler's dream is about.

He probably does this as it makes the reader curious about is the landlord involved in his dream and if so, how? There are 4 characters mentioned the beginning of this story. First, there's the narrator who witnesses the dramatic actions of the ostler as the ostler's sleeps. The narrator supposable lives in an inn as he is traumatized from what s/he just seen: "... quickly retrace my steps across the inn-yard... " S/he is the character that opens up the next part of the story.

The landlord is the character that tells the story and may also be involved in it. The ostler is the main character, more peculiar from the others. He's

anguished from his dream: "... moves one lean arm slowly, till it rests over his throat- shudders a little..." Collins uses "lean" to show that the ostler is acting out exactly the way of what maybe a reconstruction of the dramatic moment of his life. Collins shows us the distress of the ostler who, whilst dreaming, seems to be acting out a dramatic experience: he throws up both his hands with a quite hysterical gasp" Here Collins uses "hysterical" to emphasize the way the ostler to have lost control and his emotions; with the word throws he again stresses intensity and near violence of his reactions. The use of present tense enhances the feeling of the reader being there, observing alongside the narrator.

The forth character mentioned is the ostler's mother yet not much is said about her but is clear that she is one of the main characters. Also there is another character that the ostler describes in his dream: flaxen hair with golden yellow streaks in it" who maybe his fiance: "I've promised to marry, and marry I must" This suggests that she maybe another main character as she is the subject of the argument in the dream. Collins doesn't introduce her to the story to make the reader learn about this character and why the ostler's mother rejects the marriage between them.

There is a long sentence at the start of the second paragraph, a description of the ostler's actions, which is just more than three lines where Collins breaks up with many dashes: "... urns on his straw-the arm leaves his throat-the hand..." he's emphasizing the sentence with a quick breath feeling as if it was a commentary, seeming as it was happening right now, especially it being written in the present tense, making the sentence a lot more tense. H.

G. Wells is famous for his science fiction stories such as 'The war of Worlds'
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and 'The Time Machine' He was interested in scientific discoveries but was also interested in psychology/ the way the mind works, which is what The Red Room is about.

He chose this title as it brings many expectations to what the story may be about e. g. the colour 'red' somewhat symbolizes blood and danger, which may give an idea of it being an horrific story; 'room' states where the plot is set and, to some extent, illustrates an image of an eerie and confined atmosphere. The opening of the story immediately tells the reader that it's a horror story: "tangible ghost". The main character of the story is an arrogant young man: "It will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me"- the reader would expect he'd be proved wrong/have a change of attitude. The three other characters are all old and grotesque; each one pointed out with their own identifiable description e. . 'man with the withered arm'.

Wells does this to devise a sense of horror to the reader. The old people are morbid characters: "droning insistence", yet the man with the withered arm seems to be the more intellectual character from the three as he interacts with the main character a lot more out of the three. He repeats his words of wisdom in the story: "It's your own choosing" bringing more mysteriousness into the story. The old woman is a similar character to the man with the withered arm with his repeated phrase: ("This night of all nights").

Her quote is bracketed to bold out the quote and the expectation it creates, making the reader wonder what so special about this day and forcing the reader to read on to find out. The third character, the man with the shade, is an older character, described as even more deformed and grotesque than

the rest: " He supported himself by a single crutch, his eyes were covered by a shade and his lower lip, half averted, hung pale and pink from his decaying yellow teeth. "

This character causes tension to scene, as it seems the other two old characters dislike him: "... glance of positive dislike. " As it quotes in the story: "... aught a glimpse of myself, abbreviated and broadened to an impossible sturdiness, in the queer old mirror at the end of the room" the young man sees a vision himself as one of these old people. Wells writes about him seeing this vision to form this expectation that he may become just like these old people-afraid of the legendary ghost. The story is first set in the living room of the old and eerie castle where n the old people seem to inhabit.

The room gives an impression of protection from the Red Room as the room is a long way away from them as the man with the withered arm gives a long description to where the room is: You go along the passage for a bit until you come to a door, and through that is a spiral staircase, etc... " The room also has a feeling of warmth and life with the fireplace and the people in it; yet ironically, the room creates a sense of horror, with the fire from the fireplace, creating shadows/darkness on the walls: " A monstrous shadow of him crouched upon the wall", and also seeing these old people, described as, deformed, practically imagine them dead as the young man quotes there actions: " droning insistence". As the young man decides to go to the Red room, he asks for the directions to how to get there.

The man with the withered arm does so, giving the reader many ideas to what the atmosphere maybe like outside the living room e. g. " There is a candle on the slab outside the door"- suggesting that he should take it, giving an idea that the journey to the Red Room from the Living room is going to be dark; " door covered in baize", gives a idea that no-one has entered the red room for a long time. The man with the withered arm mentions that the young man goes ' alone' to the room, making him isolated from the rest of the group, building up the tension that he is insecure.

The language Wells uses reflects the time the story was written: " Eight-and-twenty-years;" the quote means twenty-eight years. Wells uses many adjectives to describe the characters and their actions: The three of them made me feel uncomfortable, with their gaunt silences, their bent carriage, their evident unfriendliness to me and one and another". This is anther clue that he may become like one of these old people as they all dislike one each other yet they live together because the fact they are too afraid to move out. This quote is another clue to prove that old people maybe afraid of the legend: " all close together.

It may suggest that the three maybe huddling for safety, in spite of that they dislike one another. The Treasure in the Forest was in 1895 by, again, H. G. Wells. Wells chooses this title as it literally tells reader the plot of the story and more importantly, to show the reader to expect a traditional treasure hunt story, as they remind us of an exciting and an adventuress journey. Haven read The Red Room; it brings expectations that this story has very similar writing styles to The Treasure in the Forest as both of them are

written by the same author e. g. the language he uses to describe events:
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Queer unnatural tilting on his face"- an abstract from The Red Room describing a character; " It's queer"- an abstract from The Treasure in the Forest; showing the kind of language the character use, show us what kind of character he is. In the first paragraph, there isn't any sign of human life.

Many verbs and adjectives are used to describe the setting of the story. It set in a ' virgin forest', which tells us that these characters are isolated, creating tension but also at risk as the forest has not really been explored before, meaning that their could be in danger, not knowing exactly what dangers lie in the forest.

Wells describes the forest in a lot detail to create a very clear illustration of what setting is like; yet he maybe doing this to give a hint that these characters, seen as villains in the story, are taught a lesson or punished by nature. The setting sounds very hot and exotic as it mentions that there's a ' beach' and ' the sky blazed'. As the second paragraph starts with speech: " It should be somewhere here," He says the " It" but not exactly us what the " it" is, as Wells is trying to draw the reader to read on to find out; yet telling from the title we almost certainly know that " it" may be treasure. The opening verses doesn't tells us the characters intentions of being there; stating the obvious that they are hunting for treasure, as one of the character's is in possession of a ' sheet of yellow paper' certain that is a treasure map as in a traditional treasure the subject of the plot (treasure) is set up by a treasure yet it still it springs to mind to how they got that map Already Wells has produced many expectations to make the reader eager to read on.

The possession of the map is later explained that they got the map from a Chinese man as it's written in Chinese, yet, in spite of that the possession of the map is explained, Wells builds up another expectation, as if he was replacing the one before so the reader doesn't lose interest, to wonder who were these Chinese people and how did they get the map. As it quotes: "They all were" the word "were" makes you curious to what happened to these men and why are they in possession of the map.

The word "Chinee", Quoted by one of the men, indicates the time this prose was written, as a Chinese person not referred as a "Chinee" anymore. There are two men at the start of the story, named Hooker and Evans. Their names sound strange; very pirate like maybe because Wells wants to create this feeling of a theme of a treasure story to the reader or it could be that, since pirates are 'badies' in treasure stories and are always the 'loser' or are killed in the stories, Wells maybe trying to convey to the reader that they aren't going to survive or get the treasure in this story.

It quotes that the men 'spoke in low tones' to each other, which may suggest that their throats are dry or these men dislike each other; it also mentions, from the rest of that quote, that their lips are 'hard and dry'; stating the obvious that the weather is very hot and that they haven't had anything to drink in a while as one of the men quotes: "I could do with a drink now" but looking at the insight of that sentence is that they were not prepared for this journey; the characters act on impulse. "Unprovisioned canoe"-this quote backs up my point that these men are unprepared for this journey, acting hastily.

It's a possible expectation that later in the story they could get punished for this weakness. "The intense excitement of the struggle for the plan"- The word "Struggle" raises questions to how come they struggled for the plan. The quote continues: "the long voyage" it seems as if it took a long time to travel to their location, showing just how precious the treasure is, showing how their greed is driving them to get this treasure. The story is written in third person, as Wells wants the reader to experience the characters' actions and feelings. It gives this idea like we are watching them from a camera's point of view.

I noticed that the characters 'From the Ostler' and 'The Red Room' aren't named, maybe because they have to show the character's proposition of the story, without having to go into detail. Openings are very important as they create expectations to what genre the story is and maybe introduce the characters in a short period of sentences. In conclusion, I would say the opening line of 'The Red Room' was most effective than the rest as it immediately grabs the reader's attention, with a quote, to wonder why the character is talking about ghosts.

Although the opening first line of 'From the Ostler' is not as effective and attention grabbing as the 'Red Room', overall I found the whole opening of 'From the Ostler' the most effective as it builds up a balance of expectations throughout the whole opening. I would say the opening paragraph of 'The Treasure in the Forest' is the least effective, as it doesn't grab your attention. The younger audience may just drift off or not be interested in reading the rest of the story.