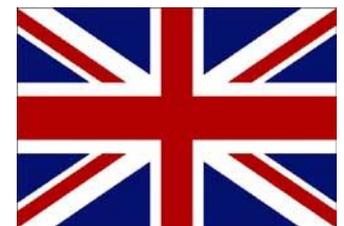




I'm the King of the Castle



Susan Hill







- After that they are found by a hunter, and Kingshaw is severely punished by his mother. Joseph Hooper decides to take the family to Leydell Castle. After trying to climb up the tower ruins, Hooper falls and injures himself.
- While Hooper is at the hospital, Kingshaw meets Anthony Fielding.
- When Hooper comes back home, he blames his accident on Kingshaw's. He also learns that Helena and Joseph are going to get married.
- Anthony Fielding comes to Warings and Hooper tries to sympathise with him so that Kingshaw is left alone. To express his anger, Kingshaw burns Hooper's battle plans.
- The next morning, Kingshaw finds a paper in his room saying "Something will happen to you, Kingshaw". Scared, he decides to go into Hang Wood where he commits suicide.



Setting

- Warings :

“ *some distance from any other house* ” : sense of isolation, not belonging to society.

“ *Warings was ugly. It was entirely graceless, rather tall and badly angled built of dark red bricks* ” Very imposing, blood colour, frightening image

“ *yew trees* ” Found in cemeteries, symbol of death.

“ *high ceiling rooms, with heavy, sashed windows, the oak wall-panelling and the oak doors, and the oak staircase, the massive furniture* ” Unwelcoming, dark, heaviness of the house.

- Red Room :

“ *the stiff, animal bodies and the dead fish, and the rows of outstretched moths*”, “ *the silent room* ” Place where death is present, gloomy, place of fear. Moreover, while he is locked in, the only thing Kingshaw could see from outside were the yew tree, the rhododendrons - symbols of death.



- Hang Wood :

“ *dark* ”, the branches are “ *clearly outlined* ”.
threatening place.

gloomy ambiance with the dead rabbit, and then Kingshaw becomes obsessed with the river : “ *the water of the stream and the pond looked completely transparent* ”, “ *I never want to leave it, this is the best feeling in the world* ”. The river,

Hang Wood is the place where Kingshaw feels the safest, which gives him a sensation of strength.



- Leydell Castle :

“ He felt high above them, very tall and strong, too, nobody could touch him ”. Leydell Castle is a place where Kingshaw feels superior to everyone : *“ Fuck to you, I’m not going to fall ”*, *“ Up here, I’m the king ”*.

But more particularly superior to Hooper : *“ He thought suddenly, I could kill him ”* .

Around him : *“ the flat grass and the lake ”*. Idea of liberty.



Village of Derne

- 1 & 1/2 hours to London
- 15 minutes to Bristol





Main Themes

- Isolation:
p.194 “Kingshaw lay down on his bed and pushed his face into the cold silk quilt”
p.187 “He wanted to cry with frustration”
- Parent/child relationships:
p.185 “for she had decided to ignore it”
p.186 “he did not care very much about her”



Characters

Edmund Hooper:

"He could not have imagined the charm it afforded him, having Kingshaw here, thinking of things to do to him."

Behaviour: violent / lonely / isolated in his own mind/ Strategic

Relationship with others:

*Father: distant and cold relationship / lack of affection between them

*Kingshaw: sees him as an intruder: "I didn't want you to come here"

Origin of troubles: motherless=insecurity created by her absence.

Key characteristic: cruelty

-Stuffed crow in Kingshaw's bedroom.

-Pretending generosity in front of the adults with the cereal packet submarine.

-Locking Kingshaw into the Red Room once he realizes Kingshaw is afraid of the moths.

-His lies and accusations

But weaknesses: sometimes he is in lower position (fear in



Joseph Hooper:

"For he knew himself to be an ineffectual man, without any strength or imposing qualities."

Behaviour: sense of failure/ his life is stained by constant disappointment / personality destroyed by his father criticism = lack confidence/ mostly unhappy (unhappy marriage etc...)

Relationship with others:

*Edmund: cold/distant/nervous

*dead wife: no regret/ disappointed (also sexually speaking)/unhappy marriage/cold

*Helena: convenient relationship / no real attraction but they respond to each other's needs = in fact they are just interested in what they can take from each other/ they are similar

*Kingshaw: (p.165) tries to comfort him after his nightmare= attitude of a father/ different attitude towards Edmund as he had inherited his mother's coldness. However not very close, Mr Hooper is seen like a crow by Kingshaw.



- **Charles Kingshaw:** _____
"He did not give in to people, he only went, from the beginning, with the assurance that he would be beaten"
- Behaviour: Weak character/ locked in his imagination: almost anything frightens him, his imagination makes everything worse (ex: the crow)
Sensitive: irrational fears (dark, insects,...)/ little confidence in himself= can't fight with Hooper.
Lack of affection from his mother / lack of understanding, provoke despair + locked in his own world / he has no model attitude
Common point with Hooper: no friends + they lost one parent + isolation
Imagery of Kingshaw: water = stream is seen as a sanctuary.
- When away from people and places that oppress him, Kingshaw is relaxed and able to enjoy life. ex: stream / Leydell castle etc...but his lack of a role model does not help him to build his personality = weakness



Helena Kingshaw:

“Things must not go wrong, this is my chance and I shall not waste it. I mean us all to be very happy.”

Behaviour: superficial person = jewellery + make up. lacks a man company + tries to seduce J.Hooper/ she seeks her OWN security throughout the book.

Relationship with others:

*Charles: distant relationship / Kingshaw is ashamed of her. She pretends to care about him but she only cares about herself : seeks her own happiness + ignores the fight between the boys+ she talks AT Charles in a babyish language, not WITH him

*Mr Hooper: she tries to seduce him/shortening her skirts etc...

*Hooper: tries to act as if they were a family. She protects Hooper until the end even when her own child has committed suicide as if forming a "family" was the most important thing to her.



Characters

- Edmund Hooper:
 - Manipulative - p.10 “He shrank from the expression in the boy’s eyes”
 - Control - p.11 “The boy’s room, high up (...) overlooked the copse. He had chosen it.”
 - p.24 “white paper was pinned on the wall, with curious lines, and little coloured dots, in blocks, together”
 - p.8 “nobody must come in here” + p.10 “it was his”
 - Cruel - p.18 “I didn’t want you to come here”



- Charles Kingshaw:
Isolated - p.189 “wanting only to get out, to get away from them all”
Overreacting - p.208 “everybody will fall and there is nothing I can do”
p.160-161 The film he sees on the television
- Helena Kingshaw:
Superficial - p.59 “the bracelet slipped up and down her arm”
p.134 “There was a green powder in the wrinkles along her eyelids. He hated it.”



STYLE

NARRATIVE VOICE

- Different view points of characters (find examples in the story) although we do not really get inside Hooper's mind which keeps his motives a mystery
- 3rd person narrator, but sometimes she slips into the 1st person narrative voice (we hear their thoughts and words)



SYMBOLS

Symbols are important : they represent key themes of the novel or abstract ideas

-EXAMPLES:

- Battle plans > reflects Hooper's strategy, he sees life as a battle.
- Jewellery + make-up > Mrs Kingshaw, superficiality
- Crow > terror for Kingshaw
- Fielding > life, nature
- Hang wood > reflects another world
- Punch and Judy > violence, lack of tenderness or love
- Warings > death, decline, war
- Weather > human emotions



WRITING

Susan Hill uses a certain number of techniques in the novel:

- Pathetic fallacy
- Flashbacks
- Symbolism
- Use of dialogues
- Adopting a child's tone: "scaredy-baby"
- Accurate + deep descriptions



Language

- **Focalisation:**

Story written in the third person but we often see things through the character's eyes

- **Short sentences not sophisticated:**

“Stuff it!” - “Get lost!” - “Scaredy baby!” - “Cry baby!”

- **Use of contractions:**

“I’m O.K.” - “I’m the King of the Castle”

- **Repetition:**

“I hate him, I hate him, I hate him.”

- **Simple vocabulary / Children’s slang:**

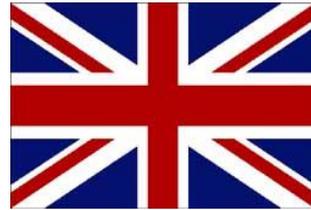
“rotten” - “bloody” - “nosey-face” - “bloody shed”

- **Pathetic Fallacy:**

The attribution of human emotions or characteristics to inanimate objects or nature: “angry clouds” - “a cruel wind”



Thanks for listening



You were a pleasure to teach!