

Loulou; or, The Domestic Life of the Language

Look back through the story and answer the following questions.

1. Why has this story got this title?
2. Look through the story and find all the discussions and references to language. What do you notice about them?
3. Look carefully at Loulou's relationship with the poets versus that with the accountant. Write down similarities and differences.
4. Why do you think Atwood made the men Loulou lives with poets?
5. Make a list of the poets' names and what we find out about them.
6. Find all the references to Loulou's work as a potter. What does this tell us about: her attitudes to her work; the poets' attitudes to her work; the accountant's attitude; the narrator's attitude?
7. Why do you think we, as readers, hear about Loulou working in the kitchen?
8. Find all references to appearance in the story and consider their significance.
9. In the story people are often labelled in some way or people have expectations of others; find all the examples you can of this and explain why this is important to the story.
10. Do you think Loulou's need to sort out her finances is integral to the story? What difference would it make, for example, if the man she went to see was an artist, a delivery man or an actor?
11. Do you find the end of the story happy; sad; uplifting; annoying; satisfactory; expected; unsatisfactory? Something else? Explain your ideas clearly.
12. Is Atwood trying to draw our attention to anything in particular in this story? Explore a variety of ideas rather than just choosing one. Is she, for example: highlighting inequalities between men and women in relationships; showing the way society has split between those who do 'proper' work and those who are creative; illustrating the futility of life?