Text analysis: “In which Eeyore Has a Birthday and Gets Two Presents”

1. Discuss the characters involved in the story and the ‘types’ that they represent. Which character is closer to the traits we associate with childhood? Which characters are furthest from this idea?

2. Discuss how characters use language and spelling. Which characters use language properly and which don’t?

3. Research the origin of Eeyore’s words “Here we go round the mulberry bush” early in the story. How does Pooh respond to this? What about “Umty-tiddly, umty-too. Here we go gathering Nuts and May”?

4. Is Milne’s notion of childhood in the story the same as in his poems?

5. The story is not overtly didactic, but it does emphasize certain moral values. Which are these?

6. What is Christopher Robin’s role in the story? When does he appear? Is Milne in the story?

7. Compare the Forest in this story with the garden in The Tale of Peter Rabbit.

8. Compare Shephard’s illustrations with Potter’s. In which work are pictures more important?

9. Do you agree with the following statement? Do you think the Pooh stories are attractive to adults?

“For adult readers, one of the special pleasures of the Pooh books is the portrayal of attitudes and personalities drawn for life. The animals represent a spectrum of emotions, outlooks, and approaches to life ... Pooh is not simply a child in the form of a bear, as a carefree bachelor he lives alone, comes and goes as he pleases, and has the independence and prerogatives of adulthood with none of its responsibilities ... he represents a form of wish fulfilment both for adults and for children”. (Wilson 166-7)

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