

How is the setting described?

a) What is the effect created by the weather?

b) What effect is created by the use of short, sharp pieces of information, separated by punctuation?

c) Which words are repeated? Why?

d) How are the people linked with the conditions in which they live?

2. What is the message conveyed by the linking of people with their surroundings?

3. What does Carter suggest about the people with her use of:

‘Their houses ...’

‘There will be ...’

‘To these upland woodsmen ...?’

4. What superstitions are held by these people?

5. What is the narrative perspective of the tale? Who is telling the story, and who is listening to it?

6. Which traditional story does this link with?

7. List details which are similar to the version you are familiar with, then list aspects of the tale which Carter has changed.

8. Why do you think details have been changed, and how do you think they affect the tale? Do you think the changes improve the story or not? Give reasons for your opinion.

9. Describe the girl in the tale. Look at her personality and her actions.

10. How is the wolf described? Look at words like ‘gulp’ and ‘sob’.

11. What effect is created by these two character descriptions? How do they make the reader react to the characters concerned?

12. When the girl reaches her grandmother’s house, she finds her grandmother is very ill. Describe her illness and which aspects of it are linked/not linked with the wolf encountered earlier.

13. Despite her grandmother’s illness, the girl shows her as little mercy as she previously showed to the wolf. Describe her actions when she sees her grandmother.

14. How do the girl’s actions benefit her?

15. Who are the victims in the tale?

16. What messages does Carter convey by showing the ruthless behaviour of the girl towards older people and animals? Are we led to believe her actions differ in any way from those of other young people in her society? Think back to the way Carter has grouped the people in the first sentences to help you answer this question.

17. Has the story got implications for our own society in this respect? Use your answers to questions 1e and 3 to help you answer this question. Carter’s narrative perspective has clearly distanced her from the behaviour exhibited by the girl, while the tense chosen for the narrative gives immediacy to the plot.

18. What genre/s does this tale use? How effectively are they woven into the plot?

19. Do you think the title is appropriate? Why?