

“My Sister’s Marriage” Guiding Questions

These go in order and are meant to help you understand the events of the story.

1. What is the narrator’s name?
2. Who is Olive in relation to the narrator?
3. What does the narrator admit, in the first paragraph, to doing with Olive’s letters?
4. Where is the narrator’s mother?
5. How has the father raised his daughters? How especially has the father treated Olive?
6. What does the narrator believe was the beginning of Olive’s desire to leave?
7. What is the argument that results from Olive reading in the kitchen? How is it resolved?
8. What does Sarah Anne recall from her childhood that is similar to the reading incident?
9. How do Olive and Mr. Dixon meet? What shocks Sarah Anne about the encounter?
10. When Sarah Anne meets Mr. Dixon, what is her initial reaction? Why does she now see things differently?
11. What are neighborhood children doing while Dr. Landis and Olive argue about Mr. Dixon?
12. What does Sarah Anne admire about her father’s ways of moving and speaking?
13. Who throws a hairbrush at whom? Why?
14. Dr. Landis gets a phone call. From whom? What is the conversation? How does Sarah Anne react?
15. What does Dr. Landis do when he discovers Sarah Anne has been receiving and sending letters?
16. How does Dr. Landis look? How is he dressed? What does Sarah Anne reveal about him over the past year?
17. Where does Sarah Anne later discover the package of letters? What does she do with them?

Bigger Issues

18. What is the setting? Where and when? How do you know?
19. What do the following symbolize?
hair, hairbrush, slim green ribbon, packet of letters, lemonade, foreign stamps, “*surrender in the name of the King*,” mirror, Miracle-wear soles/ traveling salesman
20. What would a psychoanalytical literary critic notice about the characters and conflicts?
21. Inferring: is Olive happily married? How do you know?
22. Inferring: why is Dr. Landis unwell at the end of the story?