

For “The Coup de Grace” and “Chickamauga”
by Ambrose Bierce

Name_____

Please answer for yourself:

1. Do we have control, through our decisions, of our future (free will), or are events in our lives ruled by fate/chance/some other outside source (determinism)? Explain.

Now, answer for “The Coup de Grace:”

1. Could Caffal Halcrow survive? What makes you say so?
2. What is the significance of Madwell shooting the horse?
3. Why was Creede Halcrow returning to the scene? Why is the timing of his return significant?
4. Why does Madwell do what he does?
5. Prove it!
6. What is “the silent plea” of Caffal Halcrow? Explain, specifically how you have discerned this.
7. What does this story imply about our decisions? (Does this story imply “free will” or “determinism” for mankind?) Explain why/how this story implies this.

For “Chickamauga”

1. Why does the boy behave as he does? Is it because he was born with these instincts, or because he was trained to be this way? Defend your answer.
2. What is the comment on fantasy vs. reality in this story?
3. *If* (and I mean *if*) this boy and his condition are meant to be symbolic, what might he symbolize and what might be the purpose of this symbolism?
4. Given your what you said in #2 what might be the symbolic significance of other parts of the story?
5. What is the moral of the story? (Write a theme statement.)
6. What does this story say about man’s place in the natural order of things? (Are we instinctual or reasoning? Are we like the animals or not?) Explain.