

Name: _____

Due: _____

Tales from the Odyssey
Book Four: The Gray-Eyed Goddess
By: Mary Pope Osborne

Answer all questions at the end of each chapter. Make sure to **use complete sentences** and that you read the questions fully. You should highlight unknown words, new characters, and important or interesting points within the story when you are reading. **Write notes on the side - it lets me know what you're thinking when reading.** If you have questions that come up when reading, write them down on the right hand side - sometimes asking yourself questions when reading helps you better understand the text.

Chapter Seven: Calypso's Island	Questions/Comments/Vocab
<p>Far away on Calypso's island, Odysseus sat on a rock and wept. On this day, like all others for the past seven years, he yearned for home.</p> <p>With his face buried in his hands, he did not see the bright light swoop through the air and skim the waves like a gull. He did not see Hermes, the messenger god, take shape before him.</p> <p>Carrying his golden spear, and wearing his golden winged sandals, Hermes began moving lightly over the island. He stepped through Calypso's sacred woods, where owls, falcons, and seagulls called from the branches of alders, poplars, and cypresses.</p> <p>He moved through Calypso's sweet-smelling garden, over beds of violets and herbs. Finally he came to the entrance of the goddess's cave.</p> <p>Hermes pushed past the hanging grapevines and stepped inside. The scent of cedar and sandalwood filled the air.</p> <p>The fair-haired goddess was sitting at her loom before her hearth, singing a song. When she looked up, she gave the messenger god a radiant smile.</p> <p>"Hermes, you have honored me with a visit!" she said. "Sit and let me offer you food and drink."</p>	

Calypso served Hermes ambrosia and red nectar, food for the gods. After he had refreshed himself, Hermes told Calypso the purpose of his visit.

“Today on Olympus, the goddess Athena called together all the gods,” he said. “She is greatly worried about Odysseus, king of Ithaca. He has been kept from his home and family too long, she says, and now his enemies are planning to murder his son. Calypso, Zeus has heard the words of his daughter. He commands you to release your captive.”

The goddess rose in anger, but Hermes continued: “Zeus has decreed that Odysseus must return home on his own strength. No god is allowed to speed his journey. He must build a raft and ride the waves for twenty days to the land of the Scheria. From there, he can sail on to Ithaca and avenge the wrongs done to his family.”

“The gods of Olympus are angry with me,” said Calypso. “They do not like to believe a goddess can fall in love with a mortal man! But I saved Odysseus’ life!”

Calypso stared fiercely at Hermes for a moment. Then she lowered her eyes in defeat. “I know I cannot defy the will of Zeus,” she said. “If Zeus commands it, Odysseus shall leave my island. In all good faith, I will give him the advice he needs to begin his journey home.”

Hermes bowed. Then he took swift leave of the mournful goddess.

Calypso set out to look for Odysseus. She found him on the rocks, weeping. She sat beside him and spoke gently.

“You shall no longer stay here, yearning for your home,” she said. “I will send you away. Go, but beams of wood. Make a large raft to carry you over the sea. I will give you wine, bread, water, and clothing.”

After his many years of being held captive, Odysseus did not trust Calypso’s words. “Not even a well-made ship could safely sail those waves,” he said. “Will you swear a second oath that you are not trying to harm me?”

The goddess took his hand. "I swear by heaven and earth and by the waters of the Underworld that I want no harm to come to you, Odysseus," she said.

Having sworn her oath, Calypso rose and quickly walked away. Odysseus followed her to her cave. Calypso bade her servants prepare a meal. Her handmaidens served her ambrosia and nectar, food for the deathless gods. Calypso herself served Odysseus meat and wine, refreshment for mere mortals.

"Odysseus, if you would only promise to stay with me and marry me, I would make you, too, an immortal being," Calypso said. "You would live forever."

"Fair goddess, why would I want to live forever far from my home, without my wife and son?" he asked.

"I cannot imagine that your wife is more beautiful than I am," said Calypso.

"Goddess, do not be angry with me," said Odysseus. "What you say is true. My wife is a mortal woman. She is not as beautiful as you. Still, for seven years, I have thought of nothing but getting home to her."

Desperate to keep Odysseus on her island, Calypso gave him one more reason to stay. "If you sail for home, Odysseus, you will find many troubles along the way, for the gods will not aid your journey," she said. "They will test your powers of endurance, again and again."

"Should the gods choose to destroy my raft, I shall bear it," said Odysseus. "I have suffered many hardships and can certainly endure one more."

Calypso sighed and nodded. She could see that she had no choice. She had to let Odysseus go.

The next morning, at dawn, Calypso dressed in a beautiful shimmering silver gown. She covered her head with a veil. Then

she gave Odysseus a sharp ax made of bronze and led him to the far end of the island.

There, many tall trees grew -- aspens and pines that reached as high as the sky.

“Cut what you need for your ship,” the goddess said.

For the next four days, Odysseus cut down trees with his bronze ax. He worked until he had felled twenty. Then he set about building his raft.

He smoothed the felled timbers and fixed them together with wooden bolts. Then he built a deck and made a mast and a steering rudder. Calypso gave him linen cloth for a sail. When the sea craft was finally finished, Odysseus used logs to roll it down to the water.

On the fifth day after Hermes’ visit to Calypso, Odysseus was ready to set sail. Calypso gave him clean clothes. She gave him goatskins filled with deep-red wine and water and meat. She told him which stars he should follow to guide his way.

The goddess hid her grief as Odysseus moved away from her into the water and climbed aboard his raft.

The last gift Calypso gave Odysseus was a fair, warm wind to send his raft safely out to sea.

Questions:

1. Does Calypso’s island seem like a nice place to live? Why or why not?

2. Why does Calypso say the gods are taking Odysseus away from her?

3. What does Calypso promise Odysseus if he stays on her island? Would you take that chance if you were Odysseus?

Chapter Eight: The Voyage

With his hands gripping the rudder, Odysseus skillfully guided his raft over the waves. He never slept. All night, he kept his eyes fixed on the stars that Calypso had told him to watch -- the Pleiades and the Bear.

Day after day and night after night, Odysseus sailed the seas. Finally, on the eighteenth day, he saw the dim outline of mountains on the horizon.

As Odysseus steered his raft toward the shore, dark clouds gathered overhead. The water began to rise. The wind began to blow, until it was roaring over the earth and sea.

Has Poseidon discovered my raft? Odysseus wondered anxiously. Does he now seek his final revenge?

For many years, Poseidon, mighty ruler of the sea, had been angry with Odysseus for blinding his son, the Cyclops. Now it seemed he was trying to destroy Odysseus once again. The wind roared from the north, south, east, and west. Daylight plunged into darkness. Odysseus feared he was about to come to a terrible, lonely end.

Suddenly an enormous wave crashed down on Odysseus' raft. Odysseus was swept overboard and pulled deep beneath the sea. He struggled wildly to raise his head above the water and breathe.

When his head finally broke the surface, Odysseus saw his raft swiftly moving away across the water. He swam as fast as he could toward the wooden craft. He grabbed the timbers and pulled himself aboard.

Then, as the wind swirled the raft across the water, Odysseus saw an astonishing sight. A sea goddess was floating like a gull on top of the waves.

Seemingly impervious to the great storm, she floated near his raft and climbed aboard.

“My friend,” she said, “I am Ino, the White Goddess, who guides sailors in storms. I know not why Poseidon is angry with you. But I know this: for all the torture he has inflicted upon you, he will not kill you. But you must leave your raft at once and swim for the shore. Take my veil, for it is enchanted. You will come to no harm as long as you possess it. As soon as you reach land, you must throw it back into the sea.”

With these words, the White Goddess removed her enchanted veil and gave it to Odysseus. Then she disappeared back into the wild seas.

At that moment, a huge wave crashed down on Odysseus' raft, ripping it to pieces. Clutching Ino's veil, Odysseus pulled himself onto a wooden plank and rode it as if it were a horse. Then he dove down into the sea.

Suddenly, all the winds died down -- except the north wind. Odysseus felt that Athena was holding the other winds back, so he could swim safely and swiftly to some distant shore. For two days and two nights, with the north wind gently flattening the waves before him, he swam and floated on the calm sea.

On the third day, the north wind died away and the sea was completely calm. Odysseus saw land ahead. With a burst of joy, he swam toward the rocky shore.

In an instant, the wind and waves returned. With a thundering roar, sea spray rained down on him.

Odysseus struggled to keep his head above the churning water, seeking a place to go ashore.

Angry waves were pounding the reefs with great force. *I'll be dashed against rocks if I try to swim ashore now*, he thought desperately.

But once again, Odysseus felt the presence of Athena. A giant wave picked him up and carried him over the rocks toward the beach. But before Odysseus could crawl ashore to safety, another wave dragged him back into the sea and pulled him under the water.

Odysseus swam desperately, escaping the waves pounding the shore. Soon he came to a sheltered cove. He saw a riverbank free of rough stonges. As he swam toward the bank, he prayed to the gods to save him from the angry attack of Poseidon.

Suddenly the waves were still. But when Odysseus tried to haul himself ashore, his body failed him. He had been defeated by the storm. It had ripped his flesh and robbed his muscles of their strength. He was passing in and out of consciousness.

Gasping for breath, he pulled off Ino's veil and threw it back into the sea. Then he used his last bit of strength to drag himself out of the water and throw himself into the river reeds.

If I lie here all night, I shall die from the cold and damp, he thought. *If I go farther ashore and pass out in a thicket, wild beasts will devour me*. No matter what evils lay ahead, he knew he had to push on. On bleeding hands and knees, he crawled to a sheltered spot under an olive tree, a tree sacred to the goddess Athena.

Odysseus lay down in a pile of dead leaves. With his bloody hands, he spread leaves over his torn body. Like a farmer spreading ashes over the embers of his fire, he tried to protect the last spark of life within him.

Mercifully, the gray-eyed goddess slipped down from the heavens and appeared at his side. She closed his weary eyes and pulled him down into a sweet sleep that took away his pain and sorrow.

Questions:

1. Who is Ino? How does she help Odysseus?

2. Who is punishing Odysseus in this chapter? Why?

Epilogue

Back in Ithaca, Penelope, the wife of Odysseus opened her door and greeted a friend named Medon.

“I have just received terrible news,” said Medon. “Your suitors, led by Antinous, are plotting against your son. They are waiting for him on the island of Asteris. When his ship sails past, they will kill him.”

Penelope fell to the floor in a faint. When she came to, she wept bitterly. “Where is my boy?” she said between sobs. “I thought he was somewhere in the countryside.”

“I know only that he set out some days ago in search of news of his father,” said Medon. “Soon he will be sailing for home and crossing the path of his enemies.”

Penelope was plunged into such despair that she could not rise from the floor. As she wept and wailed for her lost husband and her beloved son, all her handmaidens wept with her.

Euryclea, the aged nursemaid of Telemachus, tried to comfort her. “Call upon the goddess Athena!” she urged Penelope. “Ask for her help. She will save your boy!”

The old woman wiped away Penelope’s tears. She helped her bathe and dressed her in clean linens. She helped her make an offering to the goddess.

Penelope prayed to Athena. "O daughter of Zeus, hear me," she said. "I beg you to keep my son safe from harm."

Exhausted and filled with grief, Penelope went to her chamber and lay down on her bed.

Mercifully, the gray-eyed goddess soon came. She closed Penelope's weary eyes and pulled her down into a sweet sleep that took away her pain and sorrow.

Questions:

1. What news does Medon give Penelope?

2. What do you think Athena will do to the suitors?

Up Next - Book Five: Return to Ithaca