

# The Journey

A JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF SELF

## Exploring the Text

Check with your teacher about which questions to try.

- ① Argus's father gave him 'the book' to read. The book had no name. What title would you give it? For what reason?
- ② Who was the original Argus? Check a dictionary of mythology. Is the name significant in the context of the novel?
- ③ The book warned Argus that '**there were no absolutes**' (p. 11). Is there anything of which you can be absolutely certain? Explain.
- ④ The sky was richly alive with stars: '**a staggering coruscation spread across the dark backdrop like huge numbers of glow-worms in a cave**' (p. 15). Explain this image in your own words.
- ⑤ Argus wondered about the newness of things. How would you reply to his question, '**Is everything new, everything that happens?**' (p. 16).
- ⑥ Argus and the painter were having a discussion about art (pp. 22–4). Argus, who seems to be enjoying all his new experiences, remarked that a painting is never going to be the real thing. If art is an imitation of life, is a painting real?
- ⑦ Argus was surprised when the painter questioned him about the artist in him. Who is the artist in you? Think of three different people you know; can you recognise the artist in them?

Page references are to the Pan 1989 paperback edition of *The Journey*.

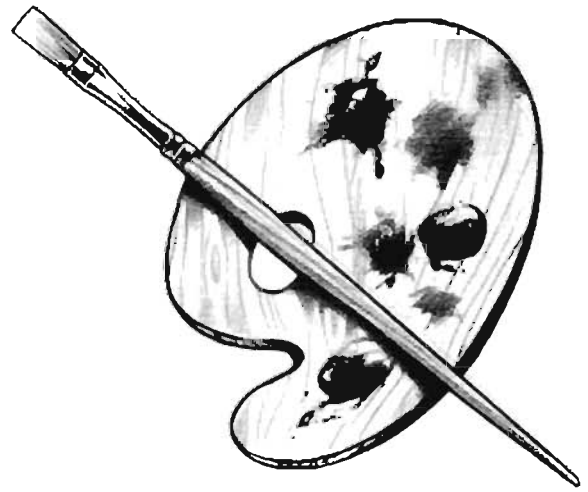
8 Think of art, painting, life, reality, a way of seeing things. Now think of the interchange between Argus and the painter about work in a vineyard. The painter suggested the work would not be easy, Argus replied, **'No, I can see that from your painting'** (p. 25). Assess Argus's earlier arguments in the light of this statement.

9 Mayon, recognising Argus's relationship to Sunday and his grief, tried to help Argus understand death (pp. 44–5). Were you convinced by Mayon's arguments? Do you have a different explanation? Justify your opinion.

10 In your opinion, what is the significance of the daffodil growing in the crack in the pavement? (p. 46).

11 Read pages 50–1. In a few sentences explain each of the following sights or experiences that Argus had in the market place:

- Tira and the man
- the icecream
- the dog on the trolley
- the orchids
- the man in wedding clothes
- the woman outside the building.



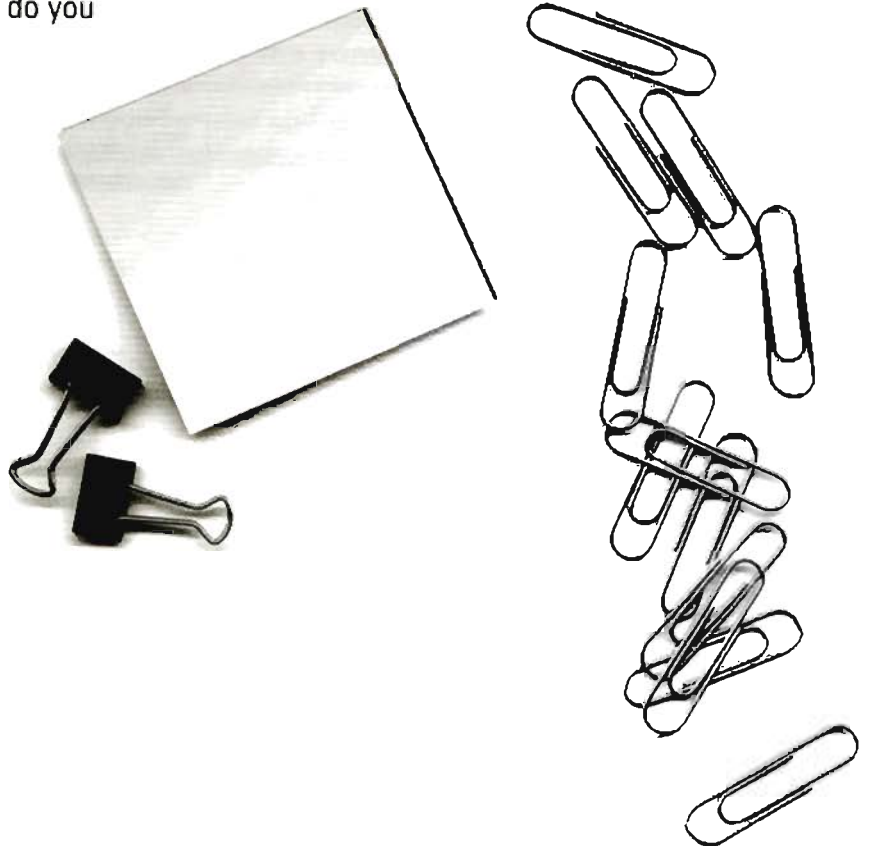
12 What sort of place is the House of the Past? (p. 52). Decide what the distinguishing features of such a place might be. There is no recognisable church, synagogue, mosque or temple in Argus's world. Can you explain why?

13 Ruth, the fat lady, chatted to Argus about being a 'lusus' and being lucky. Explain Ruth's theory and why Tiresias sees himself as being unlucky (pp. 57–8).

14 Ruth said, **'People tell you to listen to the song of the thrush, when in your heart you know yours is the song of the night owl. You've got to find your own music'** (p. 58). What is your music? When do you hear it?

15 Mayon and Argus have a long conversation about aspects of behaviour and the effect of Argus's attempt to help Tiresias (pp. 80–4). Mayon was provocative, Argus was honest. Argus could have learned a great deal. Explain why, at the end of the conversation, Mayon thought that Argus had learned nothing.

- 16 At the end of the tales told by Tiresias and Ruth, Mayon quoted softly. **'The wanderer's danger is to find comfort' (p. 102)**. What do you think he meant? How could these words affect Temora?
- 17 Along with his increasing physical maturity Argus was growing in other ways (**Chapter 17**). What particular event began this process? In what instances do you see signs of this maturity?
- 18 In his book *The Dead of the Night*, John Marsden, through the voice of Ellie, says that **'Deep inside Lee there seemed to be a place I didn't think I had. Maybe it was the place his music came from'**. Argus **'knew that there were dark depths of Adious that would never be plumbed'** (p. 127). In *Darkness Be My Friend*, Ellie says that a part of her would always be alone. Comment on this theme. What do you think John Marsden means?
- 19 John Marsden introduces two interesting images: the snake (p. 134) and the fire (p. 137), which, although warming and comforting, **'would leap at the throat of a dead tree'**. Why do you think these images were introduced into the world of Argus and Adious which up till now had been idyllic? What do they represent?
- 20 Argus was home. He was ready to take on much of the responsibility for running his parents' farm. List several ways in which he clearly showed a well-defined sense of maturity (pp. 160–3).
- 21 Write in your own words the 'moral' of one of the seven stories.




**Think it through** talk it over

In groups or as a class, discuss one or more of these topics.

## 1 Expectations

Argus knew that his parents hoped he would pass the test: '... if he passed this, the great test, ... there would be feasting and a dance' (p. 162).

What do you think Argus expected?

Who expects what of you?  
List three examples. Are the expectations reasonable?

**If we fail to meet the expectations of others, have we failed?**

If you do not do something that was expected of you, have you done something wrong?

To what extent do you try to meet expectations?

**Are expectations any help? To whom?**

## 2 Tears

Without realising it, Mayon had told the story of the death of Argus' sister. Argus later apologised for crying. Mayon answered, 'Tears are part of the healing' (p. 44).

Why would Argus feel the need to apologise?

Is it weak to cry?

**How do tears help with healing?**

Do you cry to heal yourself, or heal yourself by crying?

Are there any tears that do not heal?

**Have you ever faked tears? If so, why?**

### 3 Just say 'no'

Temora's father upset a seemingly pleasant man by saying 'no' to him. "In fact," said Temora, "no" is probably the word that's most likely to send people from love to hate" (p. 73).

Do you agree with Temora's statement about the word 'no'?

In what ways do you respond to 'no'?

**When would you definitely not take 'no' for an answer?**

Is it easier to say 'no' to a nasty person? Why?

To whom do you find it hardest to say 'no'?

**When you do say 'no', do you ever change your mind later and say 'yes'?**

### 4 Ignorance and wisdom

Mayon asked Argus 'Is it better to be ignorant and happy, or wise and sad?' (p. 82).

Do these qualities always go together? Explain.

How could you be wise and sad? Give an example.

**Have you ever been happy and sad at the same time? Explain.**

Could you be wise and ignorant at the same time? How?

### 5 Gratitude

Argus helped Tiresias carry some things to his caravan and complained to Mayon, 'He didn't even thank me' (p. 80).

Does lack of thanks upset you? Why?

**Does it lessen your good deed? Explain.**

Would you help a person again if you were not thanked? Why or why not?

Why do you help people? Would you rather help or be helped?

**Have you ever upset anyone by not thanking them?**

Do you expect a reward if you help someone? If so, give examples.

# ANYTHING GOES

Try one or more of the following activities.



**music** Suppose you were telling the story about the following events and characters and you wanted to have a musical signature for each character. Which instrument of the orchestra would you use for each character?

- Tira and the man
- Argus and the icecream
- the dog on the trolley
- Argus and the orchids
- the man in wedding clothes
- the woman outside the building.



**board game** Create a board game showing the journey of Argus and illustrate it at each 'stop'.

**time line** Put together an illustrated time line, noting the main events on Argus' journey. If you make it large and colourful, it could work as a mural.



**role play** Choose a panel in which each member is one of the characters. Each person in the class could then write down a question or two that he or she would like to ask of the 'characters'.

**question and answer** You will need dice, pen and paper, and a copy of the book for each of you. Choose a partner, then choose a chapter in the book that really interests you. Without consulting each other, you and your partner write down six questions from the chapter on the paper, numbering them. Take turns to roll the dice, and answer your partner's question that matches the number on the dice.

