1. \*\*What happens in the story?\*\*

A cashier marries a customer after five days. His mother, Miss Emily, visits and initially appears loving—sharing stories, buying clothes, treating the narrator as family. However, she suddenly transforms, berating the narrator for the apartment's mess and her perceived inadequacies. The narrator, orphaned and working-class, desperately craves maternal love but realizes she'll never meet Miss Emily's standards. The story ends with a raccoon encounter that triggers the narrator's defensive assertion: "I wasn't trash."

2. \*\*What is the theme?\*\*

Class prejudice and the conditional nature of acceptance. The story explores how social mobility and "bettering oneself" can create rigid hierarchies where those who've "made it" perpetuate the very discrimination they once faced. It examines the vulnerability of seeking approval from those who fundamentally see you as inferior, and the internalized shame that comes from class differences.

3. \*\*Does it propose other interpretations, in addition to the literal one?\*\*

Rating: 4

4. \*\*Which interpretation is it?\*\*

The raccoon serves as a metaphor for the narrator—a scavenger in society's eyes, reaching for connection but retreating when rejected. Miss Emily's transformation suggests the performative nature of upper-class benevolence. The "trash" motif works symbolically: what's discarded versus valued, the son's childhood habit of collecting dead things (paralleling his choice of bride), and the narrator's final denial revealing her internalized class shame despite claiming pride in her work.