

Mr. Stone's mythology class writes to WritingFix's Daisy Comes Home Lesson



Floating Down the River Styx

by Rachel, eleventh grade writer

I knew that I was going to have to experience this eventually, but who knew it would be so soon. The water of the river looked just as thick and as black as oil. I could hardly see it through the thick blanket of fog covering it. I saw no animals, possibly nothing was living. Even the trees that spotted the shore seemed to be dead. Everything was silent.

I could see something moving in the distance out on the river. As it inched its way closer, I saw a tall, thin, mysterious figure. It was wearing a cloak as black as the river itself. It was in a small ferry rowing up close to the shore where I stood wide-eyed and scared to death. It was Charon, the ferry driver of the river. I slowly stepped inside, half scared of what I had stepped into and half scared of the man beneath the cloak. We rode along slowly. Neither looks nor words were exchanged.

I could hear a faint cry of a man not too far away. As we got closer, I saw what I thought to be as the skinniest man I'd ever seen. I could see streams of tears running down his thin face as he reached as far as his arms could stretch just for a piece of fruit. But no matter how hard he strained, he would never be able to have the fruit touch his pale, cracked lips. Even the water seemed to go out of its way to be out of reach. After passing him, I could still hear his shouts and cries of hunger.

I couldn't help but feel sorry for him. But the man I saw next could possibly have had it worse. A tall, muscular man wearing little to no clothing was pushing a boulder up a large hill. He was sweating profusely. He seemed angry, tired and determined, all at the same time. As he got close to the top of the hill, the boulder fell from his grasp and landed all the way back to the ground. He cried out in anger. It apparently wasn't the first time it had happened. He climbed back down the hill and began pushing the boulder back to the top.

There was another long stretch of silence and cold, black river. A sudden gleam of light made my eyes strain to stay open. The river was coming to an end, and I could already feel the feelings of depression and sadness just fall away into the blackness, which I would never return to. I would never want to have these feelings again, not even on the day I die and take the trip back down the River Styx to Hades.



Waiting to be Discovered

by Derric, twelfth grade writer

As I pace through the suffocating thickness, the scent of the dead approaches. I can smell the strong, lifeless odor of something unpleasant. Soon, the visual of a dark, shadowy figure emerges from the ghostly fog. The hairs on my neck spring to life as I cautiously creep closer to the edge of the river. I clench the gold piece, as I step carefully upon the raft that looms in the gray, murky water. The deceased figure stretches out his sleeve of bones as I drop the gold coin into his skinless hand. The only thought echoing through my mind is *What have I gotten myself into?*

The day had been a gloomy fall day, sun being shaded by the damp, dark clouds. I had been talking with a friend who had convinced me into signing up to take the "Journey down the River Styx." He told me it was an experience he would not soon forget. I was persuaded by his words. I figured, *Why not? It can't be that bad.* That's where I was wrong.

The reaper-like figure kicked off from the shoreline, down the ominous waterway. The startling, frightening sounds of unearthly animals did not overshadow the fear of the unknown. I was sitting on the edge of my seat, praying for dear life, choking back the scream that was threatening to escape my mouth. Then, out of nowhere, I hear a beautiful melody. Its mesmerizing tune caught my attention immediately. Finally, the sight of three beautiful, exposed women appeared on the shore. The song they sang beckoned me yet put me at ease. I felt as if I was chosen to be on this journey. However, I had the feeling that their godlike features and striking locks of blonde hair were hiding something a little more sinister, which had me think twice before ditching the ferryman of bones for them. As we floated by, relief washed through my blood and back into my brain, but I couldn't help but think, *Why did they let me pass?*

The water churned and became awfully unstable. It didn't faze the journeyman, and he used the old, weather stick to just keep rowing. Then something huge shadowed behind the thick, white blanket of fog. It appeared to be a beast-like figure, with a furry tail and huge pearly teeth, but wait, it has not one but three heads. This must be Cerberus, the protector of the Underworld. Now, I was utterly shaking. Adrenaline was rushing through my body uncontrollably. As the fog vanished, Cerberus was sitting next to the gates of hell, wagging his tail, panting happily.

The wooden, medieval-like doors swung open, splashing a bit of water on to Cerberus who just grinned. We floated through a narrow path of water, going through another set of doors. I heard moaning coming from the room we

were about to enter. As we drifted closer, Tantalus sat in a pool of the cleanest water I had ever seen. He was reaching for fruit that hung from the limbs of trees. Each time he would try to swipe fruit from the brittle branch, a breeze from the unknown would blow the luscious produce out of his reach. He tried to drink the water he sat in, but when he bent down to swallow it up, it drained. He was forever thirsty and hungry. I couldn't help but feel sympathy for the man; however, we continued through yet another set of doors into a dark abyss.

There were no windows, no flames, no nothing. Completely unexpected, a chorus of deep, daunting voices chanted from within the walls. They seemed to get closer with every gasp of thin, dry air I force through my lungs. I tried to make myself small, hoping the darkness would make me invisible. Now, the voices were everywhere, breathing down my throat, grabbing my limbs. I clenched my eyes shut, hoping for a swift end to this madness. The scream I had been holding back burst forth with a vengeance.

I stood back on the shore of the place it all began, finally able to come to my senses and see straight. The hairs on the back of my neck felt as if they were at last able to relax. I started thinking about the journey as I peered out upon the deceptively calm, chilly waters but saw nothing but a sheet of white, just waiting to be discovered. Are you the next brave soul daring enough to take the voyage down the River Styx?



The River Styx

by Jarell, twelfth grade writer

I have angered the gods. Three weeks ago I murdered Ares, the God of War, by using the wisdom bestowed upon me after an affair with the mighty goddess Athena. Even my secret lover is angry, and she has provided me with no aid for the punishment Zeus has handed down. I stand here ready to take on the wrath and challenge of Zeus: to travel through the underworld by the river Styx. All I have is the golden amulet to pay the ferryman and my knowledge.

This is a strange place. The water is murky and the fog is endless. All that can be seen is where the beam of light hits the beginning of the puddle. The trees are weathered and you can hear the ferry creaking closer. This challenge is not for the weak-hearted. All hope seems to get lost in the darkness. No sense of awareness can be found, only the instinct for survival. The ferry has arrived and it is time to begin my journey.

As we slowly sail down the river, souls and skeletons rise from the water, covered in sludge and mold. It is a grotesque site that I could never get used to. Suddenly I felt an enormous and warm drop of water cover my head. I look up to see the Hydra, the most deadly sea monster of all, the one which even Poseidon loathes. His three sets of fangs snarl, and I am at loss for what to do. It quickly launches toward me, but I still I do not fear death. As I feel its hot breath blow into my eyes, a flash occurs as bright as the sun and the Hydra flees into the jungle of trees. A distinct voice rains down and calls out, "You are brave, Jarell. You do not fear death. That is why I saved you from the Hydra. Do not forget this favor I, Apollo, have given you. We shall meet again."

I still do not understand why Apollo saved me. I thought every god was watching to witness my demise, not help me live another cursed day. Before I could spend too much time pondering this, I heard a masculine purring that was so dreadful the blood in my veins tingled. To my left sat Hades, with Cerberus lying at his side, on a golden throne that emitted light through the entire vicinity. Hades' fire-red eyes blazed in hate. He filed his nails against each other until he hissed, "Jarell, you are cursed to spend your entire after life in my sanctuary." He paused to lift his nose and take a deep sniff. "Killing a god was said to be impossible, but you, you somehow found Pandora's Box and willed it to submit Ares to the same torture he made others endure. That is pure genius, so for that I will not take you now, but your soul will forever belong to me, and you will suffer even more than Prometheus." He joyfully explained this. Then he snapped his lanky smoke fingers and disappeared.

I was now in a state of disbelief and confusion. Thousands of thoughts were running through my mind. What could truly be worse than having your liver picked out everyday? Before this, I had never thought of the ramifications of my actions. At the time of the murder, all I had thought about was avenging my wife whom Ares had raped. My attention was distracted by three minute figures we were slowly approaching. When I arrived in front of them, I realized they were the Fates. The giggled before blurting out, "Poor, foolish mortal, the rest of your life we be full of misery and sorrow. You shall suffer every day for your wrongs. Zeus will take an eye for an eye." I stood shocked. What could this possibly mean? As if they could read my mind, they continued in harmony, "You took the life of one of Zeus' blood, not a mortal son, but a divine kin. His wrath will be so spiteful that he wants us to tell you before he does it." They shrugged at each other and looked at me in pity before continuing. "Your wife and three daughters shall die but not by the hand of Zeus. You, poor mortal, will have to take their lives and then your own. You will then spend the rest of your life with Hades."

At those words, they were suddenly gone and a tunnel full of light lay in front of me. I did not want to move nor live. How could I when I had heard the fate that was dealt to me? I was full of rage. All I had done was protect the ones I loved and now I was sentenced with this horrible burden for it. "I hate you, Zeus! I HATE YOU!" I screamed out at the top of my lungs. At that moment, I blanked out and found myself involuntarily walking into the light.