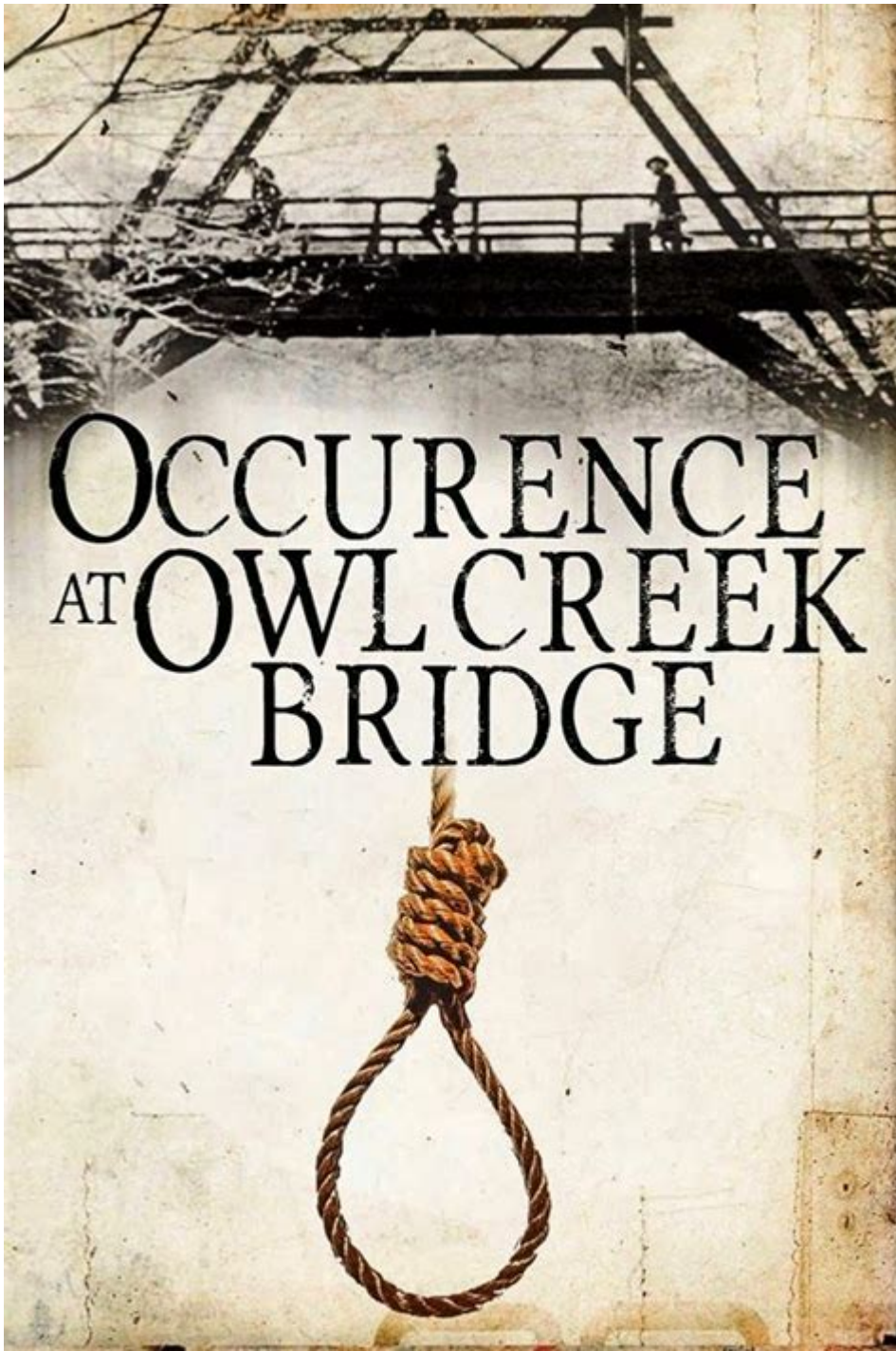


Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge



The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge: A Deep Dive into Ambrose Bierce's Masterpiece

Are you captivated by stories that bend time and challenge reality? Then prepare to be enthralled by Ambrose Bierce's chilling masterpiece, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." This blog post delves

into the intricacies of this iconic short story, exploring its masterful use of suspense, its ambiguous ending, and its enduring relevance in the world of literature. We'll dissect its narrative structure, analyze its key symbols, and unravel the psychological complexities of its protagonist, Peyton Farquhar. Get ready for a journey into the heart of one of American literature's most unforgettable tales.

The Power of Suspense: A Narrative Masterclass

Bierce's genius lies in his masterful manipulation of time and perspective. The story unfolds non-linearly, seamlessly weaving together three distinct parts. The first introduces Peyton Farquhar, a Southern plantation owner, moments before his execution. The second part plunges us into Farquhar's vivid, albeit likely hallucinatory, escape from death. The final section abruptly returns us to the grim reality of his demise, leaving the reader breathless and questioning the very nature of what they just experienced. This masterful manipulation of suspense keeps the reader on the edge of their seat, constantly questioning what is real and what is imagined.

Unraveling the Symbolism: Deeper Meanings in "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"

Bierce's storytelling is rich with symbolism, layered to enhance the story's impact and create multiple levels of interpretation. The Owl Creek Bridge itself is a potent symbol, representing a dividing line between North and South, life and death, reality and illusion. The ticking watch, constantly referenced throughout Farquhar's imagined escape, symbolizes the relentless march of time, highlighting the fleeting nature of life and the cruelty of impending death. Even the seemingly insignificant details, like the sounds and sensations Farquhar perceives during his escape, contribute to the overall symbolic weight of the narrative. Analyzing these subtle details unveils the deeper meaning hidden within the seemingly straightforward plot.

Peyton Farquhar: A Study in Psychological Complexity

Peyton Farquhar is far from a simple character. He's a complex individual caught in the tumultuous backdrop of the Civil War. His initial portrayal suggests a patriotic, albeit misguided, Southern sympathizer. He is manipulated by a Federal scout, highlighting his vulnerability and naiveté. Bierce masterfully portrays Farquhar's desperation, his struggle for survival, and the intense power of his wishful thinking as he navigates the brink of death. The story forces us to examine Farquhar's flaws and consider the moral ambiguity of the conflict that surrounds him.

The Ambiguous Ending: A Legacy of Interpretation

The story's most enduring characteristic is undoubtedly its ambiguous ending. Did Farquhar actually escape? Or was his entire escape a product of his dying mind? The sudden, brutal return to the reality of his hanging leaves the reader questioning the veracity of everything that came before. This ambiguity is not a flaw, but a testament to Bierce's skill. It encourages multiple readings and interpretations, allowing the reader to engage with the story long after they've finished reading. This open-endedness ensures the story remains relevant and thought-provoking for generations to come.

The Enduring Relevance of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"

"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" transcends its historical setting. Its exploration of themes like war, deception, and the fragility of life resonates deeply with modern readers. The story's masterful manipulation of time and perspective continues to influence writers and filmmakers, serving as a testament to its enduring power and artistry. Its exploration of the human psyche and the power of perception remains strikingly relevant in a world increasingly defined by manipulated realities and information overload.

Conclusion:

Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is more than just a short story; it's a literary masterpiece that challenges our perceptions of reality and explores the complexities of the human experience. Its masterful use of suspense, powerful symbolism, and ambiguous ending continue to captivate readers and inspire critical analysis. It's a story worth rereading, analyzing, and discussing, ensuring its place as a cornerstone of American literature.

FAQs:

1. What is the main theme of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"? The main themes revolve around the nature of reality, the power of perception, the psychological effects of war, and the fragility of life.
2. Why is the ending ambiguous? The ambiguous ending is a deliberate choice by Bierce, intended to encourage multiple interpretations and engage the reader in a deeper understanding of the story's complexities.
3. What is the significance of the Owl Creek Bridge? The bridge symbolizes the dividing line between life and death, reality and illusion, and the North and South during the Civil War.
4. How does Bierce use point of view in the story? Bierce masterfully shifts the point of view, moving from a third-person omniscient narrator to a close third-person perspective within Farquhar's mind during his imagined escape, creating a sense of heightened suspense and blurring the lines between reality and fantasy.

5. How does the story relate to the context of the American Civil War? The story utilizes the backdrop of the Civil War to explore themes of conflict, patriotism, deception, and the devastating impact of war on individuals and their perceptions of reality. Farquhar's actions and fate are inextricably linked to the political and social upheaval of the time.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge and Other Stories* Ambrose Bierce, 2008-05-19 Twenty-three stories by Ambrose Bierce, consisting of nine Civil War stories, ten horror stories, and four tall tales.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* Ambrose Bierce, A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the ties supporting the rails of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners—two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as support, that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest—a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the center of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot planking that traversed it. Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was an outpost farther along. The other bank of the stream was open ground—a gentle slope topped with a stockade of vertical tree trunks, loopholed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway up the slope between the bridge and fort were the spectators—a single company of infantry in line, at parade rest, the butts of their rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the center of the bridge, not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, observing the work of his subordinates, but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette silence and fixity are forms of deference.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* Ambrose Bierce, 2018-08-20 Classic Books Library presents this brand new edition of the short story, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (1890) by Ambrose Bierce. In this text Bierce creatively uses both structure and content to explore the concept of time, from present to past, and reflecting its transitional and illusive qualities. The story is one of Bierce’s most popular and acclaimed works, alongside “The Devil’s Dictionary” (1911). Bierce (1842-c. 1914) was an American writer, journalist and Civil War veteran associated with the realism literary movement. His writing is noted for its cynical, brooding tones and structural precision.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* Ambrose Bierce, 2015-04-20 An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge is a short story with a twist by American author, Ambrose Bierce. Set during the American Civil War, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge is the story of Peyton Farquhar, a Confederate sympathizer condemned to death by hanging from Owl Creek Bridge. This story has been hailed as an early pioneer in stream of consciousness storytelling. This Xist Classics edition has been professionally formatted for e-readers with a linked table of contents. This eBook also contains a bonus book club leadership guide and discussion questions. We hope

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occurrence at owl creek bridge: An occurrence at owl creek bridge Ambrose Bierce, 1948

occurrence at owl creek bridge: *An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge* Ambrose Bierce, 2021-01-01 'An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge' is a short story by American author Ambrose Bierce. The story is set in the time of the Civil War. It is famous for its irregular time sequence and twisted end. Bierce's abandonment of strict linear narration in favor of the internal mind of the protagonist is considered an early example of experimentation with stream of consciousness. It is one of Bierce's most anthologized stories.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge (Annotated)

Ambrose Bierce, 2020-12-24 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge or A Dead Man's Dream' is a short story, which is set during the Civil War, is famous for its irregular time sequence and twist ending. Bierce's abandonment of strict linear...

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occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge: Large Print Ambrose Bierce, 2019-09-25 Peyton Farquhar, a confederate sympathizer, stands to be hanged for his role in a plot to demolish Owl Creek Bridge. As he awaits death, Farquhar considers the possibility of escape; the chances of slipping his bonds, swimming to safety, and returning to his family. 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' recounts the final moments before Farquhar is hanged, exploring the feelings of a man facing his death, and the close relationship between life and death.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Ambrose Bierce, 2017-03-26 How is this book unique? Font adjustments & biography included Unabridged (100% Original content) Illustrated About 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' by Ambrose Bierce 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge or A Dead Man's Dream' is a short story by American author Ambrose Bierce. Originally published by The San Francisco Examiner in 1890, it was first collected in Bierce's 1891 book *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*. The story, which is set during the Civil War, is famous for its irregular time sequence and twist ending. Bierce's abandonment of strict linear narration in favor of the internal mind of the protagonist is considered an early example of experimentation with stream of consciousness. It is Bierce's most anthologized story.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge Ambrose Bierce, 2013-09-03 Peyton Farquhar, a confederate sympathizer, stands to be hanged for his role in a plot to demolish Owl Creek Bridge. As he awaits death, Farquhar considers the possibility of escape—the chances of slipping his bonds, swimming to safety, and returning to his family. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" recounts the final moments before Farquhar is hanged, exploring the feelings of a man facing his death, and the close relationship between life and death. Known for both its irregular time sequence and its surprising ending, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is the most anthologized of Ambrose Bierce's stories. HarperPerennial Classics brings great works of literature to life in digital format, upholding the highest standards in ebook production and celebrating reading in all its forms. Look for more titles in the HarperPerennial Classics collection to build your digital library.

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occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce

Ambrose Bierce, 2017-09 Title: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Author: Ambrose Bierce Language: English

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occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge: And Other Stories , 2006

occurrence at owl creek bridge: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* Ambrose Bierce, 1979

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Ambrose Bierce, 2024-06-13 »An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge« is a short story by Ambrose Bierce, originally published in 1889. It is one of his most famous works and one of the most lauded depictions of the Civil War. AMBROSE BIERCE [1842-1914] was an American author, journalist, and war veteran. He was one of the most influential journalists in the United States in the late 19th century and alongside his success as a horror writer he was hailed as a pioneer of realism. Among his most famous works are *The Devil's Dictionary* and the short story »An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge.«

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Ambrose Bierce, 2021-04-03 A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift watertwenty feet below. The man's hands were behindhis back, the wrists bound with a cord. A ropeclosely encircled his neck. It was attached to astout cross-timber above his head and the slackfell to the level of his knees. Some loose boardslaid upon the ties supporting the rails of therailway supplied a footing for him and hisexecutioners-two private soldiers of the Federalarmy, directed by a sergeant who in civil life mayhave been a deputy sheriff. At a short removeupon the same temporary platform was an officerin the uniform of his rank, armed. He was acaptain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stoodwith his rifle in the position known as support,that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrownstraight across the chest-a formal and unnaturalposition, enforcing an erect carriage of the body

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Ambrose Bierce, 2016-08-19 Peyton Farquhar, a plantation owner in his mid-thirties, is being prepared for execution by hanging from an Alabama railroad bridge during the American Civil War. Six military men and a company of infantrymen are present, guarding the bridge and carrying out the sentence. Farquhar thinks of his wife and children and is then distracted by a noise that, to him, sounds like an unbearably loud clanging; it is actually the ticking of his watch. He considers the possibility of jumping off the bridge and swimming to safety if he can free his tied hands, but the soldiers drop him from the bridge before he can act on the idea.In a flashback, Farquhar and his wife are relaxing at home one evening when a soldier rides up to the gate. Farquhar, a supporter of the Confederacy, learns from him that Union troops have seized the Owl Creek railroad bridge and repaired it. The soldier suggests that Farquhar might be able to burn the bridge down if he can slip past its guards. He then leaves, but doubles back after nightfall to return north the way he came. The soldier is actually a disguised Union scout who has lured Farquhar into a trap, as any civilian caught interfering with the railroads will be hanged.The story returns to the present, and the rope around Farquhar's neck breaks when he falls from the bridge into the creek. He frees his hands, pulls the noose away, and surfaces to begin his escape. His senses now greatly sharpened, he dives and swims downstream to avoid rifle and cannon fire. Once he is out of range, he leaves the creek to begin the journey to his home, 30 miles away. Farquhar walks all day long through a seemingly endless forest, and that night he begins to hallucinate, seeing strange constellations and hearing whispered voices in an unknown language. He travels on, urged by the thought of his wife and children despite the pains caused by his ordeal. The next morning, after having apparently fallen asleep while walking, he finds himself at the gate to his plantation. He rushes to embrace his wife, but before he can do so, he feels a heavy blow upon the back of his neck; there is a loud noise and a flash of white, and everything goes black.It is revealed that Farquhar never escaped at all; he imagined the entire third part of the story during the time between falling through the bridge and the noose breaking his neck.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Ambroso Bierce, 2017-07-16 An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambroso Bierce

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occurrence at owl creek bridge: An occurrence at Owl Creek bridge , 1979

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Annotated Fiction Classics Ambrose Bierce, 2020-08-30 An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge is divided into three sections. In section I, Peyton Farquhar is standing on a railroad bridge, twenty feet above the water. His wrists are bound behind his back, and around his neck is a noose that is tied to a beam overhead. He is positioned on loose planks that have been laid over the crossties of the train tracks to create a makeshift platform. Two soldiers from the Northern army, a sergeant, and a captain immediately surround him, awaiting the execution. Beyond them, armed sentinels stand at attention. The bridge is bordered on one side by forest and, across the stream, open ground that gives way to a small hillock on which a small fort has been erected. A motionless company of infantrymen, led by their lieutenant, stands assembled before the fort. As the two soldiers finalize the preparations, they step back and remove the individual planks on which they had been standing. The sergeant salutes the captain then positions himself on the opposite end of the board supporting Farquhar, as the captain, like the soldiers, steps off and away from the crossties. Awaiting the captain's signal, the sergeant is about to likewise step away, sending Farquhar to dangle from the bridge's edge. Farquhar stares into the swirling water below. He watches a piece of driftwood being carried downstream and notes how sluggish the stream seems to be. He shuts his eyes to push away the distractions of his present situation and focus more intently on thoughts of his wife and children. He suddenly hears a sharp, metallic ringing, which sounds both distant and close by. The sound turns out to be the ticking of his watch. Opening his eyes and peering again into the water, Farquhar imagines freeing his hands, removing the noose, and plunging into the stream, swimming to freedom and his home, safely located outside enemy lines. These thoughts have barely registered in Farquhar's mind when the captain nods to the sergeant and the sergeant steps away from the board. In section II, we learn that Farquhar was a successful planter, ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Unable to join the Confederate army, he yearned to help the South's war effort in some significant way. One evening in the past, Farquhar and his wife were sitting on the edge of their property when a gray-clad soldier rode up, seeking a drink of water. The soldier appeared to be from the Confederate army. While his wife was fetching the water, Farquhar asked for news of the front and was informed that Northern forces had repaired the railroads in anticipation of launching another advance, having already reached the Owl Creek bridge. Any civilian caught interfering with the North's efforts in the area, the soldier went on to reveal, would be hanged. Farquhar asked how a civilian could attempt some form of sabotage. The soldier told him that one could easily set fire to the driftwood that had piled up near the bridge after the past winter's flood. The man, who was actually a Northern scout in disguise, finished his drink and rode off, only to pass by an hour later heading in the opposite direction. Section III brings us back to the present, at the hanging. Farquhar loses consciousness as he plummets down from the side of the bridge. He is awakened by currents of pain running through his body. A loud splash wakes him up even more abruptly, and he realizes that the noose has broken--sending him falling into the stream below. Farquhar sees a light flicker and fade before it strengthens and brightens as he rises, with some trepidation, to the surface. He is afraid he will be shot by Northern soldiers as soon as he is spotted in the water. Freeing his bound hands, then lifting the noose from his neck, he fights extreme pain to break through the surface and take a large gasp of air, which he exhales with a shriek.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Ambrose Bierce, 2017-10-03 Classic Short Stories - An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce - An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge is one of the most famous and frequently anthologized stories in American literature; and was written by American Civil War soldier, wit, and writer Ambrose Bierce. Originally published by The San Francisco Examiner on July 13, 1890, it was first collected in Bierce's 1891 book Tales of Soldiers and Civilians. The story, which is set during the Civil War, is

famous for its irregular time sequence and twist ending. Bierce's abandonment of strict linear narration in favor of the internal mind of the protagonist is considered an early example of experimentation with stream of consciousness. Author Kurt Vonnegut wrote: ... I consider anybody a twerp who hasn't read the greatest American short story, which is 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,' by Ambrose Bierce. It isn't remotely political. It is a flawless example of American genius, like 'Sophisticated Lady' by Duke Ellington or the Franklin stove.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek (Annotated) Ambrose Bierce, 2021-03-11 Differentiated book- It has a historical context with research of the time-The purpose of realizing this historical context is to approach the understanding of a historical epoch from the elements provided by the text. Hence the importance of placing the document in context. It is necessary to unravel what its author or authors have said, how it has been said, when, why and where, always relating it to its historical moment. Incident at the Owl Creek Bridge (An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge) - sometimes translated into Spanish as: An incident at the Owl Bridge - is a horror account of the American writer Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914), originally published in the July 13, 1890 edition of the San Francisco Examiner, and then reissued in the anthology of 1891: Tales of Soldiers and Civilians (Tales of Soldiers and Civilians). An incident at the Owl Creek Bridge, probably one of Ambrose Bierce's most notable stories, puts us in the American Civil War, where a group of soldiers prepare to execute a prisoner. They hang him at the Owl Bridge (Owl Creek), but the rope breaks and the prisoner falls into the waters of the river,

occurrence at owl creek bridge: Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" Ambrose Bierce, 2003

occurrence at owl creek bridge: In the Midst of Life: Tales of Soldiers and Civilians Ambrose Bierce, Bernhard Tauchnitz, 2019-03-15 This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work was reproduced from the original artifact, and remains as true to the original work as possible. Therefore, you will see the original copyright references, library stamps (as most of these works have been housed in our most important libraries around the world), and other notations in the work. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. As a reproduction of a historical artifact, this work may contain missing or blurred pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An analysis of Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" Lea Lorena Jerns, 2014-08-21 Scientific Essay from the year 2011 in the subject Didactics for the subject English - Literature, Works, grade: 1,7, University of Potsdam (Institut für Anglistik & Amerikanistik), course: Literary Studies, language: English, abstract: The following work presents an analysis of Ambrose Bierce's short story An Occurrence at Owl Bridge. Therefore it examines the structure, especially the narrator's perspective, as well as in respect of content the setting of the story, time markers, themes and the story's effect on the reader.

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occurrence at owl creek bridge: The Beautiful Suit H. G. Wells, 2022-06-02 Freedom. A quality valued by many, and which is never restricted without consequence. Can a mother's guidance ever be too much? One beautiful suit could be all it takes to break a family apart. Protection becomes a shell, a place to hide from reality, but also a prison. There is always a breaking point, and this breaking point takes the form of one piece of tissue paper. Is freedom the danger, or was the danger created by mother's constraint? 'The Beautiful Suit' is an exploration of society's norms, and whether people's behaviour determine them, or the norms determine people's behaviour. Though it was first published in 1909, its themes and questions still ring true in today's society. H. G. Wells (1866-1946) was a writer most well-known for science fiction titles such as 'War of the Worlds' and 'The Time Machine.' In many ways he is often considered to be a pioneer in the science fiction genre, though he also wrote short fiction, satire, social commentaries, biography and autobiography. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature on four occasions. In addition to writing, he was a teacher, historian and artist.

occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Ambrose Bierce, 2016-10-26 An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge or A Dead Man's Dream is a short story, which is set during the Civil War, is famous for its irregular time sequence and twist ending. Bierce's abandonment of strict linear narration in favor of the internal mind of the protagonist is considered an early example of experimentation with stream of consciousness. It is Bierce's most anthologized story.

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occurrence at owl creek bridge: An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Ambrose Bierce, 2012

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge - Wikipedia

Plot Peyton Farquhar, a civilian who is also a wealthy planter and slave owner, is being prepared for execution by hanging from an Alabama railroad bridge during the American Civil War. Six ...

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge Full Text - I - Owl Eyes

A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as "support," that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight ...

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

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An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge - Encyclopedia Britannica

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An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge - Encyclopedia Britannica

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