

# King of the castle tension

Life



" I'm the King of the Castle": Literature Coursework Investigate the ways in which Susan Hill uses language to create tension and a sense of foreboding in " I'm the King of the Castle" Susan Hill implements several writing techniques to create tension in the novel. Tension in this sense simply means mental strain or excitement in the readers. One of the techniques used is shown when she uses a third-person narration to narrate the story. This narrator is omniscient and implies that he/ she is not one of the characters in the novel, and yet at the same time knows everything that is running through the characters' minds.

Hill uses this technique to bring the readers on a journey of moving freely in time and space to allow them to know what any character is doing or thinking at any one point of time. This is only possible because the narrator is not a character in the novel and is allowed to be anywhere, anytime. Susan Hill uses many different techniques to put a point across, the most important being her use of imagery. However her writing also has many other qualities such as good structure and her ability to think like her characters.

In addition she manages to build up tension and uses different ways of emphasising words or phrases. All of these factors contribute to her unique evocative style and add to her reputation of being a very talented writer. In chapter eleven, she describes vividly how Kingshaw feels sick with fright when Hooper locks him in the shed. " He retched, and then began to vomit, all over the sacks, the sick coming down his nose and choking him. It tasted bitter. He bent forwards, holding his stomach. When it finished he wiped his mouth on the sleeve of his shirt.

He was shivering again. " This passage is an example of her excellent use of imagery. She conjures up a picture of the scene as well as expressing Kingshaw's fears and senses in an evocative style y using a scene that we can all relate to and understand. An example of Susan Hill's good structure is at the very beginning of the novel, when Hooper and Kingshaw first meet, Hooper sends Kingshaw a note saying 'I didn't want you to come here'. This sets up the story line from the beginning, leading us to expect events to come.

Then at the very end of the novel before Kingshaw commitssuicide, Hopper sends him a final note saying ' Something will happen to you Kingshaw'. She shows the ability to be able to think like a child, which adds to the overall affect of the book because the main character is Kingshaw who is a child. This process of her thoughts gives us a wider understanding of Kingshaw's character and his One of them is her use of childish language and grammar. " Now, he thought, I know what Hooper is really like. He's a baby. And stupid. And a bully. Notice in this particular phrase that she uses childish words like baby, stupid and bully. The use of short abrupt sentences emphasise the words and adds to the childish theme, because it is grammatically incorrect to start a sentence with a conjunction, which is what a child may do).

Another form of her childish thinking is how she shows an understanding of hildren's fears and their reactions. An example of this is Kingshaw's fear of moths. " 'There are a lot of moths,' Hooper said softly, ' there always are, in woods. Pretty big ones, as well. ' Kingshaw's stomach clenched.

In his nostrils, he could smell the mustiness of the Red Room. " This passage shows how Hooper taunts Kingshaw with his fear (childishly). She shows

Kingshaw's reaction to his fear by saying his stomach clenched. She then continues with his memory of the Red Room, where he had been scared by the death moths, using her evocative style to describe how he associates moths with the musty mell of the Red Room. She uses the example of moths throughout the book, along with Kingshaw's other fears such as birds. To keep the reader alert Susan Hill tended to change from one scene to another very abruptly.

A Classic example is in chapter sixteen, when every one was in the Breakfast room on the day of Mrs. Helena Kingshaw and Mr. Hooper's wedding announcement. Suddenly the scene changes to them being in a muddy field. This can be quite confusing for the reader but it does keep them alert. It was also in this scene where Susan Hill showed her ability to build up tension. This was done by Kingshaw expressing his fears about something that we do not know about, and Mrs. Helena Kingshaw talking about how he was scared by this thing when he was little.

As the passage continues the writer gives us a clue that the unknown fear is of a certain place and finally (after a page of writing) she tells us that the place in question is a circus. Susan Hill uses many different techniques to build up an atmosphere. In my opinion the most effective atmosphere that she created was in chapters twelve and thirteen, when Hooper falls off the castle wall. When Kingshaw reaches the top of the castle (without Hooper) he feels a sense of ower. He shouts out understand how Kingshaw really does feel King, she repeats the phrase 'I am the King' thrice.

He felt so powerful that he thought he could kill Hooper. When Kingshaw is in a rage with Hopper, telling him to come down, he swears at him, this shocks the reader, as he is only a child. When Hooper is falling off the castle wall Kingshaw commands 'TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF THE WALL, HOOPER. ' The use of capital letter creates the effect that what he is saying is important. When Hooper falls and is carried off on a stretcher, thunder rumbles in the back ground which gives the ironic effect that it is not going to be a good thing for Kingshaw.

Kingshaw is then made to get down from the castle, which can be classed as an example of his life. Every time he reaches the top he is always forced to go back down which is, once again, ironic. The whole book gives an immense sense of tension to the reader. The atmosphere is one of suspense and danger. The overall use of abrupt, simple dialogue accentuates the feeling of incoming peril. Susan Hill writes the novel in a way which causes the reader to constantly be alert, and to expect the sinister and foreboding to occur.

Arsalan Abdullah