

Casey at the bat essay



Baseball is America's pastime. The poem "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer tells the story of a baseball game. The home team is losing the game. They are hoping for their star player, Casey to get up to bat and win the game. In this poem Thayer uses imagery to build suspense.

First, Thayer uses the imagery of a dust cloud to build suspense. The two players up to bat before Casey are not very good. If only one of them gets out, the game is over and Casey's team loses. When the first player hits a single and the second gets a hit, we live the suspenseful moment with the audience because the action is clouded by dust. The poem states, "And when the dust had lifted, and the men saw what had occurred, there was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third" ("Casey at the Bat" 15-16). Now that Flynn and Jimmy are safe at second and third, the crowd is hopeful that Casey can now win the game. Therefore, by obscuring the action, Thayer builds suspense.

Second, Thayer uses imagery to enhance suspense by showing how Casey reacts to having one last chance to win the game. Casey's actions show us that he may be unsure of his ability to hit the ball. At the climax of the game, the reader sees Casey's demeanor change as he settles in for his last attempt. "The sneer is gone from Casey's lips, his teeth are clenched in hate" ("Casey at the Bat" 45). Casey's determination is apparent, but the outcome is still uncertain.

Therefore, the author showing the reader Casey's realization that he has one last chance to win the game builds suspense. Finally, Thayer uses the imagery of Casey's mighty swing to build suspense. Thayer leaves the reader

with the image of Casey's swing without knowing whether or not Casey struck out or won the game. The author uses the words "shattered" and "blow" to mislead the reader. The poem says, "And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow" ("Casey at the Bat" 48). The reader is hopeful that Casey wins the game, but Thayer moves to a different scene, leaving the reader to wonder what actually happened.

In conclusion, Thayer uses imagery to build suspense when he hides the action on the field behind a cloud of dust, when he shows Casey's change in attitude, and when he shows Casey's change in attitude. Finally, he leaves the reader to wonder about the result of Casey's swing. Therefore, Thayer combines the elements of imagery and suspense to illustrate the consequences of overconfidence.