

Name: _____

Date: _____

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” by Ambrose Bierce

Guided Notes – Lesson 2

What information about Peyton Farquhar in section II helps us to understand the conflict in section I?

Objective: In this lesson, you will learn how to analyze the development of a character by considering direct and indirect characterization.

Steps:

1. Reread key scenes in the text highlighting words and phrases that reveal character traits.
2. Ask yourself: “How does the author express this information? Does he use direct or indirect characterization?”
3. Ask yourself: “Why did the author choose to reveal information about the main character in this way?”

Section I, Paragraph 1:

1. Reread key scenes in the text highlighting words and phrases that reveal character traits.
(What words and phrases either directly state something about the character or use the character’s speech, thoughts, actions, appearance, and interactions with other characters to explain something about the character?)

Peyton Farquhar was a well to do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a slave owner and like other slave owners a politician, he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with that gallant army which had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in wartime. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in the aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war

4. Ask yourself: "Why did the author choose to reveal information about the main character in this way?"

Your Turn!

What information about Peyton Farquhar in section I causes us to be surprised by the conflict in section I?

1. Reread key scenes in the text highlighting words and phrases that reveal character traits.
2. Ask yourself: “How does the author express this information? Does he use direct or indirect characterization?”
3. Ask yourself: “Why did the author choose to reveal information about the main character in this way?”

Section 1, Paragraph 3:

1. Reread key scenes in the text highlighting words and phrases that reveal character traits.

The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well fitting frock coat. He wore a moustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark gray, and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp. Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for hanging many kinds of persons, and gentlemen are not excluded.

2. Ask yourself: “How does the author express this information? Does he use direct or indirect characterization?”

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