

# Struggle for power in "hunters in the snow"



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

" Hunters in the snow" is the story about three friends named Tub, Kenny and Frank. They are friends and they decide to go hunting outside Spokane, Washington. They fail to get any game and Kenny shoots a dog that belongs to an old farmer. Kenny is the leader among the three and he insults both Tub and Frank regularly. The three struggle to control the group at different times in the story. Each strives to outdo the other by control the group and the situation turns ugly. The story utilizes conflict, suspense, surprise, and mystery to highlight the power struggles between these three friends.

Conflict entails the fights that occur among the three friends and they escalate the fights and physical insults. Suspense refers to a style that puts a reader in a dilemma as to what will happen to the friends next. Surprise refers to the things that occur against the expectation of the reader. Mystery refers to the abnormal occurrences that occur in the story. The plot for " Hunters in the Snow" explores the struggle for power among Tub, Kenny and Frank. Tobias Wolf's " Hunters in the Snow" brings out the theme of a power struggle between Tub, Kenny, and Frank by utilizing mystery, conflict, surprise, and suspense.

The perceived roles of the three characters in the story influence the manner in which they interact with one another. Kenny perceives himself as the leader of the group and he believes that he is justified to insult Tub. Frank's allegiance at the beginning of the novel is towards Kenny. However, when Tub becomes aggressive, Frank befriends him and shows him allegiance. Tub is interested in power like Frank and Kenny and it increases his desire to get acceptance from his friends. Tub gets the leadership role and he is happy because he intends to avenge how Kenny has been treating him all along.

The first element of fiction that highlights the power struggles in the group is suspense. Kenny decides to drive towards Tub with the intention of scaring him. This section creates suspense because the reader is not sure whether Kenny will run over Tub. Kenny seeks the approval of Frank in his actions through a subtle look. To illustrate Tub says " You almost ran me down you could've killed me." He is scared but the man beside the driver tells him that Kenny was only messing with him. This indicates that Kenny is insecure in the group and he believes that Frank is more powerful than him. Evidently, Tub and Kenny experience the leadership role at distinct times and in those times, Frank approves their roles by validating their actions. Frank is the ' yes-man ' in the story and he plays an instrumental role in validating their roles of leadership.

The author utilizes mystery to emphasize the struggle for power that never seems to end among these three friends. The transformation of characters in the story is mysterious. Tub changes from a friendly character to a cruel person. His transformation is caused by the desire for more power. He ends up shooting Kenny. His action can be interpreted as an act of vengeance. The author's reference to the hostile weather is symbolic of power struggles. The weather at the beginning of the story is cold and snowy. When Tub shoots Kenny, he loses strength. They throw Kenny at the back of a freezing pick-up that is freezing and does not care about him. This action indicates the lack of empathy in Tub and Frank.

Suspense plays an instrumental role in bringing out the struggle for power among Tub, Frank, and Kenny. The three characters are lost in the process of hunting. The episode that involves Kenny and Tub depicts a high level of

suspense in the story. The author notes that " Kenny turned to Tub. I hate you. Tub shot from the waist. Kenny jerked backward against the fence and buckled to his knees. He folded his hands across his stomach," he said, " You shot me." This moment is full of suspense because the reader is not sure about what will happen to Kenny after the shooting. The episode shows that Tub intends to show Kenny that he is more powerful than Kenny by shooting him.

In the same way, the author surprises the reader when Frank shifts his allegiance to Tub in a bid to humiliate Kenny. The surprise move changes the balance of power in the story. Furthermore, the manner in which Kenny moves from his leadership role is surprising and it underscores that fact that Tub and Frank can do anything to be leaders in the group even if it means mistreating Kenny. Before the shooting, of Kenny, he is the most powerful character among the three. He loses his power after the shooting and the others humiliate him.

Conflict is used to show how each of the three characters struggles to be more powerful than the others. The three characters betray one another. Kenny starts shooting and he ends up killing the old farmer's dog.

Consequently, Tub shoots Kenny and the rescue ends up failing. The Tub and Frank are caught up in the trivial things in their life. Frank orders Tub to give him dinner after informing him his love affair with a babysitter. Tub devours the dinner after confessing that he is a glutton. The allegiance among the three characters keeping shifting throughout the story. At the beginning of the story. Frank and Kenny become allies and sideline Tub. Tub walks along the creek on his own without the company of the other two characters. Even

though Kenny is aware of the things that are going on in the life of Frank, he does not tell Tub anything. After the shooting of Kenny, Frank, and Tub become close, and thus they understand one another. Frank and Tub open up to each other and they end up sidelining Kenny. They take Kenny's blanket and justify their action by arguing that 'they're not doing him any good... we might as well get some use out of them'. This act implies that Tub and Frank are striving to be more powerful than Kenny. They literally let him go in a bid to be more powerful (Eder 6).

In conclusion, the elements in the "Hunters in the snow" plot that depicts the struggle for power among Tub, Kenny and Frank include surprise, suspense conflict, and mystery. The characters are in constant conflict and they shift their allegiance to one another throughout the novel. Mysterious happenings such as the shooting of Kenny change the balance of power. The rear is left in suspense throughout the plot and this further underscores the struggle for power among the three characters.

#### Works cited

Eder, Doris L. "Literary Contexts in Novels: Tobias Wolff's "This Boy's Life." Literary Contexts in Memoirs: Tobias Wolff's 'This Boy's Life' (2007): 1. Literary Reference Center. Web. 19 Apr. 2013.

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