

First Last

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ENG 2D1

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Symbolism in a City

Alden Nowlan's short story, "The Fall of the City" shows how Teddy's imaginary world is actually representative of different aspects of his life; namely, the tumultuous relationship he has with his aunt and uncle, his desire to be recognized, and his loss of innocence.

The first similarity found in the story is that the imaginary wars Teddy holds are representative of his battle-like relationship with his aunt and uncle. In Teddy's real life, his aunt and uncle are abusive to him, and so they become enemies to Upalia in his imagination. In fact, Teddy's uncle's "round, florid face [is imagined to be] Silka, Duke of Anders" (132). Teddy imagines that his uncle is actually Upalia's enemy because he has been treated so poorly. The kingdom of Upalia, therefore, represents a safe place for Teddy to escape the "attacks" of his guardians. A second similarity is how King Theodore, the Upalian king, is a symbol of Teddy's want for love and recognition. Since Teddy has grown up in a very hostile environment in which he is either ignored or mistreated, he creates his beloved king, and names him after himself. This again shows how Teddy's imaginary world represents something more than his real world. Finally, the destruction of the city of Upalia is representative of Teddy's loss of innocence. Here, in his kingdom, Teddy is able to imagine and create, holding on to his childhood purity. However, when his uncle mocks him, Teddy's innocence is destroyed: "The city was how he had left it. Yet everything had changed" (133). Teddy then destroys his city, thereby destroying his innocence and a large part of his childhood.

In conclusion, “The Fall of the City” is filled with symbolism. Teddy’s war-like relationship with his aunt and uncle is represented by the wars in Upalia, his desire for love and respect is represented in King Theodore’s symbolic power, and the destruction of city itself represents the loss of Teddy’s innocence.