

The Outcast by Rosemary Sutcliff

1. Discuss Guinear's attitude toward the infant boy when Cunori first brings him home. How do her feelings for the baby change?

2. Guinear and Cunori are honest with Beric about his birth parents and tell him how he came to be their son. Discuss what Guinear and Cunori do to make Beric feel that he belongs in their family.

3. At age nine, the boys of the clan begin warrior training. At first it appears that Beric will not be accepted because he doesn't hold birthright in the Clan. How does Rhiada, the blind harper, help the men see that Beric should be given a chance?

4. Beric leaves the Clan in search of his own people's land. What happens to him along the way and how does this make him further lose faith in man?

5. Glaucus, his owner, decides to change Beric's name. What name does he choose and why do you think he does this? Discuss how losing his name is the breaking point for Beric.

6. Draw a parallel between Beric's escape and the escape of slaves on the Underground Railroad in nineteenth-century America. There were metaphorical stations and conductors on the Underground Railroad. Identify Beric's underground stations. Who are the conductors that help him?

7. Discuss why Rhiada leaves the Clan after Beric is cast out. What is the significance of his reappearance in Beric's life? Beric tells Rhiada about Justinus, and about the events of his life since he left the Clan. Explain why he doesn't tell Rhiada "how or why Justinus had taken him as a son."

8. Throughout the novel, Beric is searching for a sense of belonging. How does he find his "belonging-place"? The sea gave him a beginning. How does it also give him an end?
