Reading Comprehension 10th Form

**The Heron**

Half a mile from home, at the far edge of the woods where the land was highest, a great pine tree stood. The top of this ancient tree towered above all the others and made it visible for miles and miles. Sylvia had always believed that whoever climbed to the top of it could see the ocean. Now she thought of the tree with a new excitement. Why, if she climbed at dawn, would she not be able to see the whole world, and discover where the white heron flew, and find its hidden nest?

What an adventure! As she lay awake in her bed, she thought of the glory and triumph of telling everyone the secret of where the heron hid. Sylvia knew her mother and her guest were fast asleep, so she crept out of the house and followed the path through the woods. The air was filled with the sleepy songs of half-awakened birds.

There was the huge tree, seeming to sleep in the fading moonlight. Sylvia bravely began to climb, the blood racing through her veins, her bare hands and feet gripping the bark. First she had to climb the oak tree that grew alongside. Sylvia felt her way easily. She had often climbed there before, and knew that higher up one of the oak’s upper branches rubbed against the pine trunk. When she had reached it, the way was harder than she had thought. The sharp twigs scratched her, and the sticky pine sap made her little fingers clumsy and stiff.

The tree seemed to grow taller as she climbed, and she began to doubt if she could reach her goal before dawn. But Sylvia passed the last thorny branch, her face shining with triumph as she stood at the very top, weak and shaking with exhaustion.

There was the sea, dazzling in the first morning light. Two hawks flew east, so far below her she felt she, too, might fly away among the clouds. The birds sang louder and louder until the sun came up.

This beauty almost overwhelmed little Sylvia, but she did not forget her mission. Where was the white heron? She looked down to the green marsh where she had seen him before. There he was, rising and sweeping towards the great pine tree. He landed, and Sylvia froze as she watched the heron, perched two branches below, calling to his mate, cleaning his feathers for the new day.

**Task1: True/False**

1. Sylvia wanted to climb the tree to see the ocean.
2. No one knew Sylvia was going to climb the tree.
3. Sylvia was wearing shoes.
4. Sylvia had to climb the oak tree before she could climb the pine tree.
5. Sylvia had climbed the pine tree before.
6. Sylvia hurt herself while she was climbing the tree.
7. The tree was taller than Sylvia thought.
8. The sun was not totally up when Sylvia reached the top.
9. The birds Sylvia saw were flying west.
10. Sylvia saw the heron with its mate.

**Task 2: Multiple Choice**

1. Where was the pine tree located?

a. at the bottom of a hill

b. next to Sylvia’s house.

c. at a high point near Sylvia’s house.

d. in the middle of a forest.

12. What made the pine tree so special to Sylvia?

a. It was Sylvia’s hiding place.

b. Sylvia had built a tree house in it.

c. Sylvia was fascinated by its height.

d. Sylvia dreamed of it every night.

13. Why did Sylvia decide to climb the pine tree?

a. Because it seemed an easy thing to do.

b. Because she had climbed it before.

c. Because it was used to an oak tree she used to climb.

d. Because she wanted to know where the white bird hid.

14. Sylvia wanted to

a. keep the heron’s hiding place a secret.

b. tell everyone where the heron was.

c. be triumphant.

d. have someone help her.

15. Who was at Sylvia’s house when she left?

a. her mother

b. her mother and her father

c. her mother and a guest

d. her mother and her brother

16. When did Sylvia climb the pine tree?

a. at night

b. in the morning

c. in the afternoon

d. at sunset

17. How did she feel while climbing the pine tree?

a. She thought she might never make it in time.

b. She thought of giving up because she was hurt.

c. She felt disgusted because of the sap.

d. She was terrified of falling.

18. How did she feel when she reached the top?

a. She was so frightened of falling that her body shook.

b. She was delighted but felt very tired.

c. She was delighted, but disappointed that the bird’s nest was not there.

d. She was so delighted that she did not feel tired.

19. What did the bird do when he reached the tree?

a. He sat down next to her.

b. He shouted for help.

c. He settled on a lower branch.

d. He flew past her.

20. After the bird reached the tree, what happened to Sylvia?

a. She got very cold.

b. She stopped moving.

c. She called to him.

d. She smiled.

1False 2True 3False 4True 5False 6True 7True 8True 9False 10False

11. C 12. C 13. D 14. B 15. C 16. A 17. A 18. B 19. C 20. B