

In the region of ice by  
oates essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Motives of Fateful Meeting in Joyce Carol Oates's short story "In the Region of Ice" In her short story "In the Region of Ice", Joyce Carol Oates portrays the complexity of human characters, thus revealing the most intimate and hidden movements of human soul. In the given story, Oates intentionally makes the opposites collide, interact, and coexist, despite all seeming differences and conventions. And the main protagonists - Sister Irene and Allen Weinstein - serve as these opposites. Thus, the author resorts to sustained antithesis to present the readers the story fabric woven from the main heroes' contradictory feelings, infighting, and soul-searching. First, Professor Irene appears before the reader as a classic example of virtuousness, single-mindedness, and prudence. Nonetheless, the writer reveals the woman's inner contradictions, which confuse and even scare the teacher. This frank dissonance between Irene's ostentatious calmness and internal struggle is under Joyce Carol Oates's meticulous scrutiny.

To reinforce and even make "conflicts in her minds" (187) almost tangible, the author introduces restless student Allen Weinstein into the story. Exactly this hero makes Professor think, hesitate, and even "reconcile the opposite views" (187) by means of his frivolous and straightforward comments and questions asked in the classroom. Nonetheless, despite rudeness of Allen's questions, his familiarity and spontaneity, this regular woman has interest in him. This strange feeling, nonetheless, can be easily explained. Sister Irene manages to unmask the young man, who hides behind his aplomb and impudence. Thus, the nun sees a real face "of a terrified prisoner behind the confident voice" (190). Sister Irene admits that she has mixed feelings about

the young student. Sometimes, she catches herself thinking that does not like the persistent student, whose intrusion and obsession terrify her.

Nevertheless, it becomes obvious that Allen acts as a constant reminder of her emotional frigidity. Exactly Allen makes the teacher forget about so comforting academic routine and takes her into “thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice” (193), where there are no limits, prejudices, and conventions. The suicide of the young man is also symbolical. It represents a long-awaited sedation and passion subsiding. The meeting of these different people was a crucial and significant event for both of them. Nonetheless, this clash of negatively and positively charged particles brought nothing but turmoil and commotion into the teacher’s and her student’s lives.