

# "falling in love" by sandra birdsell and "a scarf" by carol fields essay sample

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Settings used throughout stories are often meant to portray a deeper meaning of the story, character(s), or conflict, as opposed to merely serving as passive backdrops. Within the stories *Falling in Love* by Sandra Birdsell and *A Scarf* by Carol Shields, there are firstperson reflections about the main characters' journeys at certain points in their lives. Lureen from *Falling in Love* has been abandoned by her boyfriend and is on her way back to her childhood home, while Reta Winters from *A Scarf* has written a book and is now on a book tour to New York, Washington, and Baltimore. On both excursions, the authors use imaginative setting to reveal a more profound characterization of their protagonists by reflecting their current situations in life and their mental states.

Most of the significant settings throughout the stories contrast each other, however reveal the same aspect of the characters. One example of a setting where this occurs is where the characters reside at, at one point in their lives. In *Falling in Love*, Lureen lives in a three bedroom apartment that is situated above a butcher shop. It is described having a "caved in ceiling" (Birdsell 370), which can demonstrate the limited and confined life that Lureen is allowing herself to live. Also, "sawdust and shavings ankledeep on the floor, ceiling slats dangling free" (Birdsell 370) show the very messy, carelessness, and immobility of her character. Lastly, a "lone light bulb suspended by a single twined wire" (Birdsell 370) shows Lureen's last little bit of enlightening alteration that can occur in her life. These descriptions ultimately impose a visual image to be obtained by the reader as very disordered and unorganized.

The way Lureen describes her life at the moment allows the reader to make a parallel between her apartment and herself. She describes her life as "between jobs, waiting for the world to end" (Birdsell 372) and "[she] left school..." (Birdsell 370). The broken, untidy apartment shows Lureen's disorganized life, and how her life needs restoration. As opposed to Lureen, while Reta is on her book tour, she stays in a very extravagant hotel. She depicts every detail, saying "a bedroom, two full baths, a very wide bed, and more sofas than I would have time to sit on in my short stay" (Shields 391), which reflects upon her wealthy and privileged life. This contrasts the way Lureen's apartment looks and therefore their lives.

Then, Reta says "and a coffee table consisting of a sheet of glass posed on three immense faux books" (Shields 391). This aspect of the hotel reveals her character's life as very definite and it has a clear path, being that the glass is transparent. Seeing as Lureen's apartment was messy, these settings differ in the sense of clarity, thus showing to the reader the differences between the clarity of these characters' lives. Overall, this explanation causes the reader to obtain a visual image that shows wealth and lavish organization.