



The Owl Service by Alan Garner

Talking Points

1 Much of the tension in the story relates to the rivalry between Roger and Gwyn. Why is there so much animosity between the two of them? How does this relate to the Welsh myth that is often referred to?

2 The Owl Service looks at family relationships in a frank and honest way. Alison and Roger have just become step-brother and step-sister. How well do you feel they know each other? How does this affect their relationship with Roger's father Clive?

3 Although Alison's mother is mentioned in the book, we never see her or meet her. Is this deliberate? What does this add to the story?

What do we learn of Alison's relationship with her mother?

4 What's the link between the plates and the Mabinogion?

5 Alison and Roger have very different backgrounds to Gwyn. How does this make any difference to them? Does it matter to you?

6 There's a strong sense of the supernatural about The Owl Service. How does the author build atmosphere and tension? How does it affect each of the characters in a different ways?

Activity **Problem Page**

They've got a problem? Have you the answer?

Imagine you are one of the main characters in *The Owl Service* – Alison, Roger or Gwyn – and you are going to write in to a problem page about your dilemma.

Try and put yourself in that person's position and see it through his or her eyes. What are the difficulties? Is life just too stressful? Are you finding it hard to cope? Write about your relationships with the other teenagers, as well as the adults around you.

Then, write a response from the problem page editor. Try and be objective, and offer helpful advice that will be of real benefit.

See if you can find a way to help them through a tricky time in their lives.