White Heron By Jewett Essay, Research Paper

In "A White Heron", by Sarah Jewett, Sylvia’s great love for nature

and animals outweighs her and her family’s needs. Sylvia’s great passion for

animals and nature leads to her great knowledge of the outdoors. Sylvia’s

expertise of birds including the white heron forces her to make a choice between

saving the white heron or helping her family. Sylvia does both of these things

because she is close to nature. Clearly, Syliva’s great understanding of the

outdoors and animals comes from her fondness of nature and its creatures. Sylvia

knows a lot about many different types of birds. A man, known as the stranger,

enthusiastically asks Sylvia, " ‘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" (827). The stranger finds out that

Sylvia knows a lot about birds and that she may be able to help him find a white

heron for his bird collection. Sylvia’s love for the outdoors is also apparent

when she states that she would have liked to have her home to be outside rather

than in doors because of it’s beauty and peacefulness. Sylvia said, "this

was a beautiful place to live in, and she never should wish to go home"

(824). It is obvious that Sylvia is happier outdoors in nature, rather than in a

stuffy house. She also likes to watch the animals in their natural environment.

Secondly, with Sylvia’s extraordinary wisdom of birds, she is forced to make the

decision: either to help support her family or to save the white heron from the

stranger. Sylvia has an idea where the white heron is, and may possibly be able

to help the stranger find the bird for his collection. The Stranger announced,

" ‘?The little white heron, it is,’ and (the Stranger) turned again to

look at Sylvia with hope of discovering that the rare bird was one of her

acquaintances"(827). The stranger asks Sylvia if she knows anything about

the white heron and if she can help him find bird. He is excited that Sylvia can

help him. To his surprise, Sylvia knows where the white heron’s and has seen it

recently. Another time Sylvia proves her love for nature is when she does not

sell the white heron for money. Sylvia went on a hunt with the stranger to find

the white heron and found it. When Sylvia and the stranger find the white heron

he offers her money for it but she refuses. When she sees the heron "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. He can

make them rich with money; he has promised it, and they are poor now"(832).

This shows how much Sylvia loves the animals and how she would never want to

harm any of them, not even for the chance to become rich and solve all of her

family’s problems. In Sarah Jewett’s, "A White Heron" Sylvia’s great

love for nature and animals outweighs her and her family’s needs. Sylvia’s

knowledge of the outdoors comes from her passion for nature and animals. Saving

the white heron was a choice that Sylvia had to make because of her great

knowledge and love of animals. The above examples prove that Sylvia’s love for

nature was much stronger than her family’s needs and her own.