

How does setting influence the mood?

How does setting influence the conflict?

How does setting influence the characters' perspectives?

SETTING

How does setting propel the action of the story?

How does setting provoke decisions?

How does setting help reveal aspects of character?

Excerpt From:

Sunrise Over
Fallujah

Even though the war is supposed to be over, there

is still fighting in and around Baghdad, and the sounds of bombing just outside the city at night are awesome. It is like a thunderstorm in the distance. When the night sky lights up, our guys cheer, but it scares the crap out of me. The booming is far away, but it's inside of me, too. It's not so much the noise, it's like something shaking in my chest. The president said that our mission has been accomplished. But there are still guys getting killed, and Captain Miller said they were only counting guys who died on the spot.

"A lot of them are being rotated back to Germany or the States and might not make it down the road," she said. "And nobody's talking about the wounds over here. Blast wounds are terrible."

"They covering stuff up?" Marla asked.

"I don't think so." Miller shrugged.

"They just making sure they talking in the sunshine," Jonesy said.

"Jonesy, you only make sense about fifty percent of the time," Marla said. "Everything else you say is beyond me."

Jonesy grinned.

But maybe he and Miller were right. Maybe more people were dying than made the news, but I didn't want to hear about it.

When we patrol north of Baghdad, outside of the safe zone, we see a lot of dead Iraqis. This morning we found two civilian cars, both riddled with bullets, both with bodies still lying in them. A small crowd of men, some weeping, some talking quietly, stood around the car, waiting for the ambulance to take the bodies away. I keep looking away from the dead because I don't want to see them. When I do look I see that the dead are not like human beings anymore. They are not neatly laid out but twisted at obscene angles on the side of the road. Sometimes there are mourners. They sit near the bodies, wailing and tearing at their clothes. They hold their hands up to the sky, as if asking, *Why is this human being lying here?* I know that human beings are not supposed to look like this. Sometimes there are just body parts lying along the side of the road. At first I felt a little bit ashamed at how scared seeing bodies makes me, but I notice that everyone in First Squad stops talking when we come on that kind of scene. We do it in public, but this is a private war.

We have the war on two radios. Jonesy has the news on all the

Excerpt from *Into the Wild* Chapter 1

Alaska has long been a magnet for dreamers and misfits, people who think the unsullied enormity of the Last Frontier will patch all the holes in their lives. The bush is an unforgiving place, however, that cares nothing for hope or longing.

"People from outside," reports Gallien in a slow drawl, "they'll pick up a copy of *Alaska* magazine, thumb through it, get to thinkin' 'Hey, I'm goin' to get on up there, live off the land, go claim me a piece of the good life.' But when they get here and actually head out into the bush—well, it isn't like the magazines make it out to be. The rivers are big and fast. The mosquitoes eat you alive. Most places, there aren't a lot of animals to hunt. Livin' in the bush isn't no picnic."

It was a two-hour drive from Fairbanks to the edge of Denali Park. The more they talked, the less Alex struck Gallien as a nutcase. He was congenial and seemed well educated. He peppered Gallien with thoughtful questions about the kind of small game that live in the country, the kinds of berries he could eat—"that kind of thing."

Still, Gallien was concerned. Alex admitted that the only food in his pack was a ten-pound bag of rice. His gear seemed exceedingly minimal for the harsh conditions of the interior, which in April still lay buried under the winter snowpack. Alex's cheap leather hiking boots were neither waterproof nor well insulated. His rifle was only .22 caliber, a bore too small to rely on if he expected to kill large animals like moose and caribou, which he would have to eat if he hoped to remain very long in the country. He had no ax, no bug dope, no snowshoes, no compass. The only navigational aid in his possession was a tattered state road map he'd scrounged at a gas station.

A hundred miles out of Fairbanks the highway begins to climb into the foothills of the Alaska Range. As the truck lurched over a bridge across the Nenana River, Alex looked down at the swift current and remarked that he was afraid of the water. "A year ago down in Mexico," he told Gallien, "I was out on the ocean in a canoe, and I almost drowned when a storm came up."