

Essay #1

Literature, Fiction



Essay #1 2. Characterize Connie in "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" and make a case for why she gives in and goes with Arnold Friend. The short story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" written by Joyce Carol Oates was quite interesting. Even though it was fiction, I believe that it could be based on a true story. There are times that young girls get themselves into situations that they feel they cannot escape. This story is a perfect example of why teenage girls should try and avoid being in harm's way. In this essay I will be describing Connie as she appears in the story and explaining her rationale for submitting to Arnold Friend. Connie was a slender girl with long dark blondish hair and thought of herself as being very beautiful. She had a little bit of pep to her walk, as if she was bouncing on a trampoline as she walked around everywhere. She was a very happy and enthusiastic girl unless she was with her family. She felt as though she was not good enough in her mothers' eyes and was always being picked on and compared to her older sister. For example, her mom would say, "Why don't you keep your room clean like your sister?" (Oates 436) She enjoyed getting out of the house as often as she could and she would go to the shopping center with her friends where they would sneak across the street to a restaurant where the older kids would hang out. She was never the same person she pretended to be at home. She would act and dress one way at home, but when she went out she was free to express herself. In the beginning of the story, like most teenage girls, she played hard to get with a boy. She connected eyes with him when she was out with her friends one night. That night he told her, "Gonna get you, baby". (Oates 438) At this point in time, I don't think she thought anything of his statement. However,

he unexpectedly shows up at her house when she was all alone and he knew much more about her than he should have. She was obviously surprised that he knew where she lived and knew that she was home alone. She went outside to ask him what he wanted and was playing hard to get until she realized he was after more than what she wanted to give. I believe that as the conversation went on she felt more and more threatened by Arnold Friend. Since she consistently refused to leave with him, then threatened to call the cops, his words became more and more aggressive towards Connie. Friend then began threatening the lives of her family. She was told that if she did not go with him and take a ride with him that she would inevitable regret it. This is supported with Friend's statement about her family, " You don't want them to get hurt". (Oates 448) Eventually at the end of the story Connie decides to leave with Arnold Friend so that he would not hurt her family in anyway. In conclusion, I believe Connie was a petite and pretty young girl with nothing but boys and having fun on her mind. She was similar to many teenage girls in that she enjoyed going out with her friends but ended up getting herself into a bad situation. She felt as if she was stuck and had no choice but to leave with Arnold Friend in order to keep her family out of harm's way.