

Discuss the four short stories



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The paper "The Stories by Ron Carlson" is an outstanding example of an essay on literature. The master of idiosyncrasies, Ron Carlson, comes out with yet another one of his unbelievable tales titled "Bigfoot stole my wife" an endearing story that flits between truth and reality and between the sensical and the nonsensical. In the story, he accuses Bigfoot of stealing his wife. This story is a satire on credulity. The wife of the narrator gives him a warning that one day when he returns home she would be gone.

Unfortunately, when the day arrived, he found his wife missing, he couldn't believe that she had taken off on her own. He was met with a "hairy odor" from within the empty house and was immediately convinced that she had been abducted by Bigfoot. The main themes in Ron Carlson's, "Bigfoot stole my wife" are fear and belief. The wife seems to always warn him of her sudden disappearance and the narrator always seems to predict an impending fear within himself. He always forces himself to believe whatever anyone else tells him because he does not have the intelligence nor fortitude to doubt what others say. This belief is clearly seen in the following sentences. "People are always saying: don't believe everything you read or everything you hear. And I'm here to tell you. Believe it. Everything. Everything you read. Everything you hear" (p. 90).

The stories by Ron Carlson seem crazy and improbable but yet come across as authentic. One of the main themes in "I am Bigfoot", the story that followed "Bigfoot stole my wife" is human desire to procreate. Carlson's intention was not to disseminate sensationalism or the occult, but his stories deal with credible human emotions. The following lines portray this fact - "At present, I am watching your wife. That's why I am here tonight. To tell you, fairly, man to man, I suppose, I am watching your wife and I know for a

fact, that when I call, she'll come" (p. 93) The irony of the situation is that the reader pretty well knows, who Bigfoot is. He is not the mythical hairy beast on the tabloid pages, but just the haunting desire of women, yearning for a better life by freeing themselves from a marriage that is dull and unfulfilling. The truth that is finally exposed is the expression and desire of human feelings and not a hairy beast spoken of in the story.

"What we wanted to do", by author Ron Carlson, is yet another very funny story that brings out many human emotions such as anger, fear, dread, and hope. The main themes are steadfastness and commitment but in a comic situation. The act of hoisting a whole cauldron of oil and bringing it to a boil on the rooftop about 200 feet above, was not only funny, but revolting in itself and this brought great opposition from the villagers. But the group who were in charge to carry out this great feat were not only highly motivated and patriotically driven in order to save their village and its villagers, but were also totally committed to this Strategic project.

With the knowledge, that "all great ideas seem strange at first", the leaders of this project of strategic defense, were committed to carrying out their plan on schedule. The most comic part of this project was that they had started boiling the oil too late and all that the enemy received from them when they reached the gates were just lukewarm oil poured over them. In fact, this act made them all the angrier and they began exercising more force than before. Though the whole group who was engaged in preparing and carrying out the whole plan was disappointed at the outcome, yet they were optimistic enough to express their feelings saying that, next time they would start boiling the oil much earlier and be sure that the enemy would be soaked with hot oil. In this story, Carlson deftly portrays the hopes and

disillusionment of the project group, who even in their failure, endeavored to achieve what they had set out to do.

“ The Tablecloth of Turin” seems to be a very interesting story of how the tablecloth that was spread on the table at the Last Supper came to be in the possession of its owner. While explaining this fact, the speaker tells us that when he visited Turin he was sold this beautiful tablecloth which was the very cloth used to cover the table at the historical event of the Last Supper when Jesus and his disciples were invited for the Passover Dinner.

The narrator and owner of the tablecloth pins the tablecloth to the backdrop of the stage and goes on to explain in detail, the events that took place at the Last Supper, highlighting the fact that the conversation at the table was not happy but sad. He gives us so much detail, such as the dimensions of the cloth, the material used, where each one was seated, what they ate, what they drank and even what they spoke. Such precise detail makes it hard to believe that it is true. Another thing which makes it hard to believe that it was actually the table cloth of Turin and because at the beginning the narrator tells us that he had bought the cloth from the person, but at the end he tells us that when he visited California once again, the person for some reason unknown made him the caretaker of the tablecloth of Turin.