

Orpheus and Eurydice - Answers

Read the story carefully, then answer the following questions in as much detail as you can:

1. How do we know that Orpheus' music was so powerful?

Orpheus' music could enchant all who heard it. It could turn bad men good and tame wild beasts.

2. What happened when Eurydice ran from Aristaeus?

As she ran from him she tripped over a log, a snake, which had been hiding under the log crawled out and bit her. The snake was venomous, and the bite immediately killed Eurydice.

3. What did Orpheus decide to do when Eurydice died?

Orpheus decided he had to attempt to get Eurydice back. He set out on a quest to beg Hades for her return from the underworld, to the human world.

4. Why did Hades allow Orpheus to try and get Eurydice back?

Because he was so moved by the poignant music Orpheus played.

5. Orpheus faced three obstacles on his journey out of the underworld. What were these obstacles?

The first obstacle was a huge wooden door chained shut. The next was a dark, dank room with Cerberus (Hades grotesque, three headed hound) guarding it. The final obstacle was "slick black hands and arms" formed from the inky waters of the river Styx attacking him.

6. Use evidence from the text to draw and label a picture of Cerberus.

Students are asked to draw a picture of the "enormous three headed dog". They may have taken cues from its description as "Hades' grotesque hound" and "beastly dog" with monstrous paws.

7. When Orpheus saw Cerberus 'his heart pounded in his chest and his ears rang painfully'. What does this tell us about how Orpheus felt?

Orpheus was terrified, and the sound of Cerberus' roar was very loud.

8. What stopped Orpheus from crossing the river?

Orpheus was restrained by slick black hands and arms formed from the murky waves of the river Styx.

9. Why did Orpheus look back across the river for Eurydice?

Orpheus looked back because he could no longer hear Eurydice's boat, and he was worried the hands had taken her.

10. Orpheus thought his quest would be easy. Why did he fail?

Orpheus failed because he was anxious to see Eurydice again. He was scared for her safety.

Challenge:

Can you write an additional obstacle for Orpheus into the story?