Black Sails Before Troy

By Rosemary Sutcliff

The Story of the *Iliad* by Homer

**Chapter 1—*The Golden Apple***

1. The vanity of the goddesses started the whole conflict. What conflicts can our vanity start if we allow it to get out of hand?
2. Menelaus has a gift from his father-in-law. The most powerful men in the worlds all become his strong ally for the sake of his beautiful wife, Helen. Is this a wise or unwise gift? What are the pros and cons of the gifts?
3. Paris gets everything he wants. Do you know people like that? What are the pros and cons of having everything?

**Chapter 2----*Ship- Gathering***

1. The “Achille’s heel” is a symbol of one’s weakness. What is your Achilles’ heel? Is your weakness something you can work to overcome, or something you must learn to live with? How do you overcome or live with your Achille’s heel?
2. Thetis tried everything to protect her child from harm. Achilles eventually made the choice to put himself in harm’s way despite his mother’s efforts. What choices do people sometimes make to forego their parents’ protection? What might it cost them in the end?

**Chapter 3---*Quarrel with the High King***

1. How can one person’s selfishness affect the lives of many others?
2. How do fights over petty things sometimes get out of control? Give an example of a quarrel that got out of control.

***Notes from Class Discussion Over Chapters 1-3***

**Chapter 4---*Single Combat***

1. This chapter focuses on the consequences of pride. Consider each of the following characters from this chapter and tell how they showed their pride. Then make an educated guess about the upcoming consequences of their pride.
   1. Paris---
   2. Odysseus-----
   3. Helen------
   4. Aphrodite------
2. What consequences could pride cause in our own lives?

**Chapter 5—*The Women of Troy***

1. Do you know people that are a lot like the goddess Athene, people who enjoy stirring up trouble? Why do they do this? What do they gain from it?
2. What are the differences between Hector and Paris? Who do you respect more and why?
3. Girls, put yourself in Andromache’s shoes. How would you feel? What would you do?

Boys, put yourself in Hector’s shoes. How would you feel? What would you do?

**Chapter 6—*The High King’s Embassy***

1. How is the wisdom of age shown in this chapter?
   1. Nestor----
   2. Phoenix----
2. Why is it important for us to listen to and obey our elders?
3. Give an example from your life when you spoke without thinking as Ajax did and caused problems for yourself or others.

**Chapter 7----*The Horses of King Rhesus***

1. Diomedes and Odysseus are cunning and swift. Are these positive or negative qualities and why?
2. Is your opinion of Diomedes and Odysseus improved or lessened by their actions in this chapter? Why?

***Notes from Class Discussion on Chapters 4-7***

**Chapter 8---*Red Rain***

1. This chapter is full of figurative language. Find 3 pieces of figurative language and write them here.

1. What type of figurative language is used in each of your three examples?

**Chapter 9---*Battle for the Ships***

1. What gave the Trojans their strength in this battle?
2. How do similar things give us strength? Use some specific examples.

**Chapter 10---*The Armor of Achilles***

1. What do you think of Achilles’ attitude? Does he have a good reason to act this way?
2. Patroclus’ bravery becomes a one man show. What happens because of his “battle madness”?
3. Give a present day example of someone who caused problems for others by setting out on their own and enforcing their own agenda.

**Chapter 11*---Vengeance for Patroclus***

1. Did Hector deserve the death he got? Why or why not?
   1. Answer the question from your point of view.
   2. Now answer the question from Achille’s point of view?

***Notes on Class Discussion for Chapters 8-11***

**Chapter 12---*Funeral Games***

1. Do you feel that Achilles was excessive in his ill treatment of Hector’s body? What excesses do people today go to when they allow grief and anger to overcome them? Give some examples.
2. What purpose did the funeral games serve? Are they appropriate or not?

**Chapter 13—*Ransom for Hector***

1. This chapter is a picture of grief. Tell about the feelings of the following characters expressed in this chapter.
   1. Priam
   2. Andromache
   3. Hecuba
   4. Helen
   5. Achilles

**Chapter 14---*The Luck of Troy***

1. What kind of “good luck” charms do we use today? How powerful do you think they really are?
2. Why do you think Odysseus didn’t tell his own men about his crazy plan?

**Chapter 15---*Warrior Women***

1. Penthesilias’ sister’s death drove her to join the war. Do you think she is justified in her feelings and actions? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think the Greeks treated the bodies of the maidens so differently than they had treated Hector’s body? Why do you think this is?

***Note over Class Discussion for Chapters 12-15***

**Chapter 16----*The Death of Achilles***

1. Achilles yells, “What coward has smitten me from afar off?” Do you think Paris is a coward? Why or why not?
2. Do you think that Nestor’s advice during the funeral games is good advice? In what situations in the world today might we need to follow the same advice?
3. Ajax is brought down by the god of wine and the madness he causes. What kind of madness can be caused by alcohol? Why is alcoholism a dangerous path?

**Chapter 17*----Poisoned Arrow***

1. Is a poison arrow a fitting death for Paris? Why or why not?
2. Do you blame Oenone for not saving Paris? Why or why not?
3. How is the death of Oenone and the memorial placed on the grave mound ironic in light of the war?

**Chapter 18----*The Wooden Horse***

1. Do you think the war would have ended if the Trojans had given Helen back to Menelaus after Paris’ death? Why or why not?
2. The Trojan horse has become a famous symbol of deception. What tools do people today use to deceive one another? Why do they act in such a way?
3. Laocoon and Cassandra both tried to talk sense into the Trojans. Why do you think the Trojans didn’t heed the warning?

**Chapter 19----*The Fall of Troy***

1. Do you have pity on the Trojans, or do you feel that they got what they deserved? Explain your answer.
2. Why did Odysseus save Helen? Could there be more than one answer to this? Explain.
3. Does Helen deserve to leave Troy as a queen? Why or why not?

***Note for Class Discussion on Chapters 16-19:***