



CLAIM:

Erdrich plays with time in structuring a narrative which begins where it ends, using foreshadowing to establish mystery and heighten the dramatic irony of its resolution.

Point 1

Erdrich plays with time in her narrative sequence

Point 2

Erdrich begins the story by cryptically foreshadowing its ironic ending

A Supporting Evidence

First verb tense/time shift:
"We owned it together until his boots filled with water" (past)
"Now Henry owns the whole car" (present)

(Reference: paragraph 1)

B Supporting Evidence

Lyman tells the story in episodes loosely connected in time (buying the car, the trip to Alaska, Henry's return from Vietnam, Lyman wrecking, and then Henry repairing the car, taking the photo, the final drive, Henry's - and the car's - drowning)

(Reference: various episodes)

A Supporting Evidence

"We owned it together until his boots filled with water on a windy night and he bought out my share."

(Reference: paragraph 1)

B Supporting Evidence

"'My boots are filling,' he says. He says this in a normal voice, like he just noticed and he doesn't know what to think of it. Then he's gone. A branch comes by."

(Reference: paragraphs 67-8)

C Supporting Evidence

At three key points, the chronological time sequence is broken or shifts: paragraph 1 (above), paragraph 45 ("That picture, I never look at it anymore..."), and paragraphs 49-50 (His face was totally white and hard... 'I know it,' he says.)

(Reference: paragraph 1, 45, 49-50)

D Supporting Evidence

Last verb tense/time shift:
"His face was totally white and hard. Then it broke, like stones break all of a sudden when water boils up inside of them." (past)
'I know it,' he says. 'I know it. I can't help it. It's no use.'" (present - from here on)

(Reference: paragraph 49-50 to finish)

C Supporting Evidence

"Lyman walks everywhere he goes."

(Reference: paragraph 1)

D Supporting Evidence

"It is all finally dark. And then there is only the water, the sound of it going and running and going and running and running."

(Reference: last paragraph (69))