



**STUDYDADDY**

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Reading and Writing Questions to Consider  
Plot, Character, Setting and Theme

In answering the following questions, please identify and cite specific passages and quotations from the text of the story under consideration:

“Battle Royal”

The story begins with the dying words of the narrator’s grandfather. What is the message the grandfather intends to impart? How does this message create a conflict for the story’s narrator, and how do the subsequent events shed light on the grandfather’s words?

Why is the narrator chosen to attend a “smoker” involving the “town’s leading white citizens”? What tests await the narrator when he arrives? What is the purpose of these activities, and what is the intended message of each test?

What is the subject of the narrator’s graduation day oration when he is finally allowed to deliver it? What accidental change does he make in the delivery that attracts the crowd’s attention? What difference does the change make in the message of the speech?

What “prize” does the narrator receive for delivering his speech? How valuable is this prize in reality? What will be the practical effect on the narrator’s future?

The story ends like it began, with the grandfather’s words. What is the significance of the narrator’s dream? What change does it indicate in the value of the “prize” he received at the smoker? How does this change resolve the narrator’s conflict and clarify the grandfather’s dying words?

“Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”

Describe Connie’s character traits. What influences her world view? Consider her self-image, her interests, and her relationships with her family members? How do these factors influence her behavior and her vision of her future life?

What are the different sides of Connie? How does her behavior differ when she is away from home? How realistic are her goals, and how do these goals influence her decision to venture “across the highway” to “where older kids hung out”? Is this a place where she belongs? Why or why not?

What about Connie attracts the attention of Arnold Friend? How does he learn where Connie lives and what her interests are? Does his behavior suggest anything dangerous or unnatural? What is his purpose in pursuing Connie to her house?

How does Arnold Friend seduce Connie? How does his behavior change over the course of his seduction? What insights about Arnold does Connie gain throughout their encounter? Why doesn’t she recognize the danger he represents earlier in their interaction?

What makes Connie decide to leave with Arnold? How does he convince her to come with him? What fate do you think awaits Connie once she leaves the safety of home? How does Oates suggest that fate to her readers?

Bonus research question: The numbers on Arnold's car refer to a Biblical passage from the Book of Judges 19:17. Why does Oates include this reference? How does the passage shed light on the theme of Oates' story?

#### “The Two”

Who is Sophie and what is her role in the story? How does her role help to establish the story's theme?

What is Brewster Place? What kind of people live there? How did Lorraine and Theresa come to reside in Brewster Place?

What is the nature of Lorraine and Theresa's relationship? How does their relationship make them the object of Sophie's interest?

What is the conflict between Lorraine and Theresa? What does each want from the other and from life? How does their relationship impact those expectations?

How is the conflict between “the two” resolved? What metaphor helps to achieve this resolution? What does this suggest about the story's theme?



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