

Sherwood Anderson's *Death in the Woods*

Day 8 (*Time required: 45-55 mins.*)

***Death in the Woods*, Section III**

Have students read Section III.

Understanding How Writers Use Plot

Plot is the series of events that take place in a story. Not all events are equally important, but many events build on each other. These events usually build to a high point, which is the most exciting or important action in the story. This high point is called the climax.

Writers often use suspense to help build plots. Suspense is a feeling of uncertainty or confusion that occurs when readers are concerned for characters' safety because they believe something violent or frightening is about to happen.

Differentiated Learning: Additional Instruction

If students would benefit from more discussion of suspense, then ask, "What is the most suspenseful part of a horror movie?" (Generally, suspense occurs when we know that something is going to happen, but we don't know what it will be.)

Reading Strategy: Synthesizing Information

Ask, "How is plot used in this story?" Have the students scan Section III for:

- details in the woman's life that the narrator shares with the reader.
- challenges that the woman faced on the day she died (a snowstorm, the heavy sack of food, etc.).
- descriptions of the dogs' strange behavior as the woman died. (Possible student answers include: The events in the story show how hard it was for the woman to keep the animals fed, and this makes the reader feel concern for her; suspense is used at the end of this section when the reader isn't sure what the dogs are going to do.)

Ask students to discuss how the narrator develops suspense at the end of this section.

Gauge student comprehension by asking students:

- How does the narrator explain the dogs' behavior?
- What similar experience did the narrator have with dogs? How was his experience different?
- What is the high point of the action in the story so far? Why?
- What could the author have done to make this section even more suspenseful?