Indian Camp Essay, Research Paper

Indian Camp

Analysis of Nick?s Father

In Earnest Hemmingway?s story Indian Camp, from his first book In Our Time, there is a character named Henry refereed to in this story as Nick?s father. Nick?s father is a doctor. A closer look at Nick?s father reveals that he is quite a paradoxical figure.

On one hand, Nick?s father appears to be a great father who is nurturing caring and wants only the best for his son. "Nick lay back with his fathers arms around him." This quote shows that Nick?s father is affectionate towards his son and is caring. When at the home of the Indian woman Nick?s father begins to explain to him why they are there. He tells him that the woman is very sick and that she needs his help. The woman is screaming in agony and Nick?s father tells him that, " What she is going through is called being in labor. The baby wants to be born and she wants it to be born. All her muscles are trying to get the baby born. That is what is happening when she screams." This is a rather direct way of telling your son what happens when a woman is in labor, but as a doctor maybe he wanted his son to learn biologically what went on. After the baby is born Nick?s father finds out that the Indian womans husband had committed suicide. The quotes, " Take Nick out of the shanty, George" and "I?m terribly sorry I brought you along, Nickie. It was an awful mess to put you through." also help show how in some senses Nick?s father has compassion for his son. The fact that he feels bad that his son had to witness the dead man means that he is sensitive towards his sons? feelings. Also under extreme situations, the mans death, his father reefers to him as Nickie not Nick as in the rest of the story. This also shows compassion.

On the other hand, Nick?s father can be seen as insensitive, uncaring, and not very compassionate at all. Looking at the same quote, when Nick?s father is explaining to him about the woman in labor and why she is screaming, his father chooses to stick to a very scientific explanation of the situation. Rather than telling his son about the moral aspects, like most parents would do. For example, a typical caring father might say to his son, when two people love each other they choose to have a baby that they can love together. All the screaming the woman is doing is all right because she will have a beautiful child when it is all over. This shows that Nick?s father may not have these morals and doesn?t choose to pass these kinds of thoughts on to his son. Another disturbing quote that suggests that Nick?s father isn?t so caring is "I haven?t any anaesthetic, her screams are not important. I don?t hear her scrams because they are not important." This reveals that either Nick?s father really doesn?t feel any compassion for this woman or he is just trying to convince himself that her screams are not important to make it easier on him. He never even touches on the fact that the woman is in pain, nor does he let it bother him. All portray bad qualities for a father, as well as a doctor, to have. Nick?s father also goes on to say that sometimes babies come out feet first and when they do they make a lot of trouble for everybody. Being a doctor, this kind of thing shouldn?t be problem. It may be a bit more difficult for the woman and him, but to say that it causes trouble portrays an impatient attitude. Which is also not a desirable quality in a father or a doctor. The fact that his Nick?s father even brought such a young boy to witness a woman giving birth, especially under such extreme circumstances, shows that maybe he isn?t a good father.

In conclusion, it is hard to say exactly whether or not Nick?s father was a good father or not. He portrays many traits that would make him a good father but in those same traits he shows that he may not be the best father, thus making him a paradoxical figure.