

Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood Study Guide

- 1) *Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood* is inspired by the well-known fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*. What elements of the original story appear in the play? What parts of the original story are not in the play? Why do you think the playwright left out these parts of the story?
- 2) What do you think is the attitude of the playwright towards the Hoods' habit of watching television? Why do you think this?
- 3) On page 9 the Grandmother introduces herself as an "archetype." Jason defines this word as "a character who has appeared over and over throughout the history of literature." What other archetypes can you think of from fairy tales? Do other archetypes appear in this story? If so, how do they break the mold of the traditional or archetypal version of their character?
- 4) We know that Wise Prince Jason and Strong Prince Justin are wise and strong because of their names, but do they also act wise and strong? In what ways? Good story telling is about showing characters in action. How do the actions of Prince Jason and Prince Justin make the story funnier than simply the adjectives "wise" and "strong"?
- 5) Sometimes comedy is created when one character misunderstands what another character is trying to say. Can you explain the miscommunication between Louise and Mr. Hood on page 10.36–37 when Louise asks "Enjoying the old idiot box, are you?" and Mr. Hood answers, "No, we're watching TV"? Can you find other examples of miscommunication in the play (or in other works) that create comedy?
- 6) Why do you think Little Red is so frustrated when she makes her exit on page 11.39? Do you think Little Red fits in well with the rest of her family? Why or why not? Do you ever feel about your family the way you think Little Red feels about hers? Do you imagine this is a common feeling among people your age?
- 7) On page 15 we learn more about Big Green and Medium Purple and their love for Jason and Justin. At first the strong girl loves the wise boy and the wise girl loves the strong boy. Which pairing do you think is more likely to work out—two people with opposite interests or two people with the same interest? Why?
- 8) One of the things we learn about fairy tales in *Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood* is that everything comes in threes. One of the oldest ways of creating comedy is to set up a pattern and then break that pattern with something unexpected. In some spots in the play, we hear a list of three things; the first two set the pattern, and the third breaks it in a comic way. For example, look at the three regrets that Little Red voices on page 17.1–3. Can you find other examples of this device? Can you create a scene in which a character lists three things and the third is a surprising and comic departure from the first two?

9) The dialogue on page 19 between the wolf and the grandmother is a direct parody of a famous wolf scene in *Little Red Riding Hood*. How does this parody differ from the original? Sometimes the best parodies are those which differ only slightly from the original. How is this scene similar to the original? Can you find another parody of this scene in the play? How does it compare to the original? Try writing a parody of a famous scene or speech from literature. Keep it close to the original, but change just enough to make it funny.

10) Fairy tales are often full of truly horrible things happening to people—grandmothers being eaten by wolves, young girls being poisoned by witches, and so on. Can you find ways in which the playwright makes fun of this morbid tendency? Consider, for instance, the Queen’s line on page 21.15–16. Why do you suppose children’s fairy tales have such frightening scenes in the first place?

11) What is funny about Mrs. Hood’s line on page 28.1–3? In what way is this line a reversal of what you would expect a mother to say? Who do you think is the most grown-up person in the Hood household? Why?

12) Most comedies can be divided into comic characters and straight characters. The straight characters are those who behave in a more “normal” way and who provide a contrast to the zaniness of the comic characters. Which characters in *Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood* would you say are comic? Which are straight? Why? If you were the playwright what could you do to one of the straight characters to make him or her into a comic character? How could you turn a comic character into a straight character?

13) Charlie Lovett’s *Wychwood-under-Ooze* plays often combine elements of more than one fairy tale into a single plotline. How does he use the plot of another fairy tale near the end of *Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood*? How does this use differ from the original version in a comic way?

14) Prince Frank’s parents don’t seem to have much confidence in his ability to compete with his brothers. Why do you think this is? What lesson can be learned by the success of Prince Frank?

15) In Charlie Lovett’s play *Snew White*, a character explains that a play is about characters trying to get what they want. In what way does each character in *Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood* get what he want at the end of the play?