

READING ACTIVITY

1/4

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

Read the excerpt and do the exercises below.

One evening in July 1849, I went to see my mother and sister at their house on Hampstead Heath. My Italian friend Pesca was there, and he had good news for me. He had found me a job in Cumberland in the north of England: four months teaching drawing to the nieces of Mr Frederick Fairlie of Limmeridge House. On the evening before I left, I went to say goodbye to my mother and sister. It was past midnight when I left their house to walk home to my apartment in London. As I stood at the crossroads, I felt someone suddenly touch my arm. I turned around quickly in fear and surprise. There, behind me, stood a woman dressed completely in white. 'Is this the road to London?' she asked. She was young and thin with a pale, worried face. After a pause, I replied, 'Yes. Sorry for not answering you before. I was surprised to see you—the road was empty just a moment ago.' She indicated a tree nearby. 'I hid behind that tree to see what kind of man you were. Don't worry. I've done nothing wrong—but there's been an accident. Will you help me?' 'Certainly.'

'I need to go to London. I have a friend there. Could you help me to get a carriage?'

As we walked together down the London road, looking for a carriage, she said, 'Do you know any aristocrats?'

'Some,' I replied, surprised by her strange question. 'Why do you ask?'

'Because I hope that there's one you don't know—one who lives in Hampshire.'

'What's his name?'

'I can't say his name; it upsets me too much! Tell me the names of the aristocrats you know.'

I named three gentlemen in whose houses I had taught drawing.

'You don't know him!' she cried with relief.

'Has this gentleman treated you badly? Is there a reason you're here alone at this hour?'

'I can't talk about it,' she said.

We left the heath and entered an area of houses. After a while she asked me if I lived in London.

'Yes, but tomorrow I'm going to Cumberland for four months.'

'Cumberland!' she cried. 'I was happy there once, in a village called Limmeridge. A lady called Mrs Fairlie was kind to me, but now she and her husband are both dead.'



READING ACTIVITY

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EXERCISES

1 Choose the correct answer – a, b or c.

1. The narrator went to Hampstead Heath to see

- a. his Italian friend, Pesca.
- b. his mother and sister.
- c. a drawing teacher.

2. The narrator was going to Cumberland

- a. on holiday.
- b. to visit his family.
- c. because he found a job.

3. At the crossroads the narrator

- a. met a woman who was thin and pale.
- b. got a carriage.
- c. hid behind a tree.

4. The woman dressed in white

- a. was an aristocrat.
- b. wanted to go to London.
- c. lived in Hampshire.

5. Mrs Fairlie and her husband

- a. were aristocrats.
- b. were the woman's parents.
- c. were both dead.



READING ACTIVITY

3/4



2 Are these statements true (T) or false (F)?

1. The narrator of the story is a drawing teacher. T F
2. The narrator had an apartment in Cumberland. T F
3. The woman in white was very worried about something. T F
4. Before talking to the narrator, the woman hid behind a tree. T F
5. The woman in white asked about the road to Limmeridge. T F
6. The narrator did not know any aristocrats. T F

