

## ‘Wolf-Alice’

(A useful set of questions for students of AQA specification B Unit 3 Elements of the Gothic to work on while studying the text. May be used as the basis for classroom discussion, or set as a homework following work in the classroom.)

1. The description of ‘Wolf-Alice’ is central to your understanding of this story so Carter introduces and describes the character at the beginning of the story, then adds more detail as it progresses. Read the story again and collect all the pieces of information you are given about her. Make a note of two or three of the most striking pieces of the description, with page references to go with them.
2. From the description, what sort of a character does Carter create? Does the girl seem realistic to you, or not? Give reasons to support your answer.
3. Look at the name given to this character. What are the two elements with which it is made up? How does this affect your feelings towards her? Do you think your feelings would be different if only one part of the name was present? Examine the effects created by the two names.
4. Which other stories in this collection may be linked to this one because of the mixture of human and animal characters? Your answer to this question is the first intertextual reference in this task.
5. How do you feel towards Wolf-Alice? Do you empathise with her at all? Do you like the character or not? Give reasons for your answer, and say which parts of the description have made you feel like this towards the girl.

The next two questions link the three ‘Wolf’ stories. The connections you make between them can be termed ‘intertextuality’, so, as you write your answers, keep in mind the reasons Carter may have had for linking the stories under the theme of wolves. Try to include these reasons in your answers.

There are three ‘Wolf Tales’ in this collection of stories: ‘The Werewolf’, ‘The Company of Wolves’ and ‘Wolf-Alice’. In what ways are the stories similar to one another and in what ways do they differ?

6. How does the character of ‘Wolf-Alice’ compare with the characters in the other two stories?
7. How is the Duke described? Make detailed notes about the way his character is drawn and how Carter makes the reader feel about him.

8. With which character do you feel the most empathy? Do you think the author intended to make you feel like this? How and why has she achieved this?
9. What is the function of the Duke? What does he contribute to the plot, and what would be missing if his character was not in the story?
10. Why is there a mirror in the story? Try to answer by including the mirror's actual as well as symbolic function. What does the mirror tell you about Wolf-Alice?
11. A mirror is a very important item elsewhere in this collection of tales. In which other story/stories is this object used? Is it used in the same way in each tale? Show the similarities and differences of the functions of the mirror in different tales.
12. Think about stories you have heard or read elsewhere which include references to mirrors, and consider which genre Carter uses to help her write this story.
13. Next, think about stories you have read or heard previously which refer to wolves. Using your answers to questions 11 and 12, say which genre/s are used in this tale.
14. On pages 124 and 125, Wolf-Alice tries on the 'white dress' which the Duke had 'tucked away behind the mirror', and she saw that it 'made her shine'. Why do you think the dress is 'white'? Examine the symbolic connotations of the colour. Then say why Wolf-Alice wears the dress now, rather than at the beginning of the story. What has happened to her during the story which creates her interest in the dress?
15. Reread the conclusion of the story and in your own words say what you think it means. What has happened to Wolf-Alice? How has she changed since the story began? With that change describe whether there has been an associated change in your feelings towards the character. What are the reasons for that change?