

Now that you've read *Loukas and the Game of Chance*...it's time... to share your discoveries about

- What happens in the story
- Who makes it happen
- Where and when things happen
- The big ideas the story got you think about...

Begin here: You could follow the directions your teacher provides to work with the following questions and prompts—the ones below—or you could form a book club with your friends who've read *Loukas and the Game of Chance* and divvy up the questions and prompts for club members to explore and then share their ideas. Be sure to write down your ideas in your Reading Journal. Which journal? Click this link for suggestions about using a Reading Journal: (<https://bit.ly/2QGj4Cv>).

Remember: You are a unique reader. Very special. Your ideas are also unique. Very Special. Be sure to write down your ideas about *Loukas and the Game of Chance* in your journal. Share them!

Record your ideas about the following topics in *Loukas and the Game of Chance* in your journal:

Got Flute? Flute playing is so important to Loukas. Find and briefly describe a scene in the story that causes you to think about Loukas's attachment to his flute.

Family Secrets. Loukas and his family keep their relationship with Lambros a secret. What does the narrator—the storyteller—reveal to you about the family's reasons for keeping Lambros a secret?

Where, Oh, Where, Oh? The story takes place in many different settings on an island in the Aegean Sea. Find a setting in *Loukas and the Game of Chance* that you believe is particularly interesting and vivid. Why do you like that setting? How does the author make that place interesting and vivid? Why do you think that setting is important for your understanding of the story?

[STOP RIGHT HERE AND NOW. Want to see a really beautiful setting? Get yourself onto the internet and search "Greek Aegean Sea Islands." Use Google Or Google Chrome (www.google.com) (www.google.com/chrome) or Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) (<https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Greece>). Write down some of the facts you learned about these islands?

Find photographs of islands in the Aegean Sea. Choose one island you'd like to visit. Name it. Describe it.]

And now, back to exploring *Loukas and the Game of Chance*.

Big Ideas. Think. Think. Think. Now that you've read the story, think about some of the BIG IDEAS the author planted in your mind. Big ideas? YEAH. About relationships, responsibility, family, personal struggles, courage, survival, and so on and on. Got any ideas about Loukas and his problems? His journey? Write 'em down quickly. Get 'em down. Share 'em. WHAT DOES THIS STORY MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT?

[Oh, and by the way, another word I could use for big idea is "THEME." All good books get their readers thinking about a theme or two. Get on the internet at "Literary Devices" (<https://literarydevices.net/>). WOW! So much valuable information at "Literary Devices" about the way all sorts of literature works. The device called "theme" is among the literary devices explored there. Click this link for information about "theme": (<https://literarydevices.net/theme/>). Write down a few ideas about theme in your journal (<https://bit.ly/2QGj4Cv>). That's good. High Five!

The Journey. Authors like to set their characters off on journeys. Have you ever met Max in *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (<https://amzn.to/2Q0dk9F>)? Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (<https://amzn.to/2RVq4vD>)? Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien (<https://amzn.to/2QPwkVm>)? Milo in *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster (<https://amzn.to/2Tg8Ha6>)? Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin in *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle (<https://amzn.to/2Q0XCLq>)? All sorts of journeys in these fabulous books.

Write down your ideas about **Loukas's journey** in your journal. Why do you think journeys are so popular in so many stories? What about Loukas's journey? Why does he set off on a journey? What happens to him along the way? Whom does he meet? What does he learn? TELL ALL! Write down your ideas in your journal.

Shock. You're reading along and then suddenly...something you didn't expect happens. Shock! Surprise! The Unexpected! Hmmm. [**Are you awake?**] Why do you think writers do that? Why do they like to shock their readers? Describe something that happened in *Loukas and the Game of Chance* that came as a surprise to you? Why do you think the author— Professor Granpa Tonio—Hey, that's me—did that to you? Write down your ideas in your journal. Nice.

[**Take a break. An art break.** You'll need a few markers in a few colors, a piece of heavy stock paper—not quite cardboard, but not as light as notebook paper. **Don't worry.** If you can't find heavy-duty paper, use any kind of paper. Get it? What paper size? Typical notebook size, approximately 8 inches X 8 inches.

Now what? "**Sketch to Stretch.**" What is SKETCH TO STRETCH? Here's what you do: In *Loukas and the Game of Chance*, find a sentence or a few related sentences that really got your attention. That really mean something important to you about the characters, themes, conflicts, settings, incidents...OKAY...OKAY...GOT IT, Prof. Tonio.

Use your best handwriting to copy the sentence or sentences on your paper. Next: Draw a scene that shows or draw characters that show what the sentence(s) mean(s) to you. Afraid to draw? "No talent," you say? BAH HUMBUG.

Stick figures? Squiggles? Whatever you can do to illustrate the meaning for you in the sentence(s). Be sure to fill-in the background with a color that captures the mood of the sentence(s). HAVE FUN! (Thank you *Disrupting Thinking: Why How We Read Matters* by Kyleen Beers and Robert E. Probst [Scholastic, 2017] for reminding me about this powerful activity. Cheers to a great teaching book by terrific teachers.)

Minor Character. Keeper of the Forest is what you might call a “minor” character. You know, like maybe not all that important ‘cause he doesn’t appear all that much. Like a few times. NOW HOLD ON. I, the author, don’t usually talk all that much about my writing process, but building the character I named “Keeper of the Forest” took a lot of time and energy and thought and nail-biting. To me, he isn’t “minor “ at all. Now, take a good look at him. Re-read the section of the story where Loukas finds Keeper and his cart near the path that leads into the forest. Re-read that section now. Now, do me a favor and respond to this statement: Keeper of the Forest is an important character because_____. That’s it. That’s all you have to do. Wow! Easy. Record your statement in your notebook.

HISSESSSSSSSS. Lambros, the mysterious, talking, dancing snake. Tell me everything you remember about Lambros. Well, you can’t tell me, but you can tell a friend, a teacher, a parent, the mail delivery person (LOL), your parents. So, what do you know about Lambros? What do you know about Lambros’s relationship with Loukas? You could do the following activity as an alternative to doing a lot of writing. You could choose five adjectives or five short phrases that describe Lambros and/or Lambros’s relationship with Loukas. Directly under each adjective or phrase, in a very few words, explain the reason you chose that adjective or phrase. Relax. Have a good time. Be unique. Be your best self.

Titles. A title for a story, a poem, a play, an information book —whatever —can be weird. The title can tell you a lot (*A Tale Dark & Grimm* by Adam Gidwitz (<https://amzn.to/2OIUXI5>) or tell you a little (*Just a Minute* by Yuyi Morales (<https://amzn.to/2OLYXkG>)). Either way is okay, of course. It’s all about the author’s choice and how much he or she wants to reveal or what the title’s supposed to say about the “stuff” inside the story, poem, play, information book. AND NOW, A DRUM ROLL, PLEASE, for this title: *LOUKAS AND THE GAME OF CHANCE*. HUH? Where’s the game? Where’s the chance? Where’s Loukas in this game? Write no more than fifty words about what the title means to you. What it makes you think about. GAME. CHANCE. LOUKAS. Write fast. Or make a list of your ideas about the title. Get it all down fast and furious. One, two, three, go! Record your ideas in your journal.

Drama, Drama, Who Wants to Be in a Play? Hey ho and away we go, readers and writers. Allow me to introduce you all to a drama activity called~~~~~another drum roll, please~~~~~Readers Theater (RT). You’re gonna love it! Why, you may wonder? Well, RT is fun. RT involves collaboration among readers and, sometimes, writers. RT can make you a better—more fluent and more confident—reader.

RT does not require memorization or moving around on a stage or forgetting your lines and getting all embarrassed. No costumes, either. With RT, readers read from a script and the reading parts are divided among readers. Scripts are held by the readers.

STOP HERE! Go here: Sixteen RT scripts from folk and fairy tales and legends by Aaron Shepard, an RT expert: *Folktales on Stage*: (<http://aaronshep.com/rt/>).

Take a good look at Mr. Shepard's scripts.

Here's another fifteen RT play scripts adapted by Mr. Shepard from the works of fifteen authors. Go here and look over these scripts: *Stories on Stage*: (<http://aaronshep.com/rt/>). OKEY, DOKEY. Now you know how RT works. And now you can select one of Mr. Shepard's scripts.

Make note of the number of readers the script calls for. Make a copy of the script for every reader. Then, follow these directions:

- Get together with the number of friends needed to read the lines of the script. Take your time assigning parts and reading slowly through the script.
- Hold on! Ya' gotta do this to present your RT script: Read through the script a few more times...so the reading flows.
- Make the reading expressive. Expressive, you ask? Expressive means: Each speaker says the lines with feeling and voice changes that show how the speaker thinks and feels.
- Perform your RT script for an audience. Take your time. No, not slow motion. Slow enough only to make every word count. Make that RT script come alive with your expressive voice.

Whew! Professor Granpa Tonio is exhausted. You all? You're doing just fine. ENJOY!

OHHHHHH. Almost forgot: Writer Alert: You can also do this: Find a story, part of a story, a poem, or a small section from an information (nonfiction) book and build an RT script of your very own. Unique. It will be u-n-i-q-u-e. And perform using the performance directions above as your guide.

Bye, for now.