

# The snow child: dominant effect

Business



In the novel *The Snow Child* by Eowyn Ivey, Jack and Mabel, an elderly couple, pursue a new life in a homestead of rural Alaska following a tragic . In this passage, Jack describes his struggle with many overwhelming difficulties involving nature. Furthermore, the wild dominates and seem to deliberately inflict hardships upon the two. Ivey creates an oppressive atmosphere in this passage through the use of figurative language, repetition of ideas and symbolism.

To begin, the author conveys nature's oppressive effect through various literary devices. In the wild, Jack discovers " swarms of mosquitoes" that "[rise] from the disturbed earth in clouds" (Ivey 61). The metaphor " clouds" portrays the mosquitoes surrounding Jack similar to dark " clouds" enveloping the " earth" and masking all sunlight. Storms often ensue, illustrating Jack's misery and discomfort due to the insects. Also, the author personify Jack's feelings of doubt towards his life in Alaska as they "[crouch] over his shoulder, ready to take him by the throat, whispering in his ear, [that he is] an old man.

An old, old man" (62). The phrases " over his shoulder" and " by the throat" resemble physical domination upon Jack's vital body parts, as nature emotionally cripples Jack to become fragile and " an old, old man." In conclusion, literary devices are used to express Jack's struggle against nature's oppression. In addition, the use of repetition emphasizes nature's villainous characteristics in the story. During Jack's hunt, he "[comes] to a log and [makes] a halfhearted attempt to brush the snow away before sitting on it... with his elbows on the rifle, head in his hands" (62).

The use of the words “ halfhearted,” “ sitting,” and “ head in his hands” stems from Jack’s lack of power, contrasting from the demeanor of a hunter and showing his lingering insecurity. While Jack hunts, he mentions himself to “ fall dead,” become a “ carcass” and remain “ a strewn pile of bones” in the forest (62). Nature’s merciless and demoralizing effect can easily reduce Jack to a meager dead body. This shows his vulnerability and powerlessness despite being armed. Finally, Jack refers to himself to “ stay frozen”, become “ frozen flesh” and resemble a “ glacier” (62).

Alaska’s barren winter hinders Jack from food and resources, making life difficult, therefore, showcasing nature’s supremacy in the cold. In conclusion, the repetition of ideas highlights Jack’s vulnerability to the forces of nature. Moreover, the author uses many symbols to express the oppressive ambience. While completing farmwork, Jack “[wipes] the horse’s flank with his hand, [and] his palm [comes] away bloody with engorged insects” (61). The strength of a “ horse” embodies Jack’s ambitions and his masculinity.

Thus, the atmosphere physically deteriorates Jack and emotionally consumes him, similar to insects feeding upon the horse. In the forests, “ the spindly black spruce were so dense in places you couldn’t squeeze an arm between them” (61). Black spruce branches resemble “ spindly” arms. These trees barricade the environment around Jack, grasping him and allowing no escape. Moreover, “ a mangy raven passed overhead, but it flew steadily on as if seeking richer grounds” (61).

The ill scavenger foreshadows Jack’s dire future, lacking food and infested with ailments. As a raven flies, it is able to see flourishing groves while Jack

remains snared by the manipulative environment in his vicinity. To conclude, symbolism plays a vital role in the portrayal of an oppressive atmosphere in the passage. In summation, through the use of figurative language, repetition and symbolism, an oppressive atmosphere is created in chapter seven of *The Snow Child*. This dominant effect create feelings of dread, making the reader anxious, yet fascinated. This passage establishes the treacherous journey Jack and Mabel undergo in the Alaskan wild.

Ultimately, the couple adapts to the hardships and gains expertise for life in the homestead. This showcases the theme that willingness to endure difficulties will result in beneficial outcomes. If Jack and Mabel fled Alaska, their eventual joyous experiences would also flee from their memory.