

Ambrose bierce's "an
occurrence at owl
creek bridge"



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Ambrose Bierce's " An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" demonstrates that embracing one's doubts and fears is an essential part of appreciating life. As presented in the short story, the protagonist Farquhar undergoes torture when he is about to hang. He perceives time to be slowly passing while the ticking on his watch sounds shrieking yet slow. As he awaits hanging, the time to his death knell seems so near yet so far. He feels every moment of the passing time including his clock ticking, which symbolizes the acuteness of senses during the critical moments of one's life. Life is more than precious and should not be taken for granted. Farquhar proves that every moment of life matters and should be a matter of making the best out of it to continue living. He could not imagine himself die. Instead of cowering, Farquhar does not give up hope despite being at the center of hanging. His hands tied with a rope on his neck; all he could think about was his wife and children. The flicker of the thought implies the significance of family in one's life. As argued above, life is precious, and one needs to consider all the essential things that matter to him. All that mattered to Farquhar is not his possessions, not even death but a family that he was leaving behind should he be executed.

Hope and sentimentality for life are evident at the owl creek bridge as Farquhar tends to imagine how he could free his hands and dive into the river below. He even pictures how he will dodge bullets should his executor fire at him (Grey House 7). Around him were inhuman union soldiers armed with guns. A small crowd of spectators was also present. The heavy presence of guards could not hold him back from the thoughts of escaping. He pictures

the whole journey of freeing his hands, diving into the waters, and swimming away under the river to dodge bullets.

The element of time in the short story suggests that if a person finds themselves in an awkward position, they should try and figure out a way to get out of the misery. They should not let misery be an intimidating barrier to escape. The position, no matter how tricky it appears, should not seal their fate (Grey House 8). Accepting the situation is giving up hope. "If I could free my hands ... I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream." His thoughts were fixated on the idea of escaping. He even swore he would swim vigorously to get to the bank and takes to the woods.

A person, regardless of the state of brokenness has the freedom of dreaming of themselves better than their current situation. The fear of known and unknown cripple ones' ability to live the moment. Regardless living reality or fantasy, one deserves to have best moments even when on the blink of death. As illustrated in the syntax of the story, Farquhar tends to result in delusion to escape the reality of death and the painfully passing time. With every second left to live, his attention or rather fantasy is the path to escape. The story mentions, "he loses consciousness ... feels sharp pressure on his throat (Bierce Para 1)." He then embraces a sense of suffocation. The incidences that happen while is on the bridge are convincing that Farquhar is facing his death, but he does not let it overcome him. Out of desperation, he plunges into escapism, through fantasy, which serves as a distraction from what he is about to suffer. His mind instantly captures flight and survival, aspects that are unachievable.

Perhaps when not faced with a life-threatening situation, one cannot appreciate what life has to offer. When such happens is when one has no other alternative but to embrace one's fears and doubts with the hope of overcoming. During these critical times when facing hardship is when one appreciates life. The story of Farquhar is indifferent to what many people face today. Once a while, even the best finds themselves between a rock and a hard place. Should one be in such a situation, they will tend to think of how to overcome. Even what complicates the scenario more is the circumstances and the barriers to overcome. Farquhar's case has complex situations, tied hands, rope on the neck, placed at the center of the bridge, and two soldiers around him. He only got himself from an inescapable position. The fact that he is alone, and he only can battle out of the situation perhaps represents how problems are personal, and everybody should strive to solve their own. Glare to the right and left of the rail bridge was empty, no one to save him.

Interestingly, the story does not reveal which crime Farquhar committed to deserve death punishment. However, hints into the war suggest he provoked the Unionists, and despite coming from a respectable background, he was no exception to the rules.

The last few minutes of life are the most critical, according to the storyline. The protagonist spends the final minutes in heightened senses, with every little detail magnified. He represses fear of death by delusion and forges to want to die a dignified death. Instead of cowering to the slowly passing the time, the river twenty feet below him, and the inevitable execution, he closes his eyes " to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children Bierce Para 4."

Farquhar escapes in fantasy and gets homes. " He stands at the gate of his <https://assignbuster.com/ambrose-bierces-an-occurrence-at-owl-creek-bridge/>

own home. All is as he left it (Bierce Para 15)." As he escapes reality and has all in place until he is home, " as he is about to clasp her, he feels a stunning blow on the back of the neck (Bierce Para 15)." He sees blinding white light before all is darkness and silence.

As argued throughout the study, at no point Farquhar cowers to the unionists. He knows he is about to die; he does not plead; instead, he opts to focus on his escape to meet his family (The Sitting Bee Para 2). He dies a dignified death. The story teaches a moral lesson on humans not accepting to be defined by circumstances. Letting out fear regardless of the situation helps one to appreciate life. Importantly, relinquishing fear is the most crucial step to embracing life. If Farquhar at any given instance let fear dominate him, he would have died a terrible and painful death. He braced fear of death and overcame the lone situation. The only way a man can defeat fear is to embrace it and not relinquish to its subjection.

Works Cited

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