

The ransom of red chief essay



Bobby Langan Red October 5, 2005 " The Ransom of Red Chief" " The Ransom of Red Chief" is a truly ironic story. O. Henry starts the story with two scheming pals, Bill and Sam, who have an idea for kidnapping a wealthy man's son in a town named Summit. They soon acquire Johnny Dorset, son of Ebenezer Dorset, (the wealthy man) and run off with him to a cave. Johnny, also called " Red Chief", turns out to be more trouble than he's worth, literally! The two friends expect a ransom of \$2, 000, but " Red Chief" causes so much chaos and havoc that the conmen are willing to give up the ransom just to get rid of him.

Red Chief's attempts to scalp, burn, and torture the two swindlers cause them to give up. He is especially cruel to Bill, which results in Bill pleading with Sam to get rid of this depraved child. To his relief, Red Chief's father is willing to take his disturbed son back, but with a counter offer of \$250! Finally agreeing that Red Chief is just too much to handle they pay Ebenezer his money and never go near Summit again. The verbal irony used in " The Ransom of Red Chief" puts much humor into the story. There are many accounts of verbal irony in " Ransom of Red Chief".

In my opinion the funniest event of verbal irony in the story, is the name of the town. Now, a town named Summit makes you think of hills and mountains, but the town is as flat as a board! Another example of O. Henry's famous verbal irony is when Bill says " Heaven help the wolves". Before, Bill and his partner referred to Red Chief as a little helpless lamb, and themselves as the wolves , but the tables have turned and it seems the " Wolves" don't have as much power as they predicted. These ironic accounts

aren't the only ones, there is much more irony to be found in "The Ransom of Red Chief".

By far, the most entertaining factor in this hilarious story is the situational irony. One of the many ironic situations the characters find themselves in is the counter offer proposed by Ebenezer Dorset. They are continually persecuted by this wicked child, throughout the whole story, but end up paying the man, that they expected to obtain money from! Another humorous account of situational irony is when Bill and Sam finally drop off Red Chief. Ebenezer holds Red Chief while Bill and Sam run for their lives.

Sam is lean, and the fastest, because Bill is overweight and out of shape, but Bill runs like he's never run before and is almost a mile ahead of Sam by the time he stopped. Read "Ransom of Red Chief" for yourself, and remember to expect the unexpected. The many references to the Bible in "Ransom of Red Chief" add humor to the already hilarious story. One reference that makes you laugh is when Red Chief, "gives out a whoop, such as David gave out after he knocked down Goliath". He then took his sling shot and fired an egg-shaped rock at Bill.

Bill falls to the ground and says "You know who my favorite biblical character is Sam... King Herod". Bill is referring to a King that was afraid of losing power so ordered his troops to kill all male children. As he does with almost any idea, O. Henry makes his Biblical references a humorous part of this masterful work of art. Every aspect of his creation provides humor and wit to this riot of a story. When I read O. Henry's remarkable, ironic story it

was like de-ja-vu . Red Chiefs continual acts of aggravation were very familiar to me.

I can really relate to the two kidnappers. I once had a small puppy named Rocky. He looked like an adorable little ball of fur, but looks can be deceiving. Our family could not control him, urinating on the beds, and ripping up trash bags are just some examples of his personal goal of wreaking havoc. Like Red Chief, Rocky chose to pick on one person, much more than his other victims. Rocky's target: my brother David. He continually bit at his ankles and ambushed him at unexpected times. No matter how nice David tried to be to the dog, Rocky hated him all the same.

One day when my brother came home from school, he found his room to be completely destroyed. Rocky ate his shoes, ripped apart his sheets and went through his laundry. This was about it for Rocky. He wasn't allowed in the house and was chained to a leash day and night, and his only shelter was a dingy dog house. Apparently Rocky had not completed his demonic dream, and broke off the leash, ripped open the cage that held our rabbit and ate it. As you can see I have much experience with irritations like Red Chief, and can relate to the two defenseless victims he chose to torment.