LITERARY HUB

Brown's works

He was an American science fiction and mystery writer, best known for his use of humor and for his mastery of the "short short" form-stories of 1 to 3 pages, often with ingenious plot devices and surprise endings. One of his stories, "Arena", is officially credited for an adaptation as an episode of the American television series Star Trek.

The plot

The story Sentry is about points of view. Most of the time it is not reality itself that shapes our feelings, but rather it is the way we see reality. It is based on rivals from different planets who are fighting for power over other planets.

Frederic Brown (1906–1972)



Fredric Brown, "The Sentry"



1. Look at the picture, what do you predict the story will be about. What is an "alien"? What do you think an alien looks like? Read the story and check your ideas.

He was wet and hungry and cold and he was fifty thousand light years from home. He was on a damned planet he did not know. War never changes. After thousands of years it was still very easy for the pilots, high up in their shining spaceships with all their sophisticated weapons. After thousands of years it was still the ordinary soldier's task, the infantryman, to fight the enemy and die in battle. The aliens were there too. The aliens, the only other intelligent race in the galaxy, cruel, horrible monsters.

The first contact with the aliens took place in the centre of the galaxy, and war broke out immediately. They started to shoot; they did not try to negotiate or to make peace. Now the war continued, planet by planet.

He was wet and hungry and cold; the fierce wind hurt his eyes. But the aliens were there, ready to infiltrate and all the positions were vital. He stayed alert,his gun ready. And then he saw one of them creeping towards him. He aimed his gun and opened fire. The alien made that strange horrible cry they all make, and then a deathly silence. It was dead. The sight of the dead body made him shudder. They were horrible disgusting creatures, with only two arms, two legs, two eyes, and awful white skin and without scales.

2. Read the story and answer the questions inserting the correct answers:

wet and cold	soldier	in the centre of the galaxy
hungry and tired	the aliens, cruel, horrible monsters	shoot an enemy

1) Who is the main character of the story? _____

2) Where is he? _____

3) What is the weather like? _____

4) Who are the soldier's enemies? What are they like?_____

5) How does the soldier feel? _____

6) What suddenly happens to him?_____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3. In your opinion, what is the message of the story? Choose among the following.

(a) Things are not always as they seem.
(b) Everybody is prejudiced.
(c) There will always be clashes between different cultures.
(d) Prejudice and misunderstanding are the seeds of hate.

LIVEWORKSHEETS