

reaches of the land behind him and on all sides of him—so much land that Connie had never seen before and did not recognize except to know that she was going to it.

[1966]

≡ THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. This story was first published in 1966. What still seems typical of fifteen-year-old Connie's behavior? What seems dated about her?
2. Is Oates making a comment about the effect music has on Connie? Should popular music be accountable for the behavior of its listeners? Can popular culture make us oblivious to the real dangers of the world? Can it make us suspicious and cynical?
3. The suggestions about what will happen to Connie when she leaves the protection of her home are not so subtle. What is your view of her future? What does Connie mean when she says, "People don't talk like that, you're crazy" (para. 105)? What is your reading of her response? Is Arnold Friend crazy?
4. A common response to this story is frustration with Connie's hesitation and her inability to take appropriate action in the face of serious danger. Was this your response? Why isn't she more assertive?
5. Could Connie have been better prepared for this encounter with evil? What evidence does the author give to show how prepared she is or isn't? What is her relationship with her parents? Is her social awareness primarily her parents' responsibility? If not, whose is it?

DON MOSER

The Pied Piper of Tucson: He Cruised in a Golden Car, Looking for the Action

Published in the March 4, 1966, issue of *Life* magazine, this article by Don Moser (b. 1932) focuses on a real-life murderer who in major ways resembled Joyce Carol Oates's character Arnold Friend. Indeed, in the essay by Oates that follows, she indicates some familiarity with Moser's piece, although she claims that she didn't read it fully. However much his article inspired Oates to write her story, he illuminates American youth culture of the mid-1960s—including the role that deadly crime could play in it.

Hey, c'mon babe, follow me,
I'm the Pied Piper, follow me,
I'm the Pied Piper,
And I'll show you where it's at.