

Literary Element (page 266)

Persona

And of Clay Are We Created ISABEL ALLENDE

Persona is the voice through which the author tells his or her story. In fiction, the narrator is as much a character invented by the author as any of the other individuals in the story.

As readers, our perception of what is happening is shaped by the feelings and opinions of the narrator. The better we understand this persona, the more effectively we can evaluate what the narrator tells us.

In “And of Clay Are We Created,” the narrator knows Rolf well. She can imagine details of his interaction with Azucena that are true to his essence even if they did not really happen. Her insights about Rolf magnify our empathy for him and help us understand the story more deeply than would a television viewer watching reports on the rescue effort.

Because we see the incident through the narrator’s persona, it is helpful to analyze it. We can identify the personality traits that shape her recounting of the event and our emotional response to it.

One of the personality traits is named below, along with supporting evidence from the story.

Character Trait

Optimism

Demonstration of this Trait

When Rolf leaves to report on the disaster, the narrator does not doubt that he will be back the next day. At the end of the story, she is confident that he will recover from his sorrow and their relationship will be as it was before this incident.

ACTIVITY A

Directions Using incidents from the story, fill in the chart with examples of how the persona of the narrator demonstrates the personality traits below.

Character Trait

Persistence

Compassion

Love of Rolf

Storyteller

Cynicism towards government officials

Demonstration of this Trait

Reading Strategy (page 266)

Analyzing Sensory Details

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By appealing to all five senses, writers enlarge our sense of involvement as the action unfolds. When reading a story, observe how the author presents details of sound, sight, smell, taste and touch.

ACTIVITY B

Directions The phrases below were used in “And of Clay Are We Created” to heighten the reader’s impression of actually being present at the action of the story. Which of the five senses does each of the following employ?

1. “unbearable image of the head budding like a black squash from the clay”

2. “a prolonged roar announced the end of the world” _____
3. “the plastered-down tangle of her hair” _____
4. “the stench of corpses” _____
5. “her silk hair against his cheek” _____
6. “Rolf Carlé had a growth of beard, and dark circles beneath his eyes”

7. “Her tone was humble, as if apologizing for all the fuss.” _____
8. “was whipping it [a belt] in the air with the never-forgotten hiss of a viper coiled to strike” _____
9. “an immense desert of mire” _____

ACTIVITY C

Directions Look back at the story and fill in the chart below with additional sensory details.

Sense	Sensory Detail
Sight	_____
Sound	_____
Smell	_____
Touch	_____
Taste	_____

Selection Vocabulary Practice (page 266)**And of Clay Are We Created** ISABEL ALLENDE**Vocabulary****presentiment** *n.* a feeling something will happen**equanimity** *n.* the ability to remain calm and assured**fortitude** *n.* firm courage or strength of mind in the face of pain or danger**pandemonium** *n.* wild disorder and uproar**tribulation** *n.* great misery or distress; suffering**EXERCISE A** Words in Context

Write the word from the vocabulary list that best completes each sentence. Use each word only once.

- Jonathan knew he was face to face with _____ as flames engulfed the roof.
- _____ ensued as sirens sounded and crowds fled the building.
- Billowing storm clouds filled me with a _____ that intense lightning and thunder awaited us.
- If we have _____, we will complete our education despite frustrations and challenges.
- Jill remained calm as she faced the heckler with _____.

EXERCISE B Differences Among Words

Two words can be similar in meaning, yet the difference between them may be sufficient enough that they cannot be used interchangeably. Using the definitions above, how are the two paired words below similar? How are they different?

- Pandemonium and tribulation _____
- Fortitude and equanimity _____

EXERCISE C Responding to the Selection

Pretend that you are reporting on the radio about the mudslide disaster in "And of Clay Are We Created." On the back of this sheet, describe to listeners what you see. Use at least THREE vocabulary words in your account.