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around the effects of
war



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Chickamauga, by Ambrose Bierce, provides a clear depiction of the tragedy of war. It provides readers with a glimpse of the effects of war even on those that do not take active part in it. By telling the gruesome nature of war from the point of view of a child, the story is able to characterize the horror of war and its effects on children.

The story revolves around the effects of war. It highlights the most horrible effect of war, death. In the story, the author is able to show the common occurrence in war. Prior to engaging in war, soldiers and other people alike exhibit bravery and invincibility. They feel as if they can conquer anything. However, as they begin to engage themselves in the war, the harsh reality sets in. They see for themselves that war is not easy. It can cause grave consequences. Bierce shows this through the child's own experience of journeying into the woods, his own battle.

This is the main theme of the story. The tragedy of war and the horrible effects it has on children are tackled in the story. Through the eyes of the six-year old boy, readers are able to see how war destroys one's view of life and ultimately, life itself.

One of the techniques that the author used to make the story interesting is foreshadowing. This technique was especially useful in the author's characterization of the main character of the story. Readers know that the boy is deaf and mute. However, they were only able to know this for certain in the end of the story when the author wrote, " The child was a deaf mute." In the middle of the story, Bierce foreshadowed this on several occasions. In the child's encounter with his fiercest enemy, the rabbit, the author wrote,

“ With a startled cry the child turned and fled, he knew not in what direction, calling with inarticulate cries for his mother, weeping, stumbling, his tender skin cruelly torn by brambles, his little heart beating hard with terror--breathless, blind with tears--lost in the forest.”

In this statement, it is said that the boy gave out a startled cry and then inarticulate cries. That is all the boy did, cry. He never uttered a single word and resorted to mere cries alone to express his emotions. Another instance where the author utilized foreshadowing was in this statement,

“ The rustle and murmur of their march had not awakened him. Almost within a stone's throw of where he lay they had fought a battle; but all unheard by him were the roar of the musketry, the shock of the cannon, ‘ the thunder of the captains and the shouting.’”

This provides evidence that point to the deafness of the boy. He was not awakened by the loud sounds. He slept through it. If he were not deaf, he would have woken up. These are very subtle clues. Readers may not pick up on it right away for it seems to blend in with the story perfectly.

Another important use of foreshadowing was in a prelude to the death of the boy's mother. The boy's encounter with the men in the forest is a foreshadowing of his encounter with his mother's death. In the forest, he saw dead men. Later on, he saw this death again in his own home with his mother as the victim. He saw clotted blood on the men in the forest which he saw on his mother as well.

He saw the men's hands turned out just like that of his own mother. This foreshadowing seems evident. However, it can only be clearly identified if

the reader is on the lookout for foreshadowing techniques. This makes Bierce's writing more interesting for he was able to effectively use literary devices in a subtle manner that made such devices blend in with the plot and flow of the story.