

Questions on *Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?* by Joyce Carol Oates

1. At what specific points in the story do your expectations about “where you are going” change? Why and how so? How might these shifts in your expectations relate to Connie’s?
2. To what extent is the major conflict in Oates’s story external (between Connie and Arnold, Connie and her family, Connie and her milieu)? To what extent is it internal (without Connie herself)? Why might she act as she does at the story’s end? What happens next, or does it matter?
3. Both Connie and Arnold Friend more than once suggest that he is, or should be, familiar to her. Aside from the fact she has seen him at least once before, why and how does he seem familiar? Why might that familiarity be significant, or how might it shape your sense of who Arnold is or what he might represent in the story?
4. Oates dedicated this story to Bob Dylan after listening to his song “It’s All Over Now, Baby Blue.” Examine Dylan’s song lyrics. How do they seem to inspire or relate to this story’s content?
5. How does the title relate to the story’s content?
6. Why is Connie’s fate left unknown at the story’s end? What do you think happened?
7. Is there a moral or lesson to this story? Who do you believe would make the most likely audience for this story?