

“The Open Window”

by Hector Hugh Munro (Saki)

Biographical Notes

•Born in Burma. When child, his mother was killed. His father sent him to live in England with brother and sister. Raised by their grandmother and two strict aunts. Not allowed to go out, windows were always closed. He rebelled against this strictness in writing. Vera is the portrayal of Saki's childhood when he wants to rebel against his aunt. He wants to take vengeance to the adults by deceiving them. This story's theme, deception, is related to Saki's feeling when he was a child.

Introduction

"The Open Window" is Saki's most popular short story. It was first collected in *Beasts and Super Beasts* in 1914. Saki's wit is at the height of its power in this story of a spontaneous practical joke played upon a visiting stranger. The practical joke recurs in many of Saki's stories, but "The Open Window" is perhaps his most successful and best known example of the type. Saki dramatizes here the conflict between reality and imagination, demonstrating how difficult it can be to distinguish between them. Not only does the unfortunate Mr. Nuttel fall victim to the story's joke, but so does the reader. The reader is at first inclined to laugh at Nuttel for being so gullible. However, the reader, too, has been taken in by Saki's story and must come to the realization that he or she is also inclined to believe a well-told and interesting tale.

Plot

- Exposition: Frampton Nuttel, met and had a chat with Vera in a countryside house. He went there because he wanted to rest his nerves.
- Rising Action: The conflict begins when she told him about a tragedy of her aunt's husband and younger brothers. The complication takes place when Mrs. Sappleton, Vera's aunt, told him about her family which made Nuttel frightened.
- Climax: when Nuttel saw three men and a dog resembled the ones in the story made him run away because he thought that they were supposedly dead.
- Falling Action: the confusion among the inhabitants of the house and Vera explained why Nuttel ran away.

Characters

- 1. Vera (Main/Major Character): Self-possessed/ confident, intelligent and alert, shrewd, creative and imaginative, a fine actress. Vera is the major character or she is the center of this story because she is the one who sets this story from beginning until the end. And the theme of this story matches with Vera's role in this story.
- 2. Framton Nuttel (Dynamic, Minor Character): A shy, nervous man due to both his medical condition and having to meet many people he doesn't know. He is a dynamic character because in this story his characteristic is changed after he faced an event. Nuttel has neural problem which makes him cannot think logically and makes him easily believing in Vera's story.
- 3. Framton Nuttel's Sister once spent time in the same town to which Framton has come for relaxation. She has given him a number of letters of introduction with which he is to make himself known to a number of people in the town. Mrs. Sappleton is the recipient of such a letter, and it is this that brings Nuttel to her home.
- 4. Mrs. Sappleton: Readers are first led to believe that Mrs. Sappleton is a widow, keeping vigil for her departed husband and brother, who have disappeared during a hunting trip. She lives with her young niece.
- 5. Mr. Sappleton is Mrs. Sappleton's husband. He has been away during most of the story on a hunting expedition with Mrs. Sappleton's younger brother, Ronnie.
- 7. Ronnie is Mrs. Sappleton's younger brother, who, with Mr. Sappleton, has been away on a hunting expedition.

Setting

- 1. Place: In a countryside house

•2. Time: October evening

•3. Weather: Warm

Theme

•1. Appearances and Reality

•Saki dramatizes here the conflict between reality and imagination, demonstrating how difficult it can be to distinguish between them. Not only does the unfortunate Mr. Nuttel fall victim to the story's joke, but so does the reader. The reader is at first inclined to laugh at Nuttel for being so gullible. However, the reader, too, has been taken in by Saki's story and must come to the realization that he or she is also inclined to believe a well-told and interesting tale.

2-Deception: theme is related with Saki's childhood when he was a child his father sent him to live with his relatives in England, he raised by two very strict aunts, that have many strict rules, they prevent him to play outside and the windows in were never open, they prevent him to play outside, he didn't like these rules and rebelled against this strictness by mocking from adults as a kind of revenge from them.

Figure of speech:

• Irony: Mr. Nuttel came to find 'peace'! but his condition became worse.

•The open window is itself ironic because it is supposed to be symbolic of honesty, yet it is used to deceive Mr. Nuttel with the story of Mrs. Sappleton's lost husband and brothers who left through the window and never returned.

. Personification: the phrase "a treacherous piece of bog". A bog is defined as a soft, wet ground. And in this short story, the bog is called as treacherous because it is where Mrs. Sappleton's husband and brothers were missing and can never be found as it has "engulfed" them.

Suspense

•When Mrs. Sappleton's husband and her two brothers came back, along with the dog, readers can feel the suspense when Mrs. Sappleton keeps on looking at them and the horrified Mr. Nuttel. The suspense increases when Mr. Nuttel looked at the terrifying look in Vera's eyes.