

# The bride comes to yellow sky

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky is a short story by Stephen Crane which was written in the late 1890s. The plot is simple, the story brief, and the characters complex. Crane articulately explores the slow disappearance of the American Frontier. The American West, in legend and in truth, played an essential role in chiseling the character of the American spirit and nationalism.

The American West created the first truly free man. The European Frontier was nothing more than people recreating “ Old World values and deferring to authority”. (Burns 37) The frontier in America had no law, no authority, and men lived by their wits.

America thinks of it's frontier as being within the country not at the edge. There is no line which separates the frontier from settled land. America's frontier was transient and terrestrial. As Crane explores in “ The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky”, the American West could not stay “ wild” forever. As the West became a place where adventurous individuals wanted to be, it became a place of less adventure – modernized by the East. While the short story can have many of the major characteristics of a traditional western, the plot, environment, and the narration are strikingly different.

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He is a quiet man in his early fifties who has been a lawman for several years. He travels to San Antonio, unbeknown to his fellow citizens to get married to woman his own age. In his absence the town drunk, Scratchy Wilson, show up in town looking for a fight and when the Marshall is nowhere to be found, he takes his boredom out on the town. The general impression of Wilson is that he is not necessary a threat but more of a pest,

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who is usually handled by Marshall Potter (Burns 36). The Marshall and his new wife travel home, by train, and when they arrive in Yellow Sky they are unexpectedly met by Wilson.

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An often overlooked aspect of Crane's writing his unique uses of names and labels as applied in his stories. "The Brides Comes to Yellow Sky" is no exception. A close examination of the names in this short story reveal humor, symbolism, and commentary on the destruction of the American Frontier. While Crane utilizes characters names to perpetuate his representation of the easternization of the West, it is also typical of Crane's parody on the "western". The Marshall is given the name of Jack Potter which comparatively different from the real life legendary Marshals of the West – Wyatt Earp and Wild Bill (Tietz 94).

Crane's choses this name to make a statement about the kind of man Jack Potter is. He is not unique or charismatic as the Marshals of years past, whose personality was just as wild and unforgiving as the Frontier once was. Jack Potter is a generic name, like his new bride who was never given a name. The name Potter evokes the idea of a Potter's Field, where the

nameless and poor are buried. Yet, Crane, in writing this parody, describes Potter as " a man known, liked, and feared in his corner, a prominent person" (92).

Marshal Jack Potter's foil, Scratchy Wilson, is also equipped with a name which parodies the western as well as comments on the migration of the eastern culture into the west. Scratchy is seen wearing red, with boots, red face " flamed in a rage begot of whisky" (94). Crane has designed the Scratchy character to appear as the devil. Satan, in old texts, are often referred to as Scratch (Tietz 90). However, Crane chooses not to call him Scratch but Scratchy. This simple name change shifts the evil outlaw to a kid-like character.