

# Bright examples of the use of foreshadowing in literature

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## **The Enhancement of Foreshadowing**

“ The sky poured as if weeping for lost loved ones.” Reading this sentence brings death to mind. This sort of sentence is used as foreshadowing, which is a literary device used in a majority of stories. The stories “ A Good Man Is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor, “ Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, and “ Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne are filled with wonderful examples of foreshadowing. The best uses for foreshadowing is to add tension, make parts of the story believable, or even to mislead the reader.

The first way of using foreshadowing as a literary enhancement would be to add tension to the story. The point of using foreshadowing this way is to give the reader anxiety or excitement for what is to come. The story “ A Good Man Is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor has a perfect example of this use of foreshadowing. This short story is about a family who is travelling on vacation when they run into an escaped convict nicknamed The Misfit. Flannery foreshadows this meeting at the very beginning of the story quite obviously. The grandmother tells everyone in the story “...this fellow that calls himself The Misfit is aloose from the Federal Pen and headed toward Florida...” (O’Connor 137), which is where the family is heading. The reader can assume from this sentence that The Misfit will be met later, and that he will have an important part of the story. Later in the story they meet Red Sammy and his wife who states, “ If he hears about it being here, I wouldn’t be none surprised to see him.” (O’Connor 142) Which gives off the idea that the characters are getting closer to meeting The Misfit.

Another use of foreshadowing is to help make certain parts of the story more believable. Often times things happen in stories that might not make sense without prior background information. The best example of this is in the short story "Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin. This short story is about the death of Louise Mallard due to the shock of her husband's undeath. Chopin includes in the very first sentence that "...Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken..." (Chopin) which brought into light some very important information. Josephine even shows how concerning Louise's heart condition was with her statement that "...you will make yourself ill" (Chopin) when Louise begins acting oddly. Not only does it suggest that something negative will happen because of her heart condition, but it also makes her death more believable. If we didn't know she had previous heart trouble then her death at the end would seem odd and unrealistic.

A third way to boost a story with foreshadowing would be to mislead the reader with information that feels important. This is often used to confuse the reader and make the story more shocking when the truth is revealed. The story "Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne provides a good use of this type of foreshadowing. This short story is about a man named Goodman Brown who leaves his innocent new wife at home as he goes to meet the devil in the woods. The story makes a lot of references to Goodman's wife, Faith, and her pretty pink ribbons. As Goodman leaves to go meet the devil "...he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him, with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons." (Hawthorne)

This gives the image of him leaving behind something sweet and innocent in favor of something dark and sinister. This is what made the reveal of Faith being at this meeting so surprising. The pink ribbons are left out upon Goodman seeing her at the ceremony, "...[he] cast one look at his pale wife..." (Hawthorne) is all that is mention. This, in itself, is symbolism of her innocence being replaced.

In conclusion, foreshadowing a very useful tool that can add tension, make parts of the story believable, or even to mislead the reader. These types of foreshadowing make a story more fun to read and more complex. Without this type of literary enhancement mystery novels would be very boring. A common trope used with foreshadowing is that the end is usually foreshadowed in the beginning. This is true in a majority of the stories mentioned. Foreshadowing is just fun little Easter eggs that are left in stories to bring entertainment and excitement.