

# The ironies in the life and death of peyton farquhar

Literature



The Ironies in the Life and Death of Peyton Farquhar He is standing on the edge of the bridge over the Owl Creek. No, Peyton Farquhar has no plan to dive into the creek water for a day's swim -- at least for the moment. The water below is apparently uninviting, which is swirling and " racing madly" (Bierce 436). The image of the bridge, however, is more visible than the swirling stream itself. Supposedly, the bridge should join together on what is divided. But instead of unification, the Confederate (represented by Farquhar) and the Union (represented by the Federal Scouts) Governments are at the other side of the water.

Ironically, the approaching death of Farquhar is greeted by the rising sun. Undeniably, he wants to see and appreciate the sun's beauty and majesty, but Farquhar has no time left. How could a dying man takes time to study the sun! Apparently, the symbolism of dawn is the emerging hope for the war-torn lives of the people. Farquhar's life, however, is as dark as the night amidst the early sun's painting the creek water with gold color.

Indeed, Farquhar does not have time left to do the things he desires to do. From somewhere, he heard a mysterious noise. He could not identity where it comes from or what it is. Farquhar only knows that the tremendous noise has the same " ringing quality" to the sound of the blacksmith's hammer clanging his anvil (Bierce 436). Paradoxically, he found out that that noise was his clock's making.

Days earlier, Farquhar and his wife were sitting outside their home " near the entrance to his ground" (Bierce 473). It was evening and Farquhar was 30 miles away from the Owl Creek Bridge. He was enjoying the night sky in the company of his beautiful wife. The two lovely couple sits quietly on the rustic bench, perhaps holding each other's white hands. And a " gray-clad soldier" <https://assignbuster.com/the-ironies-in-the-life-and-death-of-peyton-farquhar/>

riding on a horse suddenly appeared before them, and asked for a glass of water. They thought that he was Confederate soldier. The soldier appears to be thirsty, and Peyton's wife happily serves him. In their conversation, the gray-clad soldier informed Peyton about the stockade built "on the other bank" by the Union army. It was a dangerous invitation for Farquhar to burn the enemy's stockade: a trap.

The rope breaks and Farquhar falls "straight downward" when he was hanged (Bierce 473). Farquhar then discovered that he has superhuman powers, capable of seeing the small creatures even at a distant. For instance, he could clearly hear the sound of the water rippling on his face. He could also vividly see the blades of grass, the leaves of trees, and even the spider's web stretching from "twig to twig" (Bierce 438). Farquhar was able to escape from the perils of death at the hands of his enemies. And Farquhar happily arrived at the gate of his house. His wife was standing and waiting at the veranda "with a smile of ineffable joy" (Bierce 441). Suddenly, he felt a strong blow at the back of his neck. Of all ironies, Peyton Farquhar was dead all along.

#### Work Cited

Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." *The New Millennium Reader*.

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