

Student Essay on A White Heron: An Allegorical Essay

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Essay

An allegorical story replaces every object and individual with a constructed representation of a symbol for a greater cause. "A White Heron" shows a journey of maturation and coming of age.

With the protagonist, Sylvie, being a little girl scared of the city and loving the farm life, she broadens her friendship from befriending a placid cow, to a maturing boy. This young hunter is in search for the white heron, "a queer tall white bird with soft feathers and long thin legs" (p. 59) which symbolizes Sylvie's innocence, not yet found. The boy recognizes that Sylvie knows of this birds whereabouts and his intelligence slowly wins her heart over. She goes in search of this bird, recollecting that it's nest may be seen from the top of an old pine. Sylvie is determined to climb this tree, representing her life, even though on the way there are many burdens. She was "ready to cry because her fingers ache and her lamed feet slip" (p. 63). At the top of this tree, it is known that one can see the ocean, which represents syntax. The ocean proves that the human is a miniscule part of the infinite film that we do not play a role in.

Sylvie's search of this bird is the hunt for her own innocence that can be lost with this boy. Her maturation reveals itself to the reader when she can point out the nest to the clever boy, but instead she keeps the secret to herself; she saved the life of the white heron and "cannot tell the heron's secret and give it's life away" (p. 64).