

“Indian Camp” and “The End of Something”

Introduction

Ernest Hemingway’s first published book, *In Our Time*, is a collection of short stories and brief vignettes. Considered very experimental when it was published in 1925, *In Our Time* tells a number of stories that focus on a character named Nick Adams; it also tells a number of apparently unrelated stories that focus on other characters. Today’s two stories, “Indian Camp” and “The End of Something,” are the first and the third of what eventually became known as the “Nick Adams stories,” which essentially tell their own form of *Bildungsroman*, or story of the moral and psychological growth of the main character.

As you read these stories, consider the importance of the usual techniques we have been studying, such as **diction**, **point-of-view**, **imagery**, **choice of details**, and **figurative language**. However, you should also consider Hemingway’s unique approach to **dialogue** and the **ambiguity** Hemingway creates through his “tip of the iceberg” method of by leaving out key details and explanations.

In each story, how does Hemingway manage to create *pathos*; in other words, with whom does he make us sympathize, and why?

Instructions

For each topic below, discuss your ideas in at least a fully-developed paragraph, and please use at least a couple direct quotations from the story to illustrate your ideas.

1. “Indian Camp” can be understood as an initiation story. Our *Literature* textbook defines an **initiation story** (also called a **coming-of-age story**) as “a narrative in which the main character, usually a child or adolescent, undergoes an important experience or rite of passage—often a difficult or disillusioning one—that prepares him or her for adulthood.”

How can “Indian Camp” be understood as an *initiation* story? Describe the nature of Nick’s “initiation” or rite of passage, and explain what impact this experience seems to have on him. Moreover, which important textual details and authorial techniques in the story contribute to the story’s form (or artistic patterning) and to its meaning?

2. “The End of Something” can be viewed as a “break-up” story. Hemingway’s style and technique, however, make the story seem unconventional, experimental, and even puzzling to many readers. **In your opinion, what is Hemingway’s attitude toward this break-up, and how can we tell? Discuss how Hemingway wants us to perceive Nick and Marjorie, as well as which character seems more deserving of our sympathies. Does Hemingway want us to take sides with one person or the other? Which important textual details and authorial techniques in the story contribute to Hemingway’s portrayal of this ill-fated relationship and contribute to the story’s form (or artistic patterning) and to its meaning?**