

Stump, Jordan, Trans. *Rose Mellie Rose*. Marie Redonnet. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Rose discovered me one morning in the grotto. I had just been born. Rose lives in the only house in the area of the falls. It's a wooden house, still in good condition. Rose says the wood from the forest no longer sells because people have stopped building houses of wood. She called her house the Hermitage. The Hermitage is also the name of the site. Rose turned her house into a souvenir shop. That was a good idea. The travelers who come up to the falls and who go to see the grotto buy a souvenir of the Hermitage. Rose had moved to the falls a little before she found me in the grotto. She was already old. Rose has been old as long as I have known her. She would not have given up her souvenir shop for anything in the world.

Rose is even older now. She says she doesn't know what her age is anymore. She must be very old. She is so old that I don't know what her age could be either. She is stooped and wrinkled. She can scarcely see at all now. She has difficulty walking, and leans on her stick. She moves more and more awkwardly. She doesn't want to admit it, and she walks through the shop as if she could see perfectly well. The souvenirs are valuable and fragile. When I see Rose in the shop with her stick, I am afraid something will happen to the souvenirs. I am the one who runs the shop. Rose does nothing but wait for the travelers to come. She has to wait longer and longer between travelers. People must be forgetting about the site. Rose says she will close the shop when her last souvenir is sold. She says it will soon be time for me to leave the falls.

When Rose found me in the grotto, I had nothing. She has always said she hadn't seen anyone come up to the grotto for several days before that. She named me Mellie because she thinks Mellie is the most beautiful name, along with Rose. She did not register me at the municipal offices, because the municipal offices are in Oât and Oât is several days from the falls. Rose has never been back to Oât since she moved to the Hermitage. She has always said that what matters is not for me to be registered at the municipal offices of Oât, but for me to be named Mellie. (9-10)

1. How does Mellie describe Rose? Who is Rose? What does she do? What is she like?
2. There are several questions to which Mellie does not have an answer. What are these missing pieces of information? Why doesn't Mellie have all the facts? What effect does this uncertainty have on your understanding of the situation Mellie describes? Why do you think that Redonnet would write a story in this way?
3. After reading Mellie's account, a reader has the impression that a number of changes are either taking place or are about to take place. What are these changes? What factors are responsible for bringing about these new circumstances? Do you get any sense of Mellie's reaction to these changes? Why or why not?
4. Characterize the relationship between Mellie and Rose.

5. What do you think Rose means when she tells Mellie that "what matters is not...to be registered at the municipal offices of Oât, but...to be named Mellie"? Does this statement tell you anything about Rose and/or what is important to her?

6. Comment on the role of repetition in this passage. Which words and/or sentence structures are used most frequently? Why do you think Redonnet decided to write in this fashion?