



The Storyteller

by Saki (H. H. Munro)

Hector Hugh Munro

(18 December 1870 – 14 November 1916)



- pen name – Saki
- British writer
- a master of the short story
- started his writing career as a journalist for newspapers such as the Westminster Gazette, the Daily Express, the Morning Post, and magazines such as the Bystander and Outlook
- first book “The Rise of the Russian Empire”, a historical study

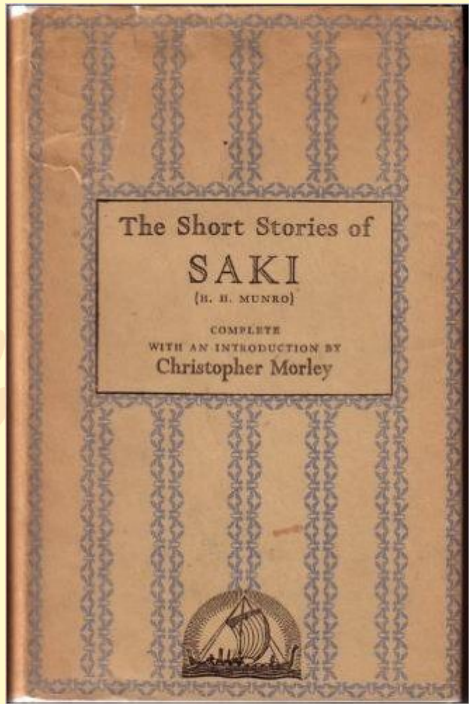
Hector Hugh Munro

Literary Style



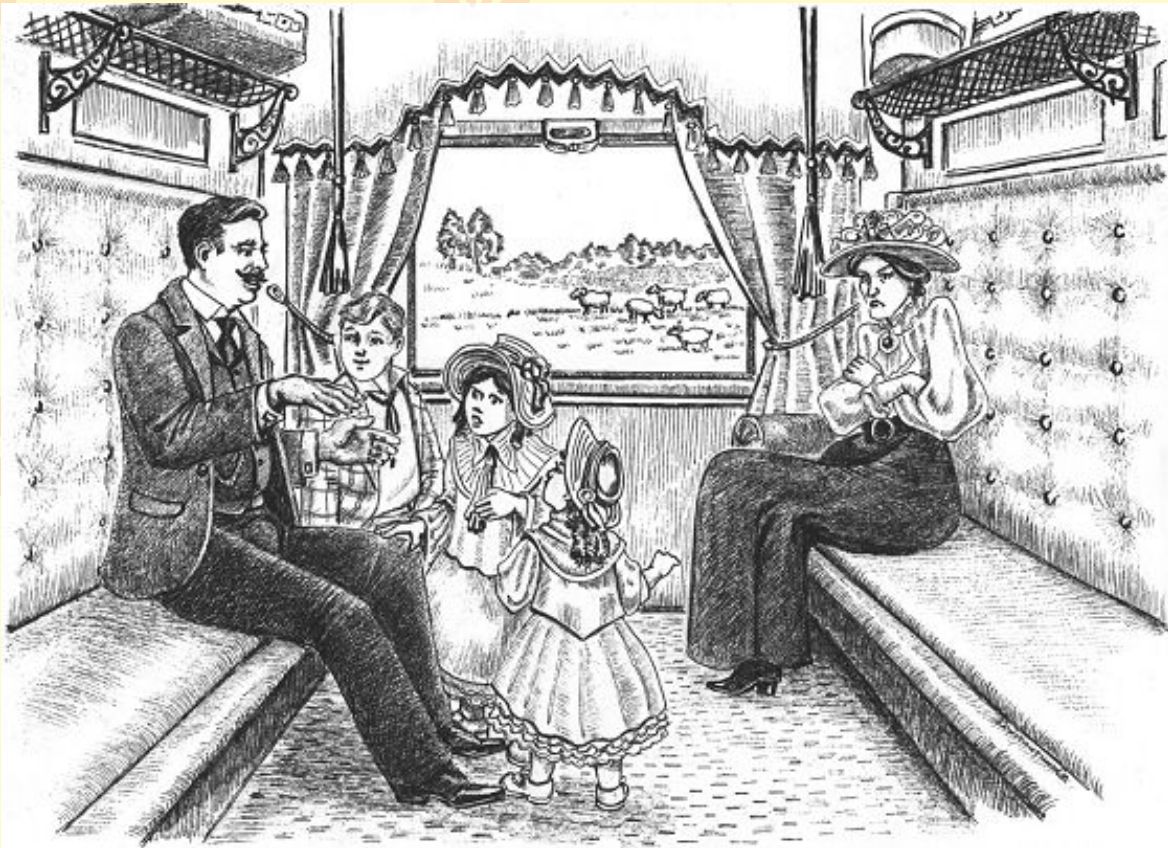
- many of his stories feature Reginald and Clovis, young men-about-town who take mischievous delight in the discomfort or downfall of their conventional, pretentious elders
- satirical commentary on the conventions and hypocrisies of Edwardian England
- genre – short stories
- blend of satire, irony, startling endings, clever dialogue, sparkling wit, psychological insight, unconventional settings, mystery, and sometimes even horror
- the short stories usually contain character who play tricks on each other and usually end with a surprising twist

Synopsis



- from “The Short Stories of Saki”, first published in 1930 by Viking Press
- the story is set on a hot, sultry railway carriage occupied by a bachelor, three active children and their strict aunt who does not manage to discipline them
- the aunt begins telling the children a story, which is very boring and predictable, and only increases the restlessness

Synopsis



- the bachelor is annoyed by these cheerful children and entertains them with “an improper” story which delights them but make their aunt angry
- the bachelor is amused by the thought that in the future the children will embarrass their guardian by begging to be told "an improper story"

Stylistic Devices

Metaphor

In the opening paragraph, H. H. Munro uses a metaphor to describe the interactions between the aunt and the children.

"Reminding one of the attentions of a housefly that refused to be discouraged"

Stylistic Devices

Oxymoron

The storyteller attracts the attention of the children when he uses two words of opposite meanings in his description of Bertha. This combination of two contradictory words is called an oxymoron.

“pleasing pain”

“wise fool”

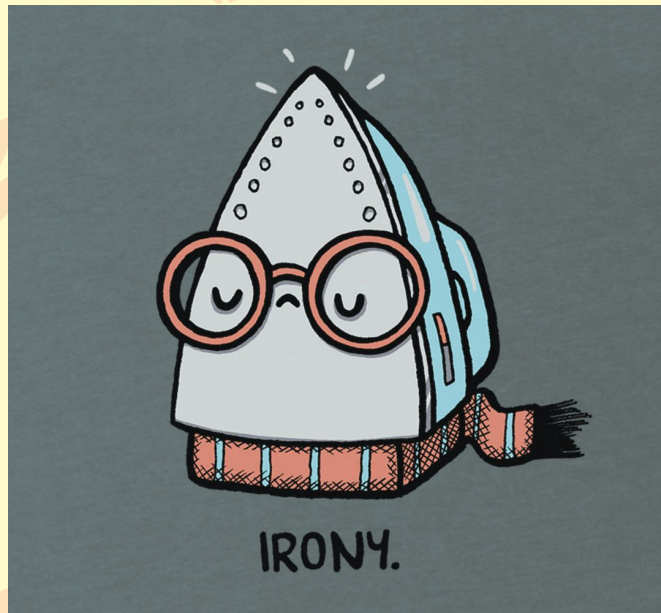
“cruel kindness”

Stylistic Devices

Irony and Satire

“The Storyteller” is an excellent example of H. H. Munro’s well-known irony and satiric literary style.

“The Storyteller” involves a story inside another story. In order to entertain the children, the bachelor tells the children a story. It is an example of a satire, which uses irony, sarcasm and wit to illustrate such human failing or vice as cruelty, greed, jealousy and stubbornness.



Main idea



Not only good things
happen to good people