

Read the passages. Then answer the questions that follow.

Sara Sees Red

by Brendan Wolfe

1 As usual, Sara was lost inside her head, her boots crunching along the trail as she revisited a recent conversation with a classmate. She plotted the back-and-forth of what was said the way she might chart a graph problem in math class, or the way an author might draft a scene of dialogue: as if it were an equation to be solved, or a piece of art to be composed. Real life didn't work that way, of course. It wasn't algebra; it wasn't an exciting novel. But for Sara that was the point. She must fix it so that it was.

2 When the clouds began to darken, the jays and finches winged across her path with unusual agitation.¹ They had noticed a slight shift in the wind, the telltale drop in barometric pressure, and they shouted their warnings to whoever cared to listen. This didn't include Sara. She undertook her weekly outing with the sole purpose of crawling deep inside herself, away from all the bleating sounds of city life and oh-so-many troubling conversations. Her obliviousness² served as a kind of refuge. As she climbed the sometimes-bumpy trail, dodging stones and the occasional copperhead snake, she hoped to find a peaceful place to sit.

3 The woman appeared as Sara rounded a bend. Several years older than Sara and underdressed for this altitude, the woman lay sprawled across the path, her leg snapped like a twig in a storm. Sara gasped. The woman turned her head in Sara's direction and their eyes met for a single, terrifying moment.

4 "Can you help me?" the woman said.

5 Sara could only stare at her. The woman wore a navy-blue T-shirt with the logo of an athletic company, and cargo shorts. Her legs were matted with sweat, dirt, and tiny flecks of red. Sara saw what might have been a cap some distance away, but no water bottle, no backpack.

¹ **agitation:** a condition of being upset

² **obliviousness:** a state of being unaware or forgetful of one's surroundings

- 6 “Please,” the woman said. She was out of breath, fatigued by the obvious pain. Her eyes briefly fluttered and then closed.
- 7 Assuming the tactic of a surprised snake, Sara didn’t move. She had not counted on anyone else hiking this particular trail. In fact, over the past weeks she had come to think of it as hers alone. When she reached the summit, nothing could separate her from the sun. The air itself, thin as it was, seemed to step aside so that all she knew were warmth and deep quiet. Who was this person to intrude upon that?
- 8 A clap of thunder startled Sara into a full gallop. Back down the path she raced, only stopping when her lungs reached their capacity. Hands on her knees, she gasped for breath, choking back tears.
- 9 “Please,” the woman had said.
- 10 Sara rummaged through her pack until she pulled out a small black cell phone. No signal. Her legs felt rubbery, so she sat down in the dirt, idly watching the first drops of rain break through the tree cover.
- 11 Why had she said “please”? As Sara wondered about that single word, she found herself rewriting the scene in her head. She kept thinking, *Shouldn’t she have been more dramatic, especially if she was really hurt that bad?* She imagined a blood-curdling scream like she had read about in a pirate novel. Then she imagined herself to be the kind of person she knew she wasn’t. In her mind, when the woman attempted to pull herself to her feet to meet Sara, Sara shook her head to stop her. Then Sara gently braced the woman’s back against a tree. In Sara’s head, it was the woman who hesitated to speak, not Sara.
- 12 By now the skies had opened up, turning the trail slick with mud and dangerous. Feeling a chill, Sara ducked under a bush, away from a responsibility she hadn’t asked for and didn’t know how to meet. She waited there, hoping that courage would strike like lightning.

from *Stone Fox*

by John Reynolds Gardiner

1 Searchlight sprang forward with such force that little Willy couldn't hang on. If it weren't for a lucky grab, he would have fallen off the sled for sure.

2 In what seemed only seconds, little Willy and Searchlight had traveled down Main Street, turned onto North Road, and were gone. Far, far ahead of the others. They were winning. At least for the moment.

3 Stone Fox started off dead last. He went so slowly down Main Street that everyone was sure something must be wrong.

4 Swish! Little Willy's sled flew by the schoolhouse on the outskirts of town, and then by the old deserted barn.

5 Swish! Swish! Swish! Other racers followed in hot pursuit.

6 "Go, Searchlight! Go!" little Willy sang out. The cold wind pressed against his face, causing his good eye to shut almost completely. The snow was well packed. It was going to be a fast race today. The fastest they had ever run.

7 The road was full of dangerous twists and turns, but little Willy did not have to slow down as the other racers did. With only one dog and a small sled, he was able to take the sharp turns at full speed without risk of sliding off the road or losing control.

8 Therefore, with each turn, little Willy pulled farther and farther ahead.

9 Swish! The sled rounded a corner, sending snow flying. Little Willy was smiling. This was fun!

10 About three miles out of town the road made a half circle around a frozen lake. Instead of following the turn, little Willy took a shortcut right across the lake. This was tricky going, but Searchlight had done it many times before.

- 11 Little Willy had asked Mayor Smiley if he was permitted to go across the lake, not wanting to be disqualified. "As long as you leave town heading north and come back on South Road," the mayor had said, "anything goes!"
- 12 None of the other racers attempted to cross the lake. Not even Stone Fox. The risk of falling through the ice was just too great.
- 13 Little Willy's lead increased.
- 14 Stone Fox was still running in last place. But he was picking up speed.
- 15 At the end of five miles, little Willy was so far out in front that he couldn't see anybody behind him when he looked back.
- 16 He knew, however, that the return five miles going back into town would not be this easy. The trail along South Road was practically straight and very smooth, and Stone Fox was sure to close the gap. But by how much? Little Willy didn't know.
- 17 Doc Smith's house flew by on the right.
- 18 Grandfather's farm was coming up next.
- 19 When Searchlight saw the farmhouse, she started to pick up speed. "No, girl," little Willy yelled. "Not yet."
- 20 As they approached the farmhouse, little Willy thought he saw someone in Grandfather's bedroom window. It was difficult to see with only one good eye. The someone was a man. With a full beard.
- 21 It couldn't be. But it was! It was Grandfather!
- 22 Grandfather was sitting up in bed. He was looking out the window.

- 23 Little Willy was so excited he couldn't think straight. He started to stop the sled, but Grandfather indicated no, waving him on. "Of course," little Willy said to himself. "I must finish the race. I haven't won yet."
- 24 "Go, Searchlight!" little Willy shrieked. "Go, girl!"
- 25 Grandfather was better. Tears of joy rolled down little Willy's smiling face. Everything was going to be all right.
- 26 And then Stone Fox made his move.
- 27 One by one he began to pass the other racers. He went from last place to eighth. Then from eighth place to seventh. Then from seventh to sixth. Sixth to fifth.
- 28 He passed the others as if they were standing still.
- 29 He went from fifth place to fourth. Then to third. Then to second.
- 30 Until only little Willy remained. . . .

22

Read this sentence from "Sara Sees Red."

"Sara saw what might have been a cap some distance away, but no water bottle, no backpack." (paragraph 5)

What does the word cap mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ a tight round lid
- Ⓑ a hat with a bill
- Ⓒ the limit of something
- Ⓓ the top of a bird's head

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

In paragraph 10 of "Sara Sees Red," the author compares Sara's legs to rubber.

Which quality of rubber is he most likely thinking of?

- Ⓐ its ability to bend under pressure
- Ⓑ its use in making tires for fast cars
- Ⓒ its presence in certain kinds of trees
- Ⓓ its value in protecting things from water

Part B

Which words from the story support the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "Sara rummaged through her pack"
- Ⓑ "until she pulled out a small black cell phone"
- Ⓒ "so she sat down in the dirt"
- Ⓓ "idly watching the first drops of rain"

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

"Sara Sees Red" is told in third person entirely from Sara's point of view. Which of the following is the best example of how this limits what Sara knows in the story?

- Ⓐ Sara does not realize how much she gets lost in thought when she hikes.
- Ⓑ Sara does not have any real experience dealing with a sudden crisis.
- Ⓒ Sara does not have any idea why she goes on weekly hikes in the woods.
- Ⓓ Sara does not understand what the wounded woman is thinking or feeling.

Part B

Which sentence from the story supports the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "As usual, Sara was lost inside her head, her boots crunching along the trail as she revisited a recent conversation with a classmate."
- Ⓑ "She undertook her weekly outing with the sole purpose of crawling deep inside herself, away from all the bleating sounds of city life and oh-so-many troubling conversations."
- Ⓒ "She kept thinking, *Shouldn't she have been more dramatic, especially if she was really hurt that bad?*"
- Ⓓ "Feeling a chill, Sara ducked under a bush, away from a responsibility she hadn't asked for and didn't know how to meet."

How would "Sara Sees Red" be different if the woman who is hurt were the narrator rather than Sara?

Write your answer on the lines below.

In *Stone Fox*, what does it mean when the narrator says that the other racers followed Willy and Searchlight "in hot pursuit" (paragraph 5)?

- Ⓐ The racers are chasing closely after them.
- Ⓑ The racers are getting warm from all their efforts.
- Ⓒ The racers are trailing at an ever-growing distance.
- Ⓓ The racers are feeling angry about falling behind.

How do Stone Fox and the woman on the path differ?

- Ⓐ Stone Fox is cruel and dishonest, while the woman on the path is trying to help Sara.
- Ⓑ Stone Fox is Little Willy's friend, while the woman on the path does not know Sara.
- Ⓒ Stone Fox is afraid of Little Willy's skill, while the woman on the path fears being alone.
- Ⓓ Stone Fox is skilled and powerful, while the woman on the path needs someone's help.

Both "Sara Sees Red" and *Stone Fox* are adventure stories. How do their topics differ in the passages?

- Ⓐ "Sara Sees Red" is about being alone, and *Stone Fox* is about making friends.
- Ⓑ "Sara Sees Red" is about running from fear, and *Stone Fox* is about competing in a race.
- Ⓒ "Sara Sees Red" is about showing courage, and *Stone Fox* is about the need for adventure.
- Ⓓ "Sara Sees Red" is about staying alive, and *Stone Fox* is about solving problems.

Which idea can be found in both stories?

- Ⓐ To stay safe outdoors, you must pay attention to your surroundings.
- Ⓑ The outdoors can be a welcome escape from the bustle of the city.
- Ⓒ Until you've crossed the finish line, don't quit running the race.
- Ⓓ Living too much inside your head can lead you to miss out on life.