Literary Response for Setting  
Ian

Essay

Author Note

[Include any grant/funding information and a complete correspondence address.]

Literary Response for Setting

The story *To Build a Fire* has been written by Jack London. Settings always plays a vital role in producing a desired effect in the story. The story is an excellent example of this. The setting is a notablefactor in the entire story. Isolated by an unfriendlyenvironment in the freezing temperatures, a man becomes victim of the nature. Each time the man and his dog came into contact with the intense environment, it created anticipation for the disaster in the story. The writer used specific approach to create the intensity of story. He introduced the readers with the setting to set the tone of the story, that is, depressed and frightening.

**Setting of the story**

  Setting was targeted by writer in the start of the story. “Day had broken cold and grey, exceedingly cold and grey…” (*To Build a Fire*, 1902). He repeats this phrase again and again, in the story, to show the impact of the surroundings on the lives of the characters. The sun stays behind the clouds and there is no light and warmth to make the day bright. From a literary point of view, this type of setting indicates an omen of destruction. The absence of sun indicates the harshness of the environment.

Desperation of surroundings implant feelings in the man for his continuous struggle with the world of melancholy he is facing. The man is only gifted with knowledge and no sense of imagination. (*The Importance of Setting in Jack London’s To Build A Fire Essay*). The story was set in Yukon during the time when people migrated to Canada in search of good fortune. But they did not know that their lives will become brutal in the harsh wilderness of the weather.

Snow and ice are another obstacle before the main character of the story. The man does not care for taking the precautionary measures and to consider “conjectural field of immortality and man’s place in the universe”. (*To Build a Fire Setting*). The man does not pay attention to the severe weather conditions and this shows the folly of the man when he confronts nature unprepared.

The external body parts of the man froze as a result of cold and then slowly moved towards the core of the body. The writer described the cold wind and the ice crusting over the man’s face. “The man’s red beard and mustache were likewise frosted but more solidly” (*To Build a Fire Analysis*). First, the exposed parts of the man’s body started to feel extremely cold and then he started experiencing the lack of feeling in his hands and feet. He lost the control of his limbs and felt disconnected from them, showed the strange experience the man was going through. When he realized that his death was inevitable, he panicked and tried to outrun death even knowing that his effort would go in vain.

Without the details about the stages of freezing to death, the story would be short and lack the details about the setting. The reader would not be able to clearly understand the story, and the intense struggle of the man; that he did for his survival in the harsh weather conditions. His will for survival escalates the story.

**Conclusion**

The story tells the relationship between man and nature. An unnamed hero moves along the way of mining camp with his dog in Yukon. He violated the caution of local people about the weather and later on, learned that he should have listened to them. By introducing his readers with the setting of the story; he sets a tone of the plot. The setting plays an important role in the progression of the story and shows its effects on the character as well.

# References

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