

Lesson Name : 29

Lesson Title : Just Lather, That's All, Section 2

Course Name : English 2 Part 3 [Honors]

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Essential Instruction

Read the second section of Hernando Tellez's "[Just Lather, That's All](#)" from "The beard had now almost entirely disappeared..." to the end.

It is a good idea to use your digital notebook to keep notes on new vocabulary and definitions that you may need to reference later.



Reading and Literary Skills

Often when reading a story, especially a suspenseful one, it is tempting to try to figure out the ending. If a story does have a surprising ending, it is only surprising because we had a preconceived notion, or an idea already in our minds, about what that ending would be.

As you read the second part of "Just Lather, That's All," were you thinking about the ending of the story? Did your predictions turn out to be true or false? Did the ending surprise you? It probably surprised you to learn that Captain Torres knew all along that the barber was a member of the revolutionary party because he was so calm and peaceful while the barber held a razor against his throat.

Types of Irony

There are three primary types of **irony** used in literature: **verbal**, **dramatic**, and **situational**.

Verbal irony is the contrast between what is said and what is meant. An example of this is sarcasm. If a girl has been badly hurt by a boyfriend who cheated on her she might say, "He was a real winner." She actually means the opposite.

Dramatic irony is the contrast between what the character thinks to be true and what the reader knows to be true. In the first section of "Just Lather, That's All," the reader learns that the barber is a member of the revolutionary party, an enemy to Captain Torres. It seems that the reader knows more than Captain Torres does, at least in the beginning of the story. **Situational irony** occurs when the end result is the opposite of what was intended. In the story "The Necklace" by French writer Guy de Maupassant, Madame Loisel and her husband work for ten years to replace a necklace that turns out to be fake and only worth fifty francs at most. Often surprise endings are an example of **situational irony**.

Originally, the reader of "Just Lather, That's All" believes that he knows more than Captain Torres. We believed that there was an element of **dramatic irony** in this story because we did not think that Torres knew that the barber was a member of the revolutionary party. Turns out, the trick was on us and there is no longer any

dramatic irony in this story. However, the surprise ending is of course, evidence of **situational irony** in this story. Captain Torres turns out to know more about the nature of the barber than the barber knows about himself. Captain Torres is confident that the barber is not a killer and will not kill him even though he has the chance. The barber, however, is not so sure of his nature and continues to contemplate whether or not he will kill the captain.

Also, when the barber thinks to himself about Captain Torres he thinks, "And this was indeed a special customer. How many of ours had he sent to their death?" This is an example of **verbal irony** because he does not really admire this client as "special." He is really disgusted by this client and wishes he did not have to shave him.

Author Argument

Consider the **argument** Tellez is making in the second section of "Just Lather, That's All." In other words, think about the message he wants to communicate to the reader about this subject. As you read "Just Lather, That's All," continue to consider the author's **argument** about war and the difference between a killer and a non-killer. The ending of this story should provide a message to the reader. First, this story does not glorify war by clearly pointing out all of the cruelty and malice for which Captain Torres is responsible. Second, we know through the thoughts of the barber, that his conscience and ability to worry are what set him apart from a killer. Captain Torres does not seem to have a conscience about the men he's killed, and does not hesitate to carry out his executions. Despite his hatred of Torres, the barber still considers how he could kill the captain without causing him pain. These thoughts prove he is not a killer.

Diction

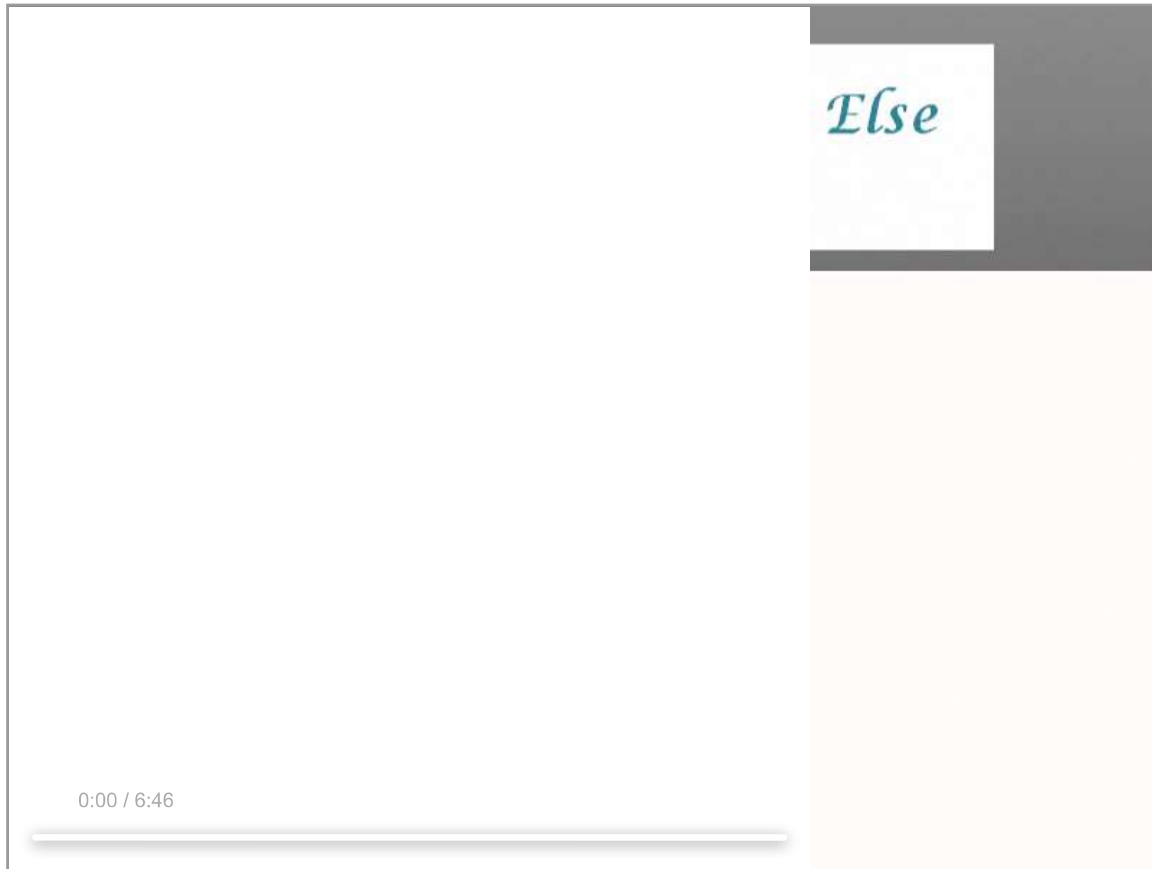
Diction refers to the choice of words that an author uses. Often, an author's word choice tells us more about his message. As you read "Just Lather, That's All," consider the exact choices Tellez uses in his piece. For example, consider this line from the story, "You are an executioner; I am only a barber." Notice the simplicity with which he divides the captain from the barber—the killer from the non-killer.

Context Clues

Context clues are "helper" words that give hints to the meaning of an unfamiliar word. For example in "Just Lather, That's All," consider the following sentence: "The *avenger* of our people." Even if you aren't sure of the meaning of the word *avenger*, you can use the clues from the previous sentences in the story—the terrible murders of the many revolutionists—to infer that an *avenger* is "someone who makes up for wrongdoing or who seeks revenge."

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have similar meanings. Always consider the **synonyms** of your vocabulary words in order to help you remember them. It is important to understand **synonyms** in order to retain meaning and then later, when writing, be able to recall these synonyms in order to use the most effective and descriptive word. For example, *red* and *scarlet*, are synonyms. However, *scarlet* is a more specific and descriptive word than *red*.



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Vocabulary

Understanding the words used in a story can aid your understanding of the story itself. Here are some words from the second section of Hernando Tellez's "Just Lather, That's All":

1. **yield** – verb – give way to pressure
2. **ventured** – verb – took part in an undertaking involving uncertainty as to the outcome
3. **avenger** – noun – someone who makes up for wrongdoing or who seeks revenge
4. **mutilated** – verb – injured, disfigured, or made imperfect by removing or irreparably damaging parts
5. **executioner** – noun – an official who inflicts capital punishment in pursuance of a legal warrant