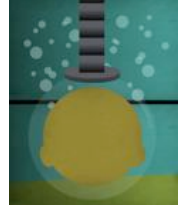




WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

The Deep, Deep World

Setting
(fantasy)



The Role of Setting in Fantasy

The setting of a story is wherever and whenever the story takes place. In fantasy, readers are limited to a particular time and place by two factors: 1) the imagination of the author, who creates an entirely new world in a fantastical setting and 2) their own imagination and ability to suspend belief long enough to be transported to this new place and time by the story.

One way authors get readers to suspend belief is to develop the setting so completely that readers can see, hear, and feel it. Often, a story may seem believable if it begins in a realistic setting and then moves into the realm of fantasy. Since authors get to “make up” the fantasy setting, they must create a place that, though not real, could be imagined. This is accomplished through detailed descriptions using sensory words and imagery. In addition to these vivid accounts, authors may also prepare maps of imaginary lands. These detailed maps help readers visualize the setting. Knowing the locations of places that are important to the story helps readers believe this alternate land could be a real place.

Questions to As Yourself About Setting

As you read fantasy, you may want to ask yourself these questions as you consider the setting:

- Does the author pay careful attention to the details in the setting?
- How has the author altered the story so that it takes place in a world other than the real world of today?
- What is the evidence that the setting has been altered? How was the setting altered? How does this setting differ from the real world?
- What is the evidence that time has been altered? How was time altered? How is this experience with time different from experiences with time in the real world?

References:

Norton, D. E. & Norton, S. E. (2007). *Through the eyes of a child: An introduction to children's literature (7 ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.