

Assignment 2

Name _____

Read the following folk tale. As you read, think about what lesson the story is trying to teach. Answer the questions.

Blonde Carrie and Brunette Carrie (folk tale from Belgium)

In a small village there lived a family with two little girls. Everyone was surprised that the mother gave both daughters the same name – Caroline. The older daughter was known as Blonde Carrie. She was the one everyone loved, because of her pretty face, rosy cheeks, and golden hair. The younger daughter was known as Brunette Carrie. She was the one everyone ignored, because of her ugly face, marked skin, and tangled black hair. Blonde Carrie knew how good and kind her little sister was, and loved her with all her heart.

One year the girls' mother died, and their nurse, Nellie, took over their care. Nellie loved Brunette Carrie as if she were her own child. However, she hated Blonde Carrie because everyone loved her more than her own dear Brunette Carrie. Merchants gave Blonde Carrie gifts, but ignored Brunette Carrie. Every time they gave Blonde Carrie a gift, though, she shared it with her beloved sister.

Nellie noticed all that happened, and it made her very angry that everyone treated Brunette Carrie so badly while they treated Blonde Carrie so nicely. She muttered to herself, "I will not allow this to continue happening!" She went to the well, where the ugly little girl was sitting, and fetched a pail of water. Then she fetched another and another. She went back and forth, fetching water, until Brunette Carrie asked, "Nellie, why are you carrying so much water into the house?"

The nurse replied, "Early tomorrow morning I'm going to hang a big pot over the fire and throw herbs and roots into it. As soon as the water is boiling, I'm going to throw Blonde Carrie into it. She'll be badly burned, and come out looking as ugly as you. Then no one will love her better than you."

That night, Brunette Carrie told her sister Nellie's plan in whispers. "You're going to be as ugly as me! That must never happen! We must run away in the morning before Nellie wakes up."

The children made their plan. Before they set off, Brunette Carrie told her slippers to answer Nellie's morning call as if they were her. And so when Nellie knocked at the door in the morning and asked if Carrie was awake, the slippers answered, "Yes, I'm in the kitchen lighting the fire."

Nellie went to the kitchen, but the fire was not lit, and the pot was cold. There was no sign of the two little girls. The nurse was frightened out of her wits. "What will I say when their father asks about them? I must hurry after them and fetch them back!"

As the girls ran away from the farm house, Blonde Carrie glanced back and saw Nellie's shawl sparkling in the sun. "We must run faster!" she gasped. But the girls soon reached a dark lake, and there was no way to get across to the other side.

A beautiful swan came gliding over the dark water. When it reached the shore, Blonde Carrie called out, "Oh swan, so fair and white, won't you help us in our plight? On your back please let us ride, and carry us safely to the other side." The swan agreed, the children climbed on its back, and it set off across the lake.

But halfway there, it said, "Both of you together weigh a ton, I cannot carry more than one. If I do, we're all undone!" Brunette Carrie instantly made a decision, said, "Farewell, dear sister!" and slipped off the swan's back into the water.

Blonde Carrie cried out her sister's name, but she had already disappeared under the water. She wept bitterly at the thought that her little sister had drowned and all on account of her. The swan carried the sobbing child to the other side of the lake. But what she did not know was that the water had done no harm to Brunette Carrie. Instead the waves sang to her, "We will gently rock you, rock you, softly, softly here and there. Your face and hair we'll wash you, wash you, 'til you are the fairest of the fair."

Blonde Carrie sat on the shore and cried and cried. All at once, the waves washed her sister up on the land at her feet. Brunette Carrie was safe and sound, but she was no longer the old Brunette Carrie. Her

cheeks were pink, her lips red, and her dark hair fell in soft waves around her shoulders and shone like silk. Brunette Carrie was now as beautiful as her sister! No one could have been happier than Blonde Carrie.

The sun's rays made a bridge over the lake, and hand in hand the children crossed over it, back over the lake and to their home. They found Nellie waiting on the other side, and she could hardly believe her eyes when she saw how beautiful Brunette Carrie had become.

"Nellie," Blonde Carrie said, "Brunette Carrie was ready to die so that I could live. But the lake kept her safe and washed away her ugliness. Now she's as beautiful to look at on the outside as she's always been on the inside. So you don't need to make a bath to make me ugly anymore."

Nellie was very ashamed of herself, and promised never to even think of doing such a thing again. "Now come along home," she said. "Your father will be looking for us."

So each girl took the other by the hand and together they skipped home alongside Nellie, to live happily ever after.

1. What "life lesson" is this folk tale trying to teach?
2. Which character is the most like you? Why do you think so?
3. Describe an important setting in this story, and explain why it was important.
4. Draw a Venn diagram to compare the two Carries.