

Name: _____

Summer Reading Guide: *The Wanderings of Odysseus* by Rosemary Sutcliff

Prologue

1. According to the prologue, how do the Greek forces finally break into the walled city of Troy after ten years of siege?
 - A) They tunnel under the main gates during the night.
 - B) They bribe a Trojan guard to open the side entrance.
 - C) They hide inside a massive wooden horse left as a false offering.
 - D) Poseidon tears down the stone walls with a massive earthquake.

The prologue introduces Odysseus as "the Resourceful" or "the Sacker of Cities." Based on how the Trojan War ended, what does it mean to be a "resourceful" leader? Is trickery a noble trait in a hero?

Chapter 1: The Sacker of Cities

1. What happens to the crew members who eat the honey-sweet fruit of the Lotus-Eaters?
 - A) They fall into a deep, permanent sleep.
 - B) They lose all desire to return home and want to stay on the island forever.
 - C) They turn into wild farm animals.
 - D) They become violently ill and attack their captain.

Odysseus has to use physical force to drag his men back to the ships and tie them down after they eat the lotus flowers. Why is a comfortable, lazy trap sometimes more dangerous than a fierce enemy in armor?

Chapter 2: The Cyclops

1. How does Odysseus trick Polyphemus so the giant cannot successfully call his neighbors for help when he is blinded?
 - A) He casts a silencing spell on the giant's voice.
 - B) He tells the giant his name is "Nobody."
 - C) He steals the giant's magic megaphone.
 - D) He ties the giant's mouth shut with leather cords.

While escaping by sea, Odysseus cannot resist shouting his real name out of pride, allowing Polyphemus to invoke a curse from his father, Poseidon. How does Odysseus's pride (*hubris*) ruin an otherwise perfect escape plan?

Chapter 3: The Lord of the Winds

1. Why does Odysseus's crew open the leather bag given to him by Aeolus, the Lord of the Winds?
 - A) They are starving and think it contains dried rations.
 - B) They suspect it holds secret treasures and gold that Odysseus is keeping from them.
 - C) They think it contains a map to bypass the sea monsters.
 - D) It accidentally snags on a wooden splinter and rips open.

Chapter 4: The Enchantress

1. What does the witch Circe do to the scouts led by Eurylochus when they drink her enchanted wine?
 - A) She turns them into stone statues for her courtyard.
 - B) She wipes their memories so they serve as her guards.
 - C) She transforms them into pigs, though they keep their human minds.
 - D) She makes them immortal but keeps them locked in a dungeon.

Eurylochus acts cautiously, while the rest of the scouts rush blindly into Circe's palace because they hear her singing sweetly. What does this chapter teach us about looking past appearances and evaluating hidden dangers?

Chapter 5: The Land of the Dead

1. What does the blind prophet Teiresias warn Odysseus *not* to harm if he wishes to return home safely to Ithaca?
 - A) The white stags of Artemis
 - B) The sacred cattle of Hyperion (the Sun Lord)
 - C) The sea-birds of Poseidon
 - D) The olive groves of Athene

In the Underworld, Odysseus encounters the spirit of his mother, who died of a broken heart waiting for him. How does this emotional encounter change the stakes of his journey? How does it affect his sense of responsibility?

Chapter 6: Sea Perils

1. How does Odysseus safely listen to the magical, alluring song of the Sirens without his ship running aground on the rocks?
 - A) He plugs his own ears with beeswax.
 - B) He asks Circe to blindfold him during the sailing.
 - C) He has his crew tie him tightly to the ship's mast and orders them not to untie him.
 - D) He plays a louder song on a harp to drown out their voices.

Odysseus chooses to steer closer to Scylla (the six-headed monster) rather than Charybdis (the giant whirlpool), knowing he will lose six men but save the whole ship. Do you think this makes him a cold-hearted captain or a realistic leader? Defend your choice.

Chapter 7: Telemachus Seeks His Father

1. Why does Prince Telemachus decide to leave Ithaca and sail to foreign kingdoms like Sparta?
 - A) To escape an arranged marriage he doesn't want.
 - B) To find news of whether his father is alive, and to gain respect away from the rowdy suitors.
 - C) To recruit a foreign army to attack his own palace.
 - D) To find a magical relic that can protect his mother.

While Odysseus is fighting monsters, Telemachus is dealing with the suitors who are devouring his estate. How does Telemachus show courage in this chapter, even though he is young and lacks his father's reputation?

Chapter 8: Farewell to Calypso

1. Why does the nymph Calypso finally agree to let Odysseus build a raft and leave her paradise island, Ogygia?
 - A) Zeus sends Hermes with a strict order that she must let him go.
 - B) She grows tired of his constant weeping on the shore.
 - C) Odysseus defeats her in a battle of wits.
 - D) A pirate fleet arrives and forces her to free him.

Calypso offers Odysseus immortality and a life of luxury if he stays with her. Why does he choose a difficult, dangerous journey back to an aging wife and a rocky home instead? What does this say about what he values?

Chapter 9: The King's Daughter

1. Who finds Odysseus washed up naked, encrusted with sea salt, and hiding under a pile of leaves?
 - A) Queen Helen of Sparta
 - B) Princess Nausicaa of Phaeacia, who was washing clothes by the river
 - C) The goddess Athene in the form of a shepherd boy
 - D) A group of local fishermen

Chapter 10: The Phaeacian Games

1. What triggers Odysseus to weep openly at the Phaeacian feast, revealing his true identity to King Alcinous?
 - A) He tastes food that reminds him of his homeland.
 - B) A blind minstrel sings a song about the hardships of the Trojan War and the wooden horse.
 - C) He realizes his raft has been stolen by the palace guards.
 - D) He gets injured during the discus-throwing competition.

When challenged by a Phaeacian youth who insults his athletic ability, Odysseus throws a massive discus farther than anyone else. Why is reputation and physical honor so fiercely guarded by heroes in ancient Greek culture?

Chapter 11: Return to Ithaca

1. How does the goddess Athene disguise Odysseus when he finally wakes up on the shores of Ithaca?
 - A) As a wealthy merchant from Egypt
 - B) As an old, ragged beggar with a staff
 - C) As a foreign prince seeking an alliance
 - D) As a common soldier returning from a completely different war

Athene warns Odysseus that he cannot simply walk into his palace and announce himself, or the suitors will ambush him. Why is patience and strategic disguise just as crucial for a hero as physical strength?

Chapter 12: The Beggar in the Corner

1. Who is the very first creature to recognize Odysseus through his magical disguise, dying peacefully immediately after?
 - A) His old swineherd, Eumaeus
 - B) His nurse, Eurycleia, who sees a scar on his leg
 - C) His old hound dog, Argus, who wagged his tail one last time
 - D) His wife, Penelope, who recognizes his voice

The suitors treat the disguised Odysseus with cruelty, throwing footstools and insults at him. How does this behavior prove to the reader (and the gods) that the suitors deserve the harsh punishment that is coming to them?

Chapter 13: The Archery Contest

1. What challenge does Penelope set for the suitors to choose her next husband, knowing only her true husband can complete it?
 - A) To lift a massive boulders outside the courtyard gates
 - B) To string Odysseus's great bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axe-heads
 - C) To correctly answer three riddles about the Trojan War
 - D) To sail a ship around the bay in a fierce storm

Penelope has delayed the suitors for years with clever tricks, like her tapestry weaving. How does her intelligence and resourcefulness prove that she is the perfect match for a clever king like Odysseus?

Chapter 14: The Slaying of the Suitors

1. Which of the suitors is the very first to be targeted and killed by Odysseus's arrow?
 - A) Eurymachus, who tries to bribe Odysseus with gold
 - B) Antinous, the cruelest and most arrogant leader of the suitors

- C) Amphinomus, who tried to run out the back doors
- D) Melanthius, the disloyal goatherd

Odysseus locks the doors and refuses to show mercy to the suitors, even when they offer to pay him back for all the food and wine they consumed. Do you think his absolute vengeance is justified, or did he take his revenge too far? Explain your stance.

Chapter 15: Peace in the Islands

1. How does Penelope test Odysseus one final time to ensure he isn't an imposter using magic?
 - A) She asks him to name every ship he brought to Troy.
 - B) She tells a servant to move their bridal bed, which Odysseus knows is built into a living olive tree.
 - C) She asks him to reveal a secret birthmark on his shoulder.
 - D) She challenges him to an archery rematch.

At the end of the chapter, Athena steps in to stop a blood-feud between Odysseus and the families of the dead suitors, commanding peace. Why is a blessing of peace from the gods a more fitting ending for this long epic journey than another war?

Final Summer Reflection

Complete this comprehensive writing prompt after finishing the entire book.

The Meaning of "Home":

Throughout his ten years of wandering, Odysseus faces immortal goddesses, beautiful paradise islands, and terrifying monsters. Yet, his ultimate goal never shifts: he wants to return to his rugged, rocky home of Ithaca.

Write a multi-paragraph reflection explaining what "home" truly represents to Odysseus. Use at least two specific examples from his adventures (such as his choice to leave Calypso, his rejection of the Lotus-Eaters, or his loyalty to his family) to explain why a mortal life filled with struggles at home is worth more to him than an easy, immortal life **away from it**.
