1. \*\*What happens in the story?\*\*

Finch, a mortuary owner in his late fifties, discovers a fatal car accident while hiking in the Appalachian mountains. He finds a young woman's body thrown from a wrecked 1950s coupe. After holding her hand and grieving, he walks to town for help. He returns with two uniformed men who retrieve the body. Afterward, alone with the wreckage, Finch reflects on life's impermanence before returning home with renewed purpose.

2. \*\*What is the theme?\*\*

The story explores mortality's omnipresence and how proximity to death shapes perspective on life. It examines the relationship between wilderness and civilization, suggesting nature's indifference to human tragedy. The narrative addresses how those who work with death (like morticians) navigate between professional distance and human compassion, finding meaning in life's transience rather than despair.

3. \*\*Does it propose other interpretations, in addition to the literal one?\*\*

\*\*Rating: 4\*\*

4. \*\*Which interpretation is it?\*\*

The story functions as meditation on the mortician's psychological landscape—the woman's body mirrors his daily work, yet affects him differently in the wild. The mountains growing "taller" while he becomes "smaller" suggests spiritual diminishment through routine exposure to death. The accident scene could represent his confrontation with mortality outside professional boundaries. The wilderness becomes a space where death's meaning shifts from managed ritual to raw encounter.