

How does the setting of each play impact your understanding of what the author might be trying to say?

Student 1

Trifles & Sure Thing

In the play “Trifles” the setting is an old abandoned farmhouse that belongs to a farmer and his wife. The majority of the story is told from the living room and kitchen area where Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters discuss Mrs. Wright while attempting to clean up the mess in the kitchen. The setting and the attitude of the women said a lot about them and the decade of civilization they were presently in.

The story was about Mrs. Wright and if she had actually killed her husband that night. The Sheriff and the County Attorney after questioning Mrs. Wright went upstairs and sought further information as to who the killer was. The setting was fairly comfortable and inviting as the ladies were downstairs cleaning the kitchen. While reading this play I was able to imagine the area as to what it would look like and it presented a calm feeling to it.

Throughout the story the author showed how women stick together with one another. Whether Mrs. Wright had committed the crime or not, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters went around the kitchen and cleaned up the mess that was there. They gathered her quilt that she had been knitting to help occupy her time and her coat so she wouldn't be cold and took those items to her in jail.

In the play “Sure Thing”, the setting was a café possibly on a one way street with medium traffic. Not a lot of pedestrian traffic which would provide a comfortable quiet setting for someone to read and relax. The story features a young city girl seated at the café on a Friday evening attempting to read a few chapters of her newly bought book. Here comes Bill, a young man around the same age as the young lady, interrupts with the intent of making conversation with her.

The couple, Betty and Bill, entertains each other in a rather weird pattern of conversation that involved stereotyping, sarcasm, and paranoid behavior. There was much to evaluate in the setting due to the fact that the entire story revolved around a table, two chairs and a bell that rang every 30 seconds it seemed. Bill and Betty engaged in a humorous conversation about their lives and jobs which seemed to be going nowhere hence the ringing of the bell. Eventually, they realized they had similar interest in the book written by Faulkner, the Woody Allen Festival, and the fact that neither one of them could get the attention of the waiter.

The author was showing the challenge of starting a conversation with a woman and how it may not be a “sure thing”. It could be hard due to rejection or you could be successful on the fifth attempt like Bill. He showed how this couple related on numerous

levels dealing with relationships, jobs, and familiar interest in entertainment. At first Betty was not interested in Bill due to her planning on ending a current relationship; however, in the long run she gained a new friend and companion. In the end Bill asked Betty to the Woody Allen Festival and her answer was “sure thing”.

Student 2

I liked and enjoyed reading your interpretation of the settings as well. I think it is interesting to see how different two people can view the same thing.

Student 3

Good job with analyzing Sure Thing. I had a hard time with it. I found it difficult to catch what it was meaning.

Student 4

Good format with your response. I agreed with what you had to write. What about the bell? What was up with that?

Student 2

In the play Trifles, the setting was in an old farmhouse. I envisioned an old country road with nothing around and plenty of land between houses. People, walking down a dirt road, to go visit their neighbors is what else comes into my mind. “Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes...” just paints a picture of an old guy in overalls, dirty from the farm. I think that it is important that this play was set where it was because when most people think of “country folk,” they think of older people sweaty and dirty from a hard day of work on the farm. These people are probably not highly educated. I picture this county attorney as feeling as though he is better than these people from the country. He states, “And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies?” It makes me think that he is almost mocking these women and thinks that they are not smart or useful. I think that the setting of this play really helps the understanding of the play. It paints a perfect picture in your head of how all of the characters look, act and feel. It helps you to realize that the women feel like they have something to prove to the men in their life.

In the other play Sure Thing, it takes place in a coffee shop. A lot of people sit alone in a coffee shop. I think that this play could have been placed anywhere that men and women meet, such as the bus stop, a line for a movie, a bar or a club. I think that it maybe would make it easier for people of all ages to read given that it is set in a coffee shop. Most people, even younger ones, have been to at least one coffee shop in their life. It is almost believable when Bill states, “Sort of a sad occupation for a Friday night, isn’t it? Reading here all by yourself?” I could actually envision someone saying that to another person while they are sitting at a coffee shop, but could see it happening at a park

bench too. I don't think that the setting really helped the reader understand what the author was trying to say.

Student 3

Good insight on both plays. I think that the settings really made the plays more realistic. I do not think that Trifles would have been good in any other setting, but maybe there could have been other places where Sure Thing could have happened.

Student 1

Student 2,

I agree with your views in both these drama plays, however, I think the setting in "sure thing" was for the more sophisticated, business like associate. Betty was probably dressed in a two piece suit and medium heels, and Bill in a \$100 suit from Men's Warehouse. In addition, I'm not sure where you located but I don't ever see people at the park reading a book. It doesn't affect the message in the poem but it is to give you a mental picture of the setting. Overall I enjoyed reading your views.

Student 2

Student 1,

I am from Austin, TX. I have run into many people sitting in parks reading books. But I have been all over the country, as many of us in this class have been. I have seen people reading books in places I couldn't even imagine being able to actually comprehend books. Anyway, I understand where you are coming from. Thank you for the response.

Student 4

Student 2,

I was under the same impressions when I was reading these plays. Good post.

Student 4

The first play Trifles, although the current setting was acceptable and added various visuals, and feelings to the reader, could have been written in many other different settings and achieved the same atmosphere the author was going towards in this play. It gave the reader a picture of a rural area, isolated, cold, dreary, and unhappy. The setting that the majority of the play occurred was lacking happiness, and brought you to the point to assume that if someone could cherish even a little bit of happiness in such a cold dreary place. If that happiness was ever taken away, other than natural occurrences, that someone might just snap and react on extreme emotions against whoever took that happiness away.

On the second poem Sure Thing, the setting was in a completely different atmosphere. An urban environment, lots of people, happy people these people living their lives and not caring who or what was going by them in their small little worlds. It set up the impersonalized relationships of the big city. Brought to the scale of how in such a huge environment it is still possible for two people to connect. They might suffer loneliness, and despair, and heart break, but in the end there is still chance for success. The author gives you the Allen movies to fall back on, if nothing else in the setting brought a smile across your face. A celebration of old woody Allen films brought you to the home page with this author.

Either of these poems could have been used in different settings. The settings didn't provide the reader with any more infuses on the story, excitement, dread, loom, or any other form of emotion that couldn't of been constructed easier, and achieved through another form of setting. I really enjoyed the way these authors constructed their settings though. Especially Sure thing, made me laugh at least 10 times.

Student 3

Sounds like you really connected to Sure Thing. By the way, I really enjoyed reading your post. I have seen your posts get better each time. You have quite the writer in you.

Student 4

Thank you.

I have tried to spend more time developing ideas, and brain storming. It seems to have had an impact on my writing.

Student 1

Student 4,

Bravo Bravo! I enjoyed reading your views on the drama plays, it definitely gave me a different view on how to look at the stories written by the authors. To me "sure thing" was difficult to read but did have some humor to it. You could be correct on your view of Mrs. Wright, she probably did lose the little joy she had. Mr. Wright could have killed her canary and in return she took his life, back then that may be considered fair game.

Student 4

It was a different time as they say. A lot of things could have been considered free game, that isn't so much today. Thanks for your input. It really made my day.

Student 3

Setting is very important in any piece of literature. This lays the ground work for the reader's imagination. A good writer will want his or her readers to feel a part of the story, to become engrossed in the telling of the story. A descriptive setting will place the reader right in the middle of the tale, and the reader will find himself or herself relating to the characters in a more realistic manner.

In the first play, "Trifles," the setting is mainly in a kitchen of an abandoned farmhouse. It is said to be gloomy and is left a mess. A messy kitchen is unheard of in the common farmhouse in this period of time. The kitchen was also the living room, the family room, the main working room in the house. The kitchen was also known to be the woman's area. Throughout the story we get little hints that the story is set in the late 1800s or early 1900s. This knowledge allows us to put ourselves back in time and pretend we are there. We are able to emerge ourselves into the story and see the same things the women see. Makes each of us question, would we do what Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters decided at the end of the play.

The second play, "Sure Thing," has the setting placed at a table in a café. Betty is in a chair reading a book and opposite her is an empty chair. The impression is given that the café is full of customers and empty chairs is a rare event. Bill, seeing the empty chair, takes advantage of the opportunity and a pretty lady and eventually occupies the chair. This setting makes the atmosphere more casual and more friendly like. A person is more apt to believe a woman will allow a man to sit at an empty chair and pick up a conversation with him in a café rather than at a bus stop. Interestingly, a bus stop was the author's original idea of a setting. A man walking up to a woman and asking to sit in an empty chair and caring on a conversation with a pretty woman will be like winning the multi-million dollar lottery.

Overall, I enjoyed the first play. The second play was a chaotic, confusing mess for me to read. Every time the bell rang, I had to figure out where the play was going next. I never saw a point in the play, and I often had to look back up and try to figure out who said what and who said what first.

Student 1

Student 3,

Nice posting by the way, I must agree with you on the second play, it was chaotic. I had to take a break between and catch some fresh air. I do agree with your perception of the bus stop idea, not very likely to happen. As for "Trifles" I think any good friend or neighbor would have done the same.

Student 4

I agree with your input. As for the second play, It was a comedy, I think the point was to confused and disboggle you....take you away, in a way.