

# Literary elements in "godfather death" essay sample

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Jakob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm are famous brothers who are known for their folk stories that are inside the book Grimm’s Fairy Tales. Grimm’s Fairy Tales is a collection of famous works, featuring stories we all have heard of such as “ Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” “ Rumpelstiltskin,” and “ Godfather Death” The Grimm Brothers use many literary aspects that help students understand essential literary elements, such as point of view, character types, and setting, especially in “ Godfather Death”.

In “ Godfather Death” the point of view is third person, nonparticipant, and total omniscience. Throughout the story the pronouns I, me, we, and us are never used unless it is a quotation of a character, which is indicative of the third person point of view, telling the story from an outside perspective. One of the earliest pronouns used in “ Godfather Death” is “ Now when the thirteenth came into the world, he did not know what to do, so he ran out onto the main highway intending to ask the first one he met to be the child’s godfather.” The third person pronouns continue throughout the story, continuing onward into the last few sentences in the story when the narrator writes, “ But because he wanted revenge, he deliberately fumbled in placing the new candle, and the stub toppled over and went out”(32).

The thoughts of the father are the first way to prove omniscience when the narrator implies what the father is thinking when the narrator declares, “ The man spoke thus because he did not know how wisely God portions out wealth and poverty” (6). Nonetheless, we cannot attest to omniscience without a second source of someone else’s thoughts. We also see another

side of the story when the doctor's thoughts appear and the narrator states " ' If I cheat Death this one time' thought the doctor" (21). This statement demonstrates omniscience through one word: ' thought'.

In " Godfather Death" there are two main characters, Death and the Doctor. These two characters are alike in the literary aspect, being that both characters are flat as well as static. The doctor is a flat character because he only plays the part of his profession, a doctor. This is expressed when the narrator confirms, " It was not long before the young man was the most famous doctor in the whole world" (19). The doctor is also a static character in the sense that he doesn't change or learn anything throughout the story. The doctor cheats Death a first time, and afterwards tries to cheat death a second time and continues to disregard lessons of the past. Death exhibits that he is a flat character at the beginning when the father clarifies, " You take the rich and the poor without distinction" (14).

Death adheres to this perception when the king gets sick and " Death was standing at the sick man's feet" which demonstrates that no matter the wealth of a man, Death must take him when it is his time to pass (20). This shows that Death has one outstanding characteristic, being equal. He also displays it when the princess is sick and on her death bed and he still believes she should die regardless of her social class. These also show that Death is static because he does not change his belief or ways when it comes to Death. These characters illustrate one literary element, but the setting is also an element that must be understood.

The setting in this story varies from a street, sick people's homes, and then Death's underground cavern. In the beginning when the father is in the street looking for a godfather, the atmosphere is thought to be hopeful. The father is hopeful that he could quickly find a godfather to lead his son to a good life. The atmosphere keeps hopeful as the doctor becomes a very rich man and a great doctor. The atmosphere can then be called troubling, as the doctor has to deal with very important people dying, like the king and the princess. The doctor contemplates, " but since I am his godson, he will turn a blind eye, so I will risk it" so he is troubled whether to do what he thinks is right or not (21). The setting then turns to the dark underground cavern, which seems very bleak. This is revealed when Death says fiercely, " It is all over for you. Now it's your turn."(25) This is a very desolate view on the doctor's life, knowing that he is about to die for his ignorance.

" Godfather Death" is a short story that expresses many different literary elements, but the main feature is a non-participant and total omniscient narrator. This short story also exemplifies an interesting atmosphere that can be found by carefully examining the text and setting. The characters in this short story do not vary much from each other in the literary sense, but are still thought-provoking all the same. The Grimm Brothers used many literary aspects that help scholars understand essential literary elements, such as point of view, character types, and setting.

Work Cited

Grimm, Jakob and Wilhelm. " Godfather Death." \_Backpack Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing. \_ Ed. X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 2012. 12-14. Print.