

Cather, "Paul's Case"
Wesley Advocates

4 August 2019

What is significant about our first meeting with Paul—in trouble, at school?
What details enhance the conflict?

Although Cather uses omniscient point of view—entering the minds of any or all characters early in the story, principally she tells the story through Paul (limited omniscient). Where does that shift of consciousness occur in the story, and how does it affect our view of character and plot? How does point of view affect our judgment about whether Paul is “a bad case”?

Why does Cather present the School Paul and the Theatre Paul before we see the Home Paul?

Where does Paul live? With whom? Why does he hate his circumstances? Describe his home, his room, his family, their Sundays. Why does Paul reject all of these?

How does Cather develop the contrast between Paul's actual and imaginative lives?

Why does Paul lie? What does he value? What does Paul want? How does Cather distinguish between art and artifice in the story? How important is each to Paul?

Why does Paul begin working at Denny and Carson's? How does that change allow him to escape? What does he escape from? Escape to?

Why does Cather provide such detail about how Paul spends his money in New York? About how he behaves? How does he differ from the college boy he meets?

What do Paul's trips to the stock theatre, to New York, to his Newark bosuicide have in common? Why does Cather choose Pittsburgh and New York as the two chief sites of action?

Identify the main symbols and what they stand for.

Why does Paul choose death? What does the last sentence mean? What does it tell us about Paul?

