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"A WHITE HERON" BY SARAH ORNE JEWETT



In this unit you will be reading another short story. In this story you will be learning about point of view- the vantage point from which a story is told. Point of view can be divided into three categories.

1 **Omniscient point of view**-is the “all-knowing” point of view. In this, the person telling the story knows everything that goes on in the story. The narrator is not a character in the story; he can tell the reader everything the characters are thinking or feeling.

2 **First person point of view**-is the point of view in which the narrator is a character in the story. The story is told by using “I.” The narrator can express only his/her own beliefs, feelings, etc.-nothing about other characters.

3 **Limited third person point of view**-is the point of view in which the narrator is outside the story, but relates the story from only one character’s perspective. The narrator can reveal the thoughts of that character, but can only express information about other characters through observation.

Directions:

Before you read the story there are some vocabulary words that need defined.



Now answer questions 1 - 6

Now let's read "A White Heron" by Sarah Orne Jewett.

A White Heron



Sarah Orne Jewett

The woods were already filled with shadows one June evening, though a bright sunset still glimmered faintly among the trunks of the trees. A little girl was driving home her cow, a plodding, dilatory, provoking creature in her behavior, but a valued companion for all that. They were going away from the western light, and striking deep into the dark woods, but their feet were familiar with the path, and it was no matter whether their eyes could see it or not.

The companions followed the shady wood-road, the cow taking slow steps, and the child very fast ones. Suddenly this little woods-girl is horror-stricken to hear a clear whistle not very far away. The enemy had discovered her, and called out in a very cheerful and persuasive tone, "Halloa, little girl, how far is it to the road?" and a trembling Sylvia answered almost inaudibly, "A good ways." "I have been hunting for some birds," the stranger said kindly, "and I have lost my way, and need a friend very much. Don't be afraid," he added gallantly. "Speak up and tell me what your name is,

and whether you think I can spend the night at your house, and go out gunning early in the morning.” “My name is Sylvy” she replied. Mrs. Tilley was standing in the doorway when the trio came into view. The cow gave a loud moo by way of explanation. The young man stood his gun beside the door and dropped a heavy game-bag beside it; then he bade Mrs. Tilley good-evening, and repeated his wayfarer’s story, and asked if he could have a night’s lodging.

“Dear sakes, yes,” responded the hostess, whose long slumbering hospitality seemed to be easily awakened. “Dan, my boy, was a great hand to go gunning,” she explained sadly. “I never wanted for pa’ttridges or gray squer’ls while he was to home. He’s been a great wand’rer, I expect, and he’s no hand to write letters. There, I don’t blame him, I’d ha’ seen the world myself if it had been so I could. “Sylvia takes after him.”

“So Sylvy knows all about birds, does she?” he exclaimed as he looked round at the little girl who sat, very demure but increasingly sleepy, in the moonlight. “I am making a collection of birds myself. I have been at it ever since I was a boy.” “I have shot or snared every one myself. I caught a glimpse of a white heron three miles from here on Saturday, and I have followed it in this direction.”

Sylvia’s heart gave a wild beat; she knew that strange white bird, and had once stolen softly near where it stood in some bright green swamp grass, away over at the other side of the woods. There was an open place where the sunshine always seemed strangely yellow and hot, where tall, nodding rushes grew, and her grandmother had warned her that she might sink in the soft black mud underneath and never be heard of more. Not far beyond were the salt marshes and beyond those was the sea, the sea which Sylvia wondered and dreamed about, but never had looked upon, though its great voice could often be heard above the noise of the woods on stormy nights. “I can’t think of anything I should like so much as to find that heron’s nest,” the handsome stranger was saying. “I would give ten dollars to anybody who could show it to me,” he added desperately, “and I mean to spend my whole vacation hunting for it if need be. Perhaps it was only migrating, or had been chased out of its own region by some bird of prey.”

The next day the young sportsman hovered about the woods, and Sylvia kept him company, having lost her first fear of the friendly lad, who proved to be most kind and sympathetic. As the day waned, Sylvia still watched the young man with loving admiration. She had never seen anybody so charming and delightful. The woman’s heart, asleep in the child, was vaguely thrilled by a dream of love. Some premonition of that great power stirred and swayed these young foresters who traversed. What a spirit of adventure, what wild ambition! What fancied triumph and delight and glory for the later morning when she could make a secret! It was almost too real and too great for the childish heart to bear.

As the evening began to fall, they drove the cow home together, and Sylvia smiled with pleasure when they came to the place where she heard the whistle and was afraid only the night before.

Later that night, there was a huge tree asleep yet in the paling moonlight, and small and hopeful Sylvia began with utmost bravery to mount to the top of it, with tingling, eager blood coursing the channels of her whole frame, with her bare feet and fingers, that pinched and held the bird's claws to the monstrous ladder reaching up, up, almost to the sky itself.

Sylvia's face was like a pale star, if one had seen it from the ground, when the last thorny bough was past, and she stood trembling and tired but wholly triumphant, high in the tree-top. Yes, there was the sea with the dawning sun making a golden dazzle over it, and toward that glorious east flew two hawks with slow-moving pinions. How low they looked in the air from that height when before one had only seen them far up, and dark against the blue sky. Their gray feathers were as soft as moths; they seemed only a little way from the tree, and Sylvia felt as if she too could go flying away among the clouds. Sylvia could see the white sails of ships out at sea, and the clouds that were purple and rose-colored and yellow at first began to fade away.

Now look down again, Sylvia, where the green marsh is set among the shining birches and dark hemlocks; there where you saw the white heron once you will see him again; look, look! A white spot of him like a single floating feather comes up from the dead hemlock and grows larger, and rises, and comes close at last, and goes by the landmark pine with steady sweep of wing and outstretched slender neck and crested head.

She knows his secret now, the wild, light, slender bird that floats and wavers, and goes back like an arrow presently to his home in the green world beneath. Then Sylvia, well satisfied, makes her perilous way down again, not daring to look far below the branch she stands on, ready to cry sometimes because her fingers ache and her lamed feet slip. Here she come snow, paler than ever, and her worn old frock is torn and tattered, and smeared with pine pitch. The grandmother and the sportsman stand in the door together and question her, and the splendid moment has come to speak of the dead hemlock-tree by the green marsh.

But Sylvia does not speak after all, though the old grandmother fretfully rebukes her, and the young man's kind appealing eyes are looking straight in her own. She remembers how they watched the sea and the morning together, and Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away.

Dear loyalty, that suffered a sharp pang as the guest went away disappointed later in the day that could have served and followed him and loved him as a dog loves! Were the birds better friends than their hunter might have been,--who can tell? Whatever treasures were lost to her, woodlands and

summer-time, remember! Bring your gifts and graces and tell your secrets to this lonely country child!



Now answer questions 7-20