

# Reading Choice Board- Week 1 Fiction

3/23-3/27

7th Grade

You will need to use the short story attached or a book of your choosing.

Choose **At LEAST 3** activities- all from different columns

**In addition to the choice board, students are encouraged to read 30 minutes daily.**

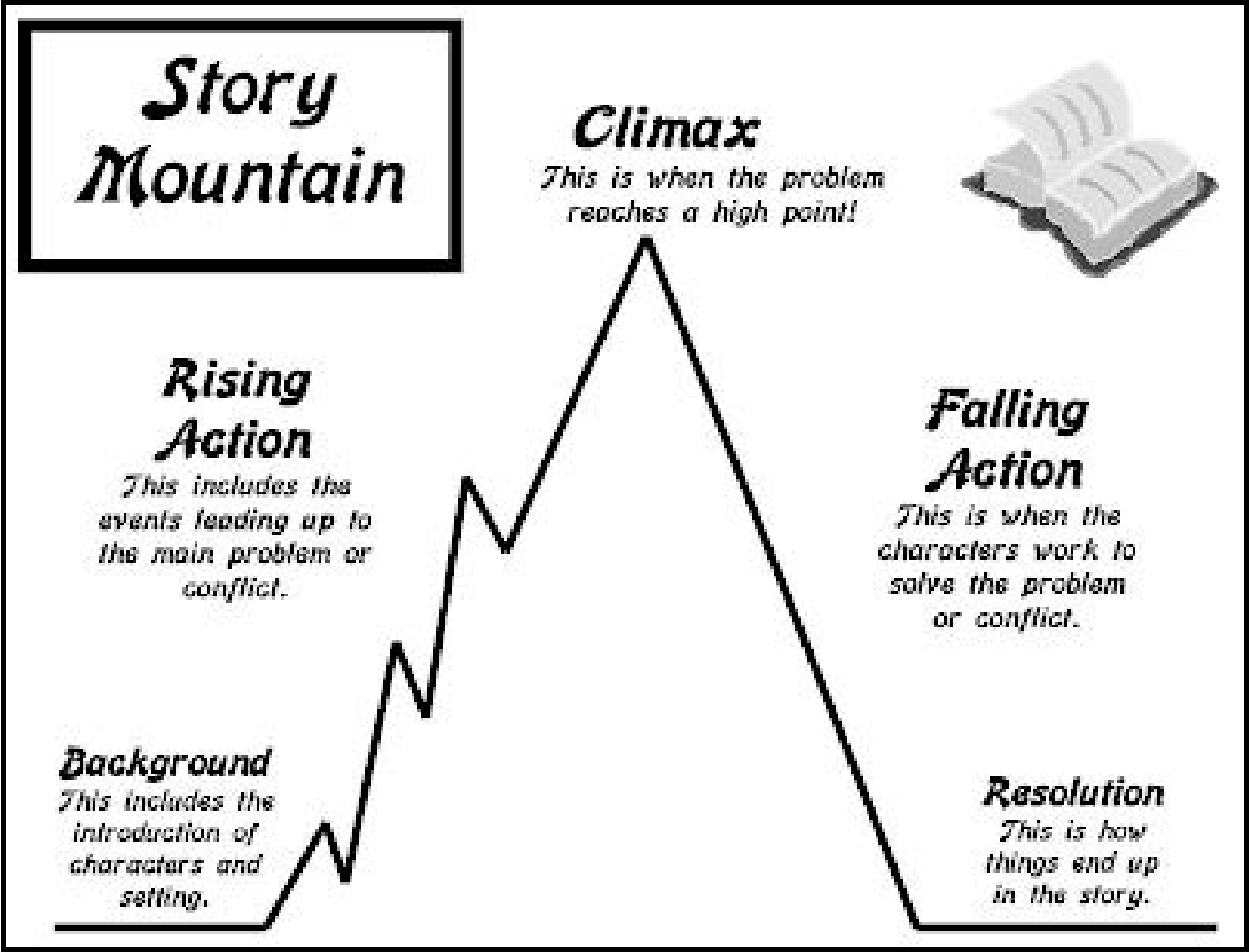
**Please visit your teacher's website for more information and extension activities.**

<p><u>Reading</u> I can read and comprehend grade-appropriate texts independently.</p> <p>TEK 7.4</p>	<p><u>Comprehension</u> I can evaluate details read to determine key ideas.</p> <p>TEK 7.5G</p>	<p><u>Reader Response</u> I can use text evidence to support an appropriate response.</p> <p>TEK 7.6C</p>	<p><u>Genre</u> I can analyze plot elements, including the use of foreshadowing and suspense, to advance the plot.</p> <p>TEK 7.7 C</p>	<p><u>Composition and Writing</u> I can use the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and uses appropriate conventions.</p> <p>TEK 7.10</p>
Ask someone to read a page of your book or the story aloud to you. Listen carefully and ask questions to help you understand. Write 2-3 sentences explaining the message of the story and supporting your message with information from the text.	Read a fictional book/story of your choice. As you read, make notes to support your understanding of what the text is about.	Create a book-talk about the book/story you read today. Watch the video for details.  <a href="https://youtu.be/klm1mTngLq4">https://youtu.be/klm1mTngLq4</a>	Using information from the text, answer the following question:  List the elements of the plot. Thinking about how those elements work together, what message is the author conveying in this story?	Write a summary about the story or your book using at least 2 subordinating conjunctions.
Go to your teacher's website and read any of the texts that are available. Talk to someone about what you read. Write a summary of your discussion.	Create an image that represents the meaning of the story. Provide a brief explanation of why you created that particular image.	Make a COLLAGE! Find pictures from magazines or online and create a collage that represents what happened in your story. Try and find pictures to illustrate the characters, problem, solution, setting, & events! Write a brief description to explain your image choices.	Create an illustrated timeline of events from a chapter or short story.  Write a paragraph explaining how those events are connected.	Complete the No Red Ink task assigned by your teacher.  <a href="https://www.noredink.com/">https://www.noredink.com/</a>
Meet with your teacher online or send them a video of you reading aloud. (see your teacher's website for more details.)	As you are reading the story or your book, write down 3 questions you have for the author. Make sure the questions will help you understand more about the character, setting, or plot of the story.	Make a personal connection to your book or the story. In 3-5 sentences, describe how the text connects to your life in some way.	Find an important moment in the book or story. In 2-3 sentences, explain why the author placed that moment there.	Write a poem from one of the character's point of view.
Read your story or book aloud to someone. Write a reflection about how comfortable you were reading aloud and identify any words you struggled to pronounce or didn't understand.	Select one sentence from the story/book you are reading that you feel is really important. Explain why you think that sentence is important to the story.	Choose 2 characters from your book and create a T-Chart. Write 5 adjectives to describe each character and show the evidence from the text to support the adjectives you've used to describe these characters.  Write a sentence explaining how the characters' personalities influence the resolution of the story.	Create a comic strip with important events from the story or a chapter of your book. Include at least 4 boxes and text bubbles.	Think about the problem of the story you are reading. Write a paper describing a time when you or someone you know faced a similar problem.
Read a book or magazine silently for 10 minutes. Write a reflection about what you found interesting while reading and what you feel was the most challenging.	Make a connection between the key ideas in the story/book you are reading and something in the world today. Write 2-3 sentences about how they are connected.	What is one inference you can make about the text? Provide text evidence to support your answer.	What point of view (POV) is the story of your book told from? How does that point of view help the reader understand the plot? What would be hidden if told from another POV?	Write an essay explaining why it is important to stick together during tough times.

# Point of View

1st Person	2nd Person	3rd Person
The story is told by one of the characters.	The story is told by a narrator talking to the reader.	The story is told by a narrator.
<b>Key Words:</b> I Me We	<b>Key Words:</b> You Your	<b>Key Words:</b> He She They

Third Person	
<b>Third Person Limited</b>	<b>Third Person Omniscient</b>
The narrator knows the thoughts of <u>one</u> character.	The narrator knows the thoughts of <u>every</u> character.



END OF WEEK REFLECTION

Complete the following questions at the end of the week.  
Submit to your teacher digitally or keep a written log to share later.

Which 3 activities were your favorite?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What were 2 big ideas from your reading?

- 1.
- 2.

What is 1 question you still have? Or What is one way that I can help you?

- 1.

# Reading Choice Board- Semana 1 Ficción

3/23-3/27

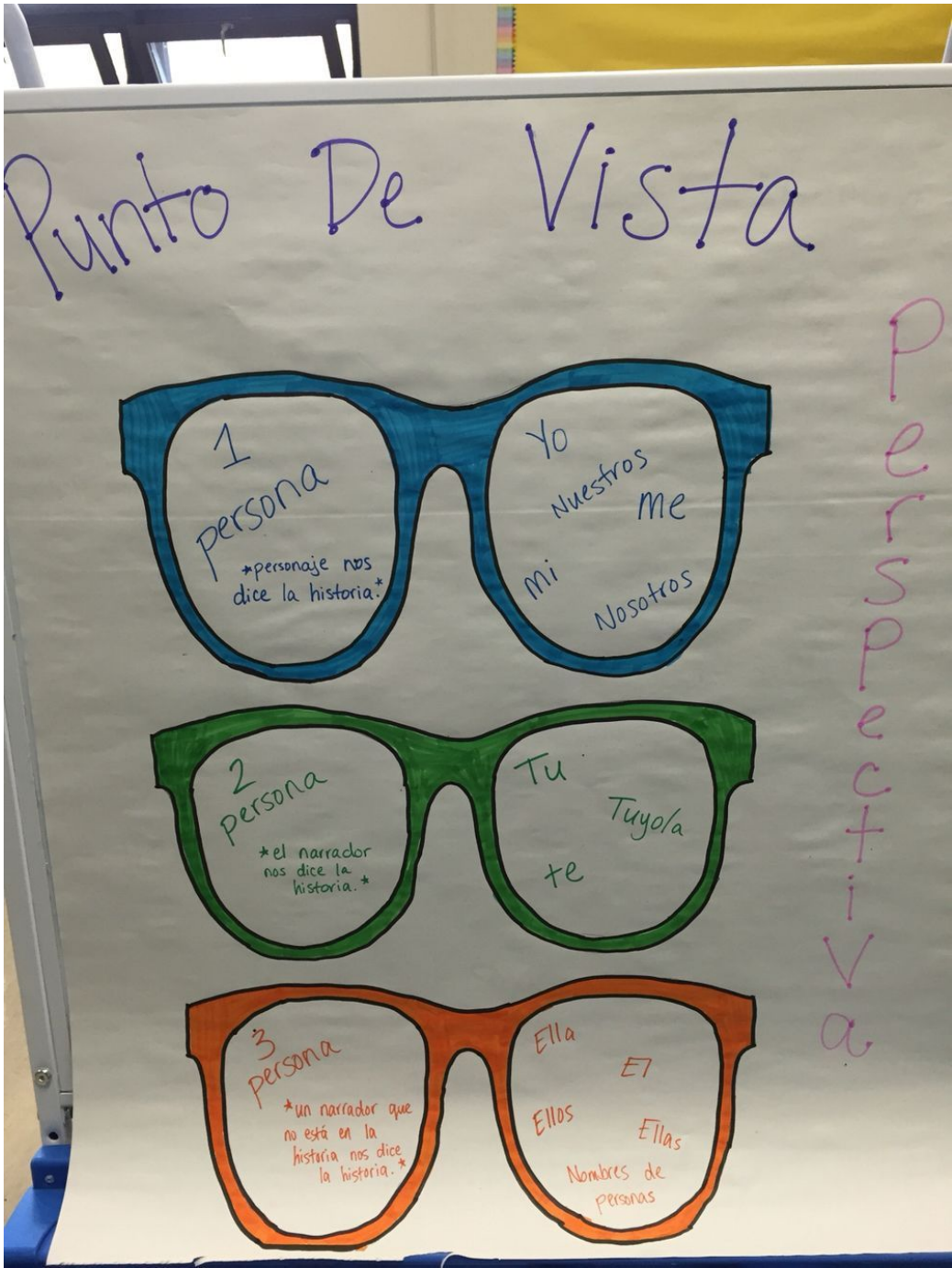
Deberá usar el cuento adjunto o un libro de su selección.

Elija al menos 3 actividades, todas de diferentes columnas

Además del tablero de selección, se le pide a los estudiantes que lean 30 minutos al día.

Visite el sitio web de su maestro para obtener más información y actividades de extensión.

<p><u>Lectura</u></p> <p>Puedo leer y comprender textos apropiados para el grado de forma independiente.</p> <p>TEK 7.4</p>	<p><u>Comprensión</u></p> <p>Puedo evaluar los detalles leídos para determinar ideas clave.</p> <p>TEK 7.5G</p>	<p><u>Respuesta del lector</u></p> <p>Puedo usar evidencia textual para respaldar una respuesta apropiada.</p> <p>TEK 7.6C</p>	<p><u>Género</u></p> <p>Puedo analizar elementos de la trama, incluida la acción ascendente, el clímax, la acción descendente y la resolución</p> <p>TEK 7.7C</p>	<p><u>Composición y escritura</u></p> <p>Puedo usar el proceso de escritura de forma recursiva para componer varios textos que sean legibles y use convenciones apropiadas.</p> <p>TEK 7.10</p>
<p>Pídale a alguien que le lea en voz alta una página de su libro o la historia. Escuche con atención y haga preguntas para ayudarlo a comprender. Escriba 2-3 oraciones explicando el mensaje de la historia y apoyando su mensaje con información del texto.</p>	<p>Lea un libro / historia ficticio de su elección. Mientras lee, tome notas para apoyar su comprensión de lo que trata el texto.</p>	<p>Crea una charla sobre el libro / historia que leíste hoy. Mira el video para más detalles.</p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/kln1mTngLq4">https://youtu.be/kln1mTngLq4</a></p>	<p>Usando la información del texto, responda la siguiente pregunta:</p> <p>Haga una lista de los elementos de la trama. Pensando en cómo esos elementos funcionan juntos, ¿qué mensaje transmite el autor en esta historia?</p>	<p>Escribe un resumen sobre la historia o tu libro usando al menos 2 conjunciones subordinantes.</p>
<p>Vaya al sitio web de su maestro y lea cualquiera de los textos disponibles. Habla con alguien sobre lo que lees. Escribe un resumen de tu discusión.</p>	<p>Crea una imagen que represente el significado de la historia. Proporcione una breve explicación de por qué creó esa imagen en particular.</p>	<p>¡Hacer un collage!</p> <p>Encuentre imágenes de revistas o en línea y cree un collage que represente lo que sucedió en su historia. ¡Intenta encontrar imágenes para ilustrar los personajes, problemas, soluciones, escenarios y eventos!</p> <p>Escriba una breve descripción para explicar sus elecciones de imagen.</p>	<p>Cree una línea de tiempo ilustrada de eventos de un capítulo o cuento.</p> <p>Escribe un párrafo que explique cómo están conectados esos eventos.</p>	<p>Completa la tarea Sin tinta roja asignada por tu profesor.</p> <p><a href="https://www.noredink.com/">https://www.noredink.com/</a></p>
<p>Reúnase con su maestro en línea o envíele un video de usted leyendo en voz alta. (vea el sitio web de su maestro para más detalles.)</p>	<p>Mientras lee la historia o su libro, escriba 3 preguntas que tenga para el autor. Asegúrese de que las preguntas lo ayuden a comprender más sobre el personaje, el escenario o la trama de la historia.</p>	<p>Haga una conexión personal con su libro o la historia. En 3-5 oraciones, describe cómo el texto se conecta a tu vida de alguna manera.</p>	<p>Encuentra un momento importante en el libro o la historia. En 2-3 oraciones, explique por qué el autor colocó ese momento allí.</p>	<p>Escribe un poema desde uno de los puntos de vista del personaje.</p>
<p>Lea su historia o libro en voz alta a alguien. Escribe una reflexión sobre lo cómodo que estabas leyendo en voz alta e identifica las palabras que te costó pronunciar o no entendiste.</p>	<p>Seleccione una oración de la historia / libro que está leyendo que considere que es realmente importante. Explica por qué piensas que esa oración es importante para la historia.</p>	<p>Elige 2 personajes de tu libro y crea un T-Chart. Escribe 5 adjetivos para describir cada personaje y muestra la evidencia del texto para apoyar los adjetivos que has usado para describir estos caracteres.</p> <p>Escribe una oración que explique cómo las personalidades de los personajes influyen en la resolución de la historia.</p>	<p>Crea una tira cómica con eventos importantes de la historia o un capítulo de tu libro. Incluya al menos 4 cuadros y burbujas de texto.</p>	<p>Piensa en el problema de la historia que estás leyendo. Escriba un documento describiendo un momento en que usted o alguien que conoce enfrentó un problema similar.</p>
<p>Lea un libro o revista en silencio durante 10 minutos. Escriba una reflexión sobre lo que le pareció interesante mientras leía y lo que consideró más desafiante.</p>	<p>Haga una conexión entre las ideas clave en la historia / libro que está leyendo y algo en el mundo de hoy. Escriba 2-3 oraciones sobre cómo están conectados.</p>	<p>¿Cuál es una inferencia que puedes hacer sobre el texto? Proporcione evidencia de texto para respaldar su respuesta.</p>	<p>¿Desde qué punto de vista (POV) se cuenta la historia de su libro? ¿Cómo ayuda ese punto de vista al lector a comprender la trama? ¿Qué estaría oculto si se contara desde otro POV?</p>	<p>Escriba un ensayo explicando por qué es importante mantenerse juntos durante los momentos difíciles.</p>



REFLEXIÓN DE FIN DE SEMANA

Complete las siguientes preguntas al final de la semana.  
Envíe a su maestro digitalmente o mantenga un registro escrito para compartir más tarde.

¿Cuáles 3 actividades fueron tus favoritas?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

¿Cuáles fueron 2 grandes ideas de tu lectura?

- 1.
- 2.

¿Cuál es 1 pregunta que aún tienes? ¿O cuál es una forma en que puedo ayudarlo?

- 1.

## The Wallet

Jenny stared at the store window longingly. There was nothing in this world that she wanted more than a Happy Hannah doll and all that currently separated her from the hottest doll of the holiday season was a thin piece of glass and \$29.95 plus tax. Unfortunately, Jenny didn't even have the 95 cents, so she let out a deep sigh and continued walking home.

As she stomped across the slushy sidewalk, she considered her options. She thought about taking over her brother's chores. If she shoveled the driveway, washed the dishes all month, dusted, and vacuumed... she fidgeted with her fingers as she added it up... she would have eleven dollars. Just as she was concluding that this would not be enough, something caught her eye. It was a small, pink triangle poking out from the snow on the roadside.

Jenny walked over to the triangle and removed it from the snow, whereupon she realized that it was not a triangle at all but a rectangle. More importantly she realized that the rectangle was a fashionable leather wallet. She unzipped the bulging wallet to find a thick wad of folded green bills. Jenny gasped and nearly dropped it. She gathered herself and went to close the snap on the wallet when she saw some plastic cards. One was a credit card and the other an ID.

Jenny stared at the old woman in her driver's license photo. The woman had a beautiful smile that reminded Jenny of her grandma. Jenny sighed and then she shoved the wallet into her purse. She turned around and walked in the direction from which she came.

Jenny's heart beat quickly as she entered the store. She had long dreamed about this moment, but something didn't feel right about it. As she approached a stack of Happy Hannah dolls, she pushed away her feelings. She grabbed one of the dolls off of the stack. She felt electricity surging through her body as she began walking toward the checkout.

As Jenny approached the register, the Happy Hannah Show theme song began playing. Jenny looked around startled, and then realized that it was her mobile phone. She checked the caller ID and saw that it was her grandma. In one hand she held the Happy Hannah doll and in the other she held the phone on which her grandma was calling. Jenny heart filled with love and appreciation as she thought of her sweet old grandma. She put the doll down and picked up the phone call.

"Hi, Grandma? I'm going to be a little bit late tonight. I've got to drop something off... Yeah, it was good... O.K... Alright... I love you too." Jenny left the store and walked through the slush all the way to the other side of town. She thought of her grandma as she rang the bell at 301 West Street. The woman who answered the door had been crying recently and looked distressed. Jenny recognized her from the ID. "Here, I found this in the snow," Jenny said as she handed her the wallet. The woman face glowed with joy and relief.

"Oh, good God! This is the money for the orphanage! Now we can bring the children the puppies for Christmas! It's a miracle!" The woman took the wallet smilingly. She was so appreciative that she gave Jenny a cookie and a ride home. Jenny had sort of hoped that she would reward her good deed with a Happy Hannah doll, but Jenny did get a chocolate chip cookie, and chocolate chip cookies were her favorite.

After doing her brother's chores for three months, Jenny finally got a Happy Hannah doll. She hated doing all of that extra work, but she knew that she had made the right choice when she was done because she could play with her Happy Hannah doll *and* look her grandma in the eyes.



# Doris Is Coming

Short Story by **ZZ Packer**



## BACKGROUND

**ZZ Packer** (born 1973) is an award-winning writer of short fiction. She nicknamed herself ZZ because her given name, Zuwena (Swahili for “good”), was hard for teachers to pronounce. Recognized as a talent at an early age, Packer’s first significant publication was in *Seventeen* magazine, when she was 19. “Doris Is Coming” is a short story about a young African American girl growing up Louisville, Kentucky, in the early 1960s.



## SETTING A PURPOSE

*As you read, pay attention to the dialogue between characters and Doris’s thoughts and feelings. What do these elements reveal about the historical setting of the story?*

- 1 **S**he walked from Stutz’s and up along Fourth Street. When she got to Claremont, the street where she lived, she kept going, past Walnut and Chestnut and all the other streets named after trees. She hit the little business district, which was still lit for New Year’s, the big incandescent bulbs on wires like buds growing from vines, entwining the trees and lighting the shop facades. When she walked farther, she felt, for the first time, some purpose other than solitude motivating her. She rushed, and did not know why, until she found it, Clovee’s Five and Dime. As soon as she saw it, she knew what she was doing.
- 2 It was warm inside, and she made her way to the soda fountain, even warmer from the grill’s heat. A white man stood at the ice cream machine and whirled a shake. Two white men sat at the counter and talked in low, serious tones, occasionally sucking up clots of shake through a straw.



3 There was one waitress, hip propped against the side of the counter, wiping the countertop with a rag that had seen cleaner days. Without looking up she said, "Sorry. We don't serve colored people."

4 "Good," Doris said. "I don't eat them." She remembered Helen telling her that this was the line someone used during a sit-in, and Doris was glad to have a chance to use it.

5 The waitress frowned, confused, but when she finally got it, she laughed. "Seriously though," the waitress said, turning solemn. "I can't serve you."

6 The two men talking looked over at her and shook their heads. They began talking again, occasionally looking over at Doris to see if she'd left.

7 "What if I stay?"

8 The waitress looked to the man making the shake, eyes pleading for help. "I don't know. I don't know. I just don't make the rules and I feel sorry for you, but I don't make 'em."

9 The man walked over with a shake and gave it to the waitress, who bent the straw toward herself and began to drink it. "Look," the man said to Doris, "I wouldn't sit here. I wouldn't do that."



10 "You wouldn't?"

11 "I wouldn't if I were you."

12 She sat. Shaking, she brought out her World History book. She'd made a book cover for it with a paper bag, and she was glad she'd done it because she was sweating so much it would have slipped from her hands otherwise. She set it on the counter, opened it, as if she did this everyday at this very shop, and tried to read about the Hapsburgs, but couldn't.

13 It occurred to her that other students who did sit-ins were all smarter than she; they'd banded together, and had surely told others of their whereabouts, whereas she had foolishly come to Clovee's all by herself. She stared at her book and didn't dare look up, but from the corner of her eye she noticed when the two men who'd been talking got up and left.



- 14 The man at the ice cream machine made himself some coffee and beckoned the waitress to him. When he whispered something to her, she swatted him with the rag, laughing.
- 15 Once Doris felt the numbness settle in her, she felt she could do it. She tried at the Hapsburgs again.
- 16 The waitress said, "Student? High school?"
- 17 "Yes, Ma'am. Central."
- 18 "My daughter's over at Iroquois."
- 19 "We played them last Friday." Doris didn't know what the scores were, didn't care, but had heard about the game over the intercom.
- 20 "Well." The waitress started wiping the counter again. Going over the same spots.
- 21 When Doris closed her book, about to leave, she said, "I just want you to know I'm leaving now. Not because you're making me or because I feel intimidated or anything. I just have to go home now."
- 22 The waitress looked at her.
- 23 "Next time I'll want some food, all right?"
- 24 "We can't do that, but here's half my shake. You can have it. I'm done."
- 25 The shake she handed over had a lipstick ring around the straw, and a little spittle. Doris knew she wouldn't drink it, but she took it anyway. "Thanks, ma'am."
- 26 Outside Clovee's Five and Dime, the world was cold around her, moving toward dark, but not dark yet, as if the darkness were being adjusted with a volume dial. Whoever was adjusting the dial was doing it slowly, consistently, with infinite patience. She walked back home and knew it would be too late for dinner, and the boys would be screaming and her father wanting his daily beer, and her mother worried sick. She knew that she should hurry, but she couldn't. She had to stop and look. The sky had just turned her favorite shade of barely lit blue, the kind that came to windows when you couldn't get back to sleep but couldn't quite pry yourself awake.



6.

## **“The Third Wish”**

A short story by Joan Aiken

---

Once there was a man who was driving in his car at dusk on a Spring evening through part of the forest of Savernake. His name was Mr. Peters. The primroses were just beginning but the trees were still bare, and it was cold; the birds had stopped singing an hour ago. As Mr. Peters entered a straight, empty stretch of road he seemed to hear a faint crying, and a struggling and thrashing, as if somebody was in trouble far away in the trees. He left his car and climbed the mossy bank beside the road. Beyond the bank was an open slope of beech trees leading down to thorn bushes through which he saw the gleam of water. He stood a moment waiting to try and discover where the noise was coming from, and presently heard a rustling and some strange cries in a voice which was almost human-and yet there was something too hoarse about it at one time and too clear and sweet at another. Mr. Peters ran down the hill and as he neared the bushes he saw something white among them which was trying to extricate itself; coming closer he found that it was a swan that had become entangled in the thorns growing on the bank of the canal.

The bird struggled all the more frantically as he approached, looking at him with hate in its yellow eyes, and when he took hold of it to free it, hissed at him, pecked him, and thrashed dangerously with its wings which were powerful enough to break his arm. Nevertheless he managed to release it from the thorns, and carrying it tightly with one arm, holding the snaky head well away with the other hand (for he did not wish his eyes pecked out), he took it to the verge of the canal and dropped it in.

The swan instantly assumed great dignity and sailed out to the middle of the water, where it put itself to rights with much dabbling and preening, smoothing its feathers with little showers of drops. Mr. Peters waited to make sure that it was all right and had suffered no damage in its struggles.

Presently the swan, when it was satisfied with its appearance, floated in to the bank once more. and in a moment, instead of the great white bird, there was a little man all in green with ~ golden crown and long beard, standing by the water. He had fierce glittering eyes and looked by no means friendly.

"Well, Sir," he said threateningly, "I see you are presumptuous enough to know some of the laws of magic. You think that because you have rescued-by pure good fortune-the King of the Forest from a difficulty, you should have some fabulous reward."

"I expect three wishes, no more and no less," answered Mr. Peters, looking at him steadily and with composure.

"Three wishes, he wants, the clever man~ Well, I have yet to hear of the human being who made any good use of his three wish they mostly end up worse off than they started. Take your three wishes then-" he flung three dead leaves in the air "-don't blame me if you spend the last wish in undoing the work of the other two."

Mr. Peters caught the leaves and put two of them carefully in his notecase. When he looked up the swan was sailing about in the middle of the water again, flicking the drops angrily down its long neck.

Mr. Peters stood for some minutes reflecting on how he should use his reward. He knew very well that the gift of three magic wishes was one which brought trouble more often than not, and he had no intention of being like the forester who first wished by mistake for a sausage, and then in a rage wished it on the end of his wife's nose, and then had to use his last wish in getting it off again. Mr. Peters had most of the things which he wanted and was very content with his life. The only thing that troubled him was that he was a little lonely, and had no companion for his old age. He decided to use his first wish and to keep the other two in case of an emergency. Taking a thorn he pricked his tongue with it, to remind himself not to utter rash wishes aloud. Then holding the third leaf and gazing round him at the dusky undergrowth, the primroses, great beeches and the blue-green water of the canal, he said:

"I wish I had a wife as beautiful as the forest."

A tremendous quacking and splashing broke out on the surface of the water. He thought that it was the swan laughing at him. Taking no notice he made his way through the darkening woods to his car, wrapped himself up in the rug and went to sleep.

When he awoke it was morning and the birds were beginning to call. Coming along the track towards him was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen, with eyes as blue-green as the canal, hair as dusky as the bushes, and skin as white as the feathers of swans.

"Are you the wife that I wished for?" asked Mr. Peters.

"Yes I am," she replied. "My name is Leita."

She stepped into the car beside him and they drove off to the church on the outskirts of the forest, where they were married. Then he took her to his house in a remote and lovely valley and showed her all his treasures-the bees in their white hives, the Jersey cows, the hyacinths, the silver candlesticks, the blue cups and the lustre bowl for putting primroses in. She admired everything, but what pleased her most was the river which ran by the foot of his garden.

"Do swans come up here?" she asked. "Yes, I have often seen swans there on the river," he told her, and she smiled.

Leita made him a good wife. She was gentle and friendly, busied herself about the house garden, polished the bowls, milked the cows and mended his socks. But as time went by Mr. Peters began to feel that she was not happy. She seemed restless, wandered much in the garden, and sometimes when he came back from the fields he would find the house empty and she would only return after half an hour or so with no explanation of where she had been. On these occasions she was always especially tender and would put out his slippers to warm and cook his favorite dish-Welsh rarebit with wild strawberries-for supper.

One evening he was returning home along the river path when he saw Leita in front of him, down by the water. A swan had sailed up to the verge and she had her arms round its neck and

the swan's head rested against her cheek. She was weeping, and as he came nearer he saw that tears were rolling, too, from the swan's eyes.

"Leita, what is it?" he asked, very troubled.

"This is my sister," she answered. "I can't bear being separated from her."

Now he understood that Leita was really a swan from the forest, and this made him very sad because when a human being marries a bird it always leads to sorrow.

"I could use my second wish to give your sister human shape, so that she could be a companion to you," he suggested.

"No, no," she cried, "I couldn't ask that of her."

"Is it so very hard to be a human being?" asked Mr. Peters sadly.

"Very, very hard," she answered.

"Don't you love me at all, Leita?"

"Yes, I do, I do love you," she said, and there were tears in her eyes again. "But I miss the old life in the forest, the cool grass and the mist rising off the river at sunrise and the feel of the water sliding over my feathers as my sister and I drifted along the stream."

"Then shall I use my second wish to turn you back into a swan again?" he asked, and his tongue pricked to remind him of the old King's words, and his heart swelled with grief inside him.

"Who would darn your socks and cook your meals and see to the hens?"

"I'd do it myself as I did before I married you," he said, trying to sound cheerful.

She shook her head. "No, I could not be as unkind to you as that. I am partly a swan, but I am also partly a human being now. I will stay with you."

Poor Mr. Peters was very distressed on his wife's account and did his best to make her life happier, taking her for drives in the car, finding beautiful music for her to listen to on the radio, buying clothes for her and even suggesting a trip round the world. But she said no to that; she would prefer to stay in their own house near the river.

He noticed that she spent more and more time baking wonderful cakes-jam puffs, petits fours,

éclaircs and meringues. One day he saw her take a basketful down to the river and he guessed that she was giving them to her sister.

He built a seat for her by the river, and the two sisters spent hours together there, communicating in some wordless manner. For a time he thought that all would be well, but then he saw how thin and pale she was growing.

One night when he had been late doing the accounts he came up to bed and found her weeping in her sleep and calling:

"Rhea! Rhea! I can't understand what you say! Oh, wait for me, take me with you!"

Then he knew that it was hopeless and she would never be happy as a human. He stooped down and kissed her goodbye, then took another leaf from his notecase, blew it out of the window, and used up his second wish.

Next moment instead of Leita there was a sleeping swan lying across the bed with its head under its wing. He carried it out of the house and down to the brink of the river, and then he said, "Leita! Leita!" to waken her, and gently put her into the water. She gazed round her in astonishment for a moment, and then came up to him and rested her head lightly against his hand; next instant she was flying away over the trees towards the heart of the forest.

He heard a harsh laugh behind him, and turning round saw the old King looking at him with a malicious expression.

"Well, my friend! You don't seem to have managed so wonderfully with your first two wishes, do you? What will you do with the last? Turn yourself into a swan? Or turn Leita back into a girl?"

"I shall do neither," said Mr. Peters calmly.

"Human beings and swans are better in their own shapes."

But for all that he looked sadly over towards the forest where Leita had flown, and walked slowly back to his empty house.

Next day he saw two swans swimming at the bottom of the garden, and one of them wore the gold chain he had given Leita after their

marriage; she came up and rubbed her head against his hand.

Mr. Peters and his two swans came to be well known in that part of the country; people used to say that he talked to the swans and they understood him as well as his neighbors. Many people were a little frightened of him. There was a story that once when thieves tried to break into his house they were set upon by two huge white birds which carried them off bodily and dropped them in the river.

As Mr. Peters grew old everyone wondered at his contentment. Even when he was bent with rheumatism he would not think of moving to a drier spot, but went slowly about his work, milking the cows and collecting the honey and eggs, with the two swans always somewhere close at hand.

Sometimes people who knew his story would say to him:

"Mr. Peters, why don't you wish for another wife?"

"Not likely," he would answer serenely.

"Two wishes were enough for me, I reckon. I've learned that even if your wishes are granted they don't always better you. I'll stay faithful to Leita."

One autumn night, passers-by along the road heard the mournful sound of two swans singing. All night the song went on, sweet and harsh, sharp and clear. In the morning Mr. Peters was found peacefully dead in his bed with a smile of great happiness on his face. In between his hands, which lay clasped on his breast, were a withered leaf and a white feather.

## Checkouts Cynthia Rylant

Her parents had moved her to Cincinnati, to a large house with beveled glass windows and several porches and the *history* her mother liked to emphasize. You'll be lonely at first, they admitted, but you're so nice you'll make friends fast. And as an impulse tore at her to lie on the floor, to hold to their ankles and tell them she felt she was dying, to offer anything, anything at all, so they might allow her to finish growing up in the town of her childhood, they firmed their mouths and spoke from their chests, and they said, It's decided.

They moved her to Cincinnati, where for a month she spent the greater part of every day in a room full of beveled glass windows, sifting through photographs of the life she'd lived and left behind. But it is difficult work, suffering, and in its own way a kind of art, and finally she didn't have the energy for it anymore, so she emerged from the beautiful house and fell in love with a bag boy at the supermarket. Of course, this didn't happen all at once, just like that, but in the sequence of things that's exactly the way it happened.

She liked to grocery shop. She loved it in the way some people have to drive long country roads, because doing it she could think and relax and wander. Her parents wrote up the list and handed it to her, and off she went without complaint to perform what they regarded as a great sacrifice of her time and a sign that she was indeed a very nice girl. She had never told them how much she loved grocery shopping, only that she was "willing" to do it. She had an intuition which told her that her parents were not safe for sharing such strong, important facts about herself. Let them think they knew her.

Once inside the supermarket, her hands firmly around the handle of the cart, she would lapse into a kind of reverie and wheel toward the produce. Like a Tibetan monk in solitary meditation, she calmed to a point of deep, deep happiness; this feeling came to her, reliably, if strangely, only in the supermarket.

Then one day the bag boy dropped her jar of mayonnaise, and that is how she fell in love.

He was nervous—first day on the job—and along had come this fascinating girl, standing in the checkout line with the unfocused stare one often sees in young children, her face turned enough away that he might take several full looks at her as he packed sturdy bags full of food and the goods of modern life. She interested him because her hair was red and thick, and in it she had placed a huge orange bow, nearly the size of a small hat. That was enough to distract him, and when finally it was her groceries he was packing, she looked at him and smiled, and he could respond only by busting her jar of mayonnaise on the floor, shards of glass and oozing cream decorating the area around his feet.

She loved him at exactly that moment, and if he'd known this, perhaps he wouldn't have fallen into the brown depression he fell into, which lasted the rest of his shift. He believed he must have looked a fool in her eyes, and he envied the sureness of everyone around him: the cocky cashier at the register, the grim and harried their breaks. He wanted a second chance. Another chance to be confident and say witty things to her as he threw tin cans into her bags, persuading her to allow him to help her to her car so he might learn just a little about her, check out the floor of the car for signs of hobbies or fetishes, and the bumpers for clues as to beliefs and loyalties.

But he busted her jar of mayonnaise, and nothing else worked out for the rest of the day.

Strange, how attractive clumsiness can be. She left the supermarket with stars in her eyes, for she had loved the way his long, nervous fingers moved from the conveyor belt to the bags, how deftly (until the mayonnaise) they had picked up her items and placed them into her bags. She had loved the

way the hair kept falling into his eyes as he leaned over to grab a box or a tin. And the tattered brown shoes he wore with no socks. And the left side of his collar turned in rather than out.

The bag boy seemed a wonderful contrast to the perfectly beautiful house she had been forced to accept as her home, to the *history* she hated, to the loneliness she had become used to, and she couldn't wait to come back for more of his awkwardness and dishevelment.

Incredibly, it was another four weeks before they saw each other again. As fate would have it, her visits to the supermarket never coincided with his schedule to bag. Each time she went to the store, her eyes scanned the **checkouts** at once, her heart in her mouth. And each hour he worked, the bag boy kept one eye on the door, watching for the red-haired girl with the big orange bow.

Yet in their disappointment these weeks, there was a kind of ecstasy. It is reason enough to be alive, the hope you may see again some face which has meant something to you. The anticipation of meeting the bag boy eased the girl's painful transition into her new and jarring life in Cincinnati. It provided for her an anchor amid all that was impersonal and unfamiliar, and she spent less time on thoughts of what she had left behind as she concentrated on what might lie ahead. And for the boy, the long often tedious hours at the supermarket, which provided no challenge other than that of showing up the following workday . . . these hours became possibilities of mystery and romance for him as he watched the electric doors for the girl in the orange bow.

And when finally they did meet up again, neither offered a clue to the other that he, or she, had been the object of obsessive thought for weeks. She spotted him as soon as she came into the store, but she kept her eyes strictly in front of her as she pulled out a cart and wheeled it toward the produce. And he, too, knew the instant she came through the door—though the orange bow was gone, replaced by a small but bright yellow flower instead—and he never once turned his head in her direction but watched her from the corner of his vision as he tried to swallow back the fear in his throat.

It is odd how we sometimes deny ourselves the very pleasure we have longed for and which is finally within our reach. For some perverse reason she would not have been able to articulate, the girl did not bring her cart up to the bag boy's checkout when her shopping was done. And the bag boy let her leave the store, pretending no notice of her.

This is often the way of children, when they truly want a thing, to pretend that they don't. And then they grow angry when no one tries harder to give them this thing they so casually rejected, and they soon find themselves in a rage simply because they cannot say yes when they mean yes. Humans are very complicated. (And perhaps cats, who have been known to react in the same way, though the resulting rage can only be guessed at.)

The girl hated herself for not checking out at the boy's line, and the boy hated himself for not catching her eye and saying hello, and they most sincerely hated each other without having every exchanged even two minutes of conversation.

Eventually—in fact, within the week—a kind and intelligent boy who lived very near her beautiful house asked the girl to a movie, and she gave up her fancy for the bag boy at the supermarket. And the bag boy himself grew so bored with his job that he made a desperate search for something better and ended up in a bookstore where scores of fascinating girls lingered like honeybees about a hive. Some months later the bag boy and the girl with the orange bow again crossed paths, standing in line with their dates at a movie theater, and, glancing toward the other, each smiled slightly, then looked away, as strangers on public buses often do when one is moving off the bus and the other is moving on.