

THE OPEN WINDOW

-SAKI





SUMMARY

Mr. Framton Nuttel has just moved to a new town. While visiting one of his sister's acquaintances, Mrs. Sappleton, he spends some time with the woman's niece, Vera. Vera recounts a story about how her aunt lost her husband and two brothers in a tragic hunting accident. She warns Framton that her aunt never accepted their deaths and believes that some day the hunting party will return. In anticipation, Mrs. Sappleton leaves the window in the front room open so that they may re-enter the house. When Mrs. Sappleton enters the room and discusses the hunting party, Framton is deeply disturbed by her delusion. However, his concern turns to pure horror when he sees three male figures dressed in hunting gear approaching the house. Believing he has seen ghosts, Framton bolts from the house. Spinning another tale, Vera explains to the newly arrived hunting party and her aunt that Framton fled when he saw the hunting dog because of his severe fear of dogs.



Themes

Desire to Escape

Both Framton and Vera possess a strong desire to escape. Vera seeks escape from the adult world she inhabits through her imagination and storytelling. Framton is brought to the rural town out of a desire to escape and recover from his nerve disorder. While Vera's escape proves fruitful and entertaining, Framton's is not so successful: it provokes more chaos than calm.

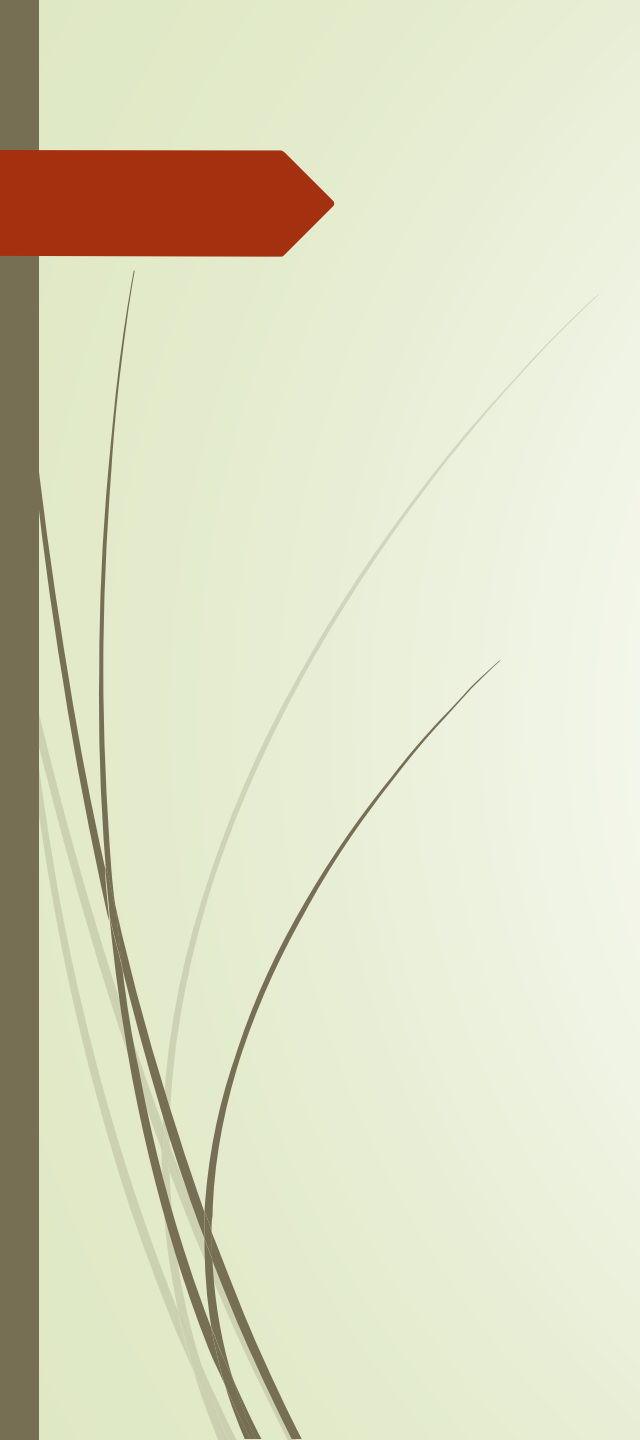
Power of Storytelling

Saki commonly uses the 'story within a story' technique in his works. He takes this a step further in "The Open Window" by using Vera as storyteller to convey a theme about storytelling as an art form. Saki and Vera both rely on the short story to fool their audience. As one who relied mainly on the short story to capture his ideas, Saki includes storytelling in this work to communicate its unique compatibility with the comedic tale.



"The Open Window" (Metaphor)

The title of the story ("The Open Window") is itself a metaphor for the power of storytelling as a means of entertaining through humor and trickery. Reading the story is like looking out the window in Mrs. Sappleton's parlor, the window that Vera controls (and Saki in creating her) and through which the storyteller and trickster devises her own creations.



Glossary

Endeavour

attempt to do something

Sufficient

enough

Communion

participation in a joint experience

Rectory

A priest or Pastor's house, owned by the Church

Caller

visitor

Habitation

the state or process of living in a place

Moor

open land for shooting