

Comparison between blackberries by leslie norris and blackberries by ellen hunnic...

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Comparison and Contrast between Two Short Stories: Blackberries by Leslie Norris and Blackberries by Ellen Hunnicutt

Introduction

Leslie Norris' *Blackberries* is a short story that is set in Wales. Written from the point of view of the third person, the story describes the experiences of a young boy who goes picking blackberries with his father ("*Blackberries*" Summary). On the other hand, Ellen Hunnicutt's story by the same title is the story of a husband and wife who go picking blackberries at the foot of a hill (Characterisation). After picking the blackberries, they sit at the foot of the hill to enjoy the fruits. An ambiguous conversation ensues between the two. This paper compares and contrasts the two stories on the following points: plot, setting, characterization, and theme. Besides their common title that connotes the picking of blackberries, the two stories have very little in common.

Discussion

Norris' story is about a family of three: a husband, a wife, and their son ("*Blackberries*" Summary). For the first time, the mother takes the boy to Mr. Frensham, a barber for a haircut. Mr. Frensham has been cutting the boy's father's hair since he was a little boy. The boy is a little scared of the encounter with the barber, although in the end he enjoys the cut. After the haircut, the mother buys the boy a cap from her savings. The cap is a little over-size, but she buys it all the same because it is cheaper than the others are and the boy will wear it for many years to come. A few days later, the boy and his father go to pick blackberries at Fletchers Woods. They decide to take some of the fruit to the mother. For lack of a container, they carry the

blackberries in the boys cap. On arriving home, the mother is furious because the berries have severely stained the " expensive" cap. Hunnicutt's story is about a couple that goes out at the foot of a nearby hill (Characterisation). While there, they sit down to enjoy blackberries that the husband has brought with him in his cap. A conversation ensues between the two. However, the conversation is highly disjointed: each one of them seems to be talking about different things.

Norris story is believed to be situated in Wales. The events in the story take place over several days from the visit to the barber to the picking of blackberries. The events take place in different locations such as the barber's and the dresser's shops, Fletcher woods and the boys home (" Blackberries" Summary). The fact that the boy's father is unemployed has led some readers to conclude that Norris may have written the story during the Great Depression in the 1930s. By contrast, Hunnicutt's story is set at the foot of a hill (Characterisation). The fact that the characters in Hunnicutt's story also pick and eat blackberries indicates that the events in the stories may have taken place at around the same time of the year.

On the surface, both short stories seem to propagate the subject of blackberries. However, a closer reading and analysis of the two stories indicates otherwise. The theme of Norris' story is the ordinary experiences that boys from humble family backgrounds go through as they grow up. Like any other child, the boy learns several things by experiencing them first hand. For instance, at first, he is scared of the visit to the barber's shop, but in the end, he enjoys the experience of being shaved by the barber rather than by his mother at home (" Blackberries" Summary). The ambiguity of

Hunnicutt's story makes it difficult for one to figure out the theme of the story. Still, people have tended to assume the story to be about the brevity of life on earth and the need to enjoy it. This theme is drawn from the remarks of the husband when his wife prompts them to leave. He responds by saying that they have plenty of time (Characterisation).

The major characters in Norris' story are the boy and his two parents. The boy's mother is portrayed as hardworking and responsible. Even though her husband is unemployed and, therefore, without an income, she works hard and provides for the family. She even manages to save some money with which she buys her son a cap ("Blackberries" Summary). The boy's father is responsible despite not having a job. He takes his son out for a walk. The son is obedient to his parents. For instance, when told that they were going to the barber's shop, he obeys even though he does not know what the visit entails ("Blackberries" Summary). The two characters in Hunnicutt's story are the husband and his wife (Characterisation). The former comes out as arrogant and dismissive while the latter is nagging.

Works Cited

"Blackberries" Summary. n. d. Web. 21 February 2015.

Characterisation. n. d. Web. 21 February 2015.