**Baucis and Philemon**

Long ago in a land called Phrygia, a pious old couple lived in a tiny cottage among gently rolling hills. Baucis and Philemon lived a cheerful and content life despite their poverty. Their marriage was sound, and their love for each other remained as strong as it had been on their wedding day.

One day Jupiter, king of the gods, traveled to Earth to test the Phrygians. Disguised as mortals, he and Mercury, the messenger god, walked from one home to the next asking for shelter. At each home, the Phrygians heartlessly turned the gods away. Finally, the gods came to the cottage of Baucis and

Philemon, where the couple welcomed the strangers warmly. After arranging a place for their guests to rest, the couple prepared a meal. Baucis and Philemon brought out their finest dishes and carefully set the table, paying attention to even the most minute details. As the meal began, Philemon poured the wine.

To his surprise, he saw that the bottle refilled itself. Frightened, he and Baucis apologized for being poor hosts, but Jupiter stopped them. "We caused the wine to be replenished," he said, "for we are gods. We came to Phrygia to test the kindness of its citizens. You and Baucis alone have passed. The rest will be

punished as they deserve."

Baucis and Philemon followed the gods up a nearby hill. Upon reaching the top, they were shocked to see that a lake stood where their neighbors' houses had been. The couple wept, but when they looked closer, they saw that their own cottage had been transformed into a temple with a roof of glimmering gold. "Worthy couple," said Jupiter, "we thank you for your generosity. Name what it is you desire and it shall be yours."

The couple spoke privately for a moment and then declared their united wish with finality. Philemon said, "We wish to be guardians of this temple and to serve you for the rest of our days. Also, we wish never to be separated, even in death."

In the years that followed, Baucis and Philemon cared for the temple and served the gods faithfully. One day, Baucis noticed leaves sprouting from Philemon's hair. Philemon turned to Baucis and saw her wrinkled skin turning to bark. Realizing that their end was drawing near, they bid each other farewell. At that moment, Philemon was transformed into a sturdy oak and Baucis turned into a graceful linden. The couple's wish was fulfilled, for the two trees grew from a single trunk. For centuries, people have marveled at the intertwined trees, a symbol of the devoted couple that passed the test of the gods.

**Comprehension**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions about “Baucis and Philemon.”

1. The last paragraph reveals which part of the myth?
2. moral of the story
3. a creation in nature
4. certain flaws of a god
5. consequences of bad behavior
6. The bottle refilling itself shows
7. a god’s mistake
8. the gods supernatural powers
9. explain a mystery in the universe
10. describe the lesson learned
11. The creation of the lake and temple best
12. shows the consequences of good/bad behavior
13. explains a mystery of the universe
14. reveals Phrygian’s power
15. shows Mercury’s anger
16. The myth is told in chronological order so that it can
17. persuade the reader to be generous
18. explain how all lakes were formed
19. describe the characters fully
20. retell a story clearly
21. When Jupiter told the couple they “passed the test of the gods” he was referring to their
22. sound marriage
23. sorrow on the hill
24. kindness to the strangers
25. patience during the transformation

**Directions**

Use context clues and your knowledge of root words to answer the following questions.

1. What is the most likely meaning of the word “pious” in line 1?
	1. active
	2. typical
	3. elegant
	4. honorable
2. What is the most likely meaning of the word “finality?”
	1. force
	2. concern
	3. emphasis
	4. completeness

**Read the following sonnet and answer the questions to the right.**

By Nicholas Gordon

*Junior high school is a time of yearning
For what's ahead and what is left behind:
Neither child nor adult, but burning
Unrestrained with love and fear combined.*

*Now that we must leave, we have the pleasure
Of moving one step nearer to who we are,
Knowing that we lose the equal treasure,
Bit by bit, of leaving dreams ajar.*

*How lucky we have been this awkward moment,
Shifting from the shade into the sun,
To have this school as our communal parent,
Guiding us as well as you have done!*

*More than skills improved or knowledge gained
Are intellects inspired and gifts unchained.*

1. The first quatrain sets up the sonnet by
2. defining the junior high years
3. showing a clear vision for the future
4. expressing thanks for the school’s gifts
5. describing issues adults have
6. The couplet is a nice way to end the poem because it
7. finishes with thoughts of freedom
8. concludes with a warning for the future
9. reflects on a useless and difficult time
10. explains how to achieve your dreams

“When You Reach Me' by Rebecca Stead

**The Bottom Line**

*When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead is a young adult novel that is part mystery, part science fiction, part coming of age story. When Miranda, who is obsessed with *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline L'Engle, starts to receive strange notes, she tries to understand what they could mean (especially since they seem to defy the laws of space and time). Meanwhile, Miranda helps her mother prepare to be a contestant on the $20,000 Pyramid. As Miranda unravels the mystery, she learns about herself, her family and friendship. This is a gripping and enjoyable read that would be good for youth or adults.

**Pros**

* 'When You Reach Me' is satisfying for adults even though it is "young adult fiction."
* 'When You Reach Me' is well written, with an absorbing mystery.
* The main character is likeable and well developed.

**Cons**

* This book was delightful - no cons.

**Description**

* 'When You Reach Me' by Rebecca Stead was published in July 2009.
* Publisher: Wendy Lamb Books
* 208 Pages

**Guide Review - 'When You Reach Me' by Rebecca Stead**

There is a part of me that prefers young adult fiction to adult novels. A young protagonist can be deep and real without being cynical or jaded. A middle school aged protagonist, like Miranda, is just learning to ask big questions and discover who she is. When written well, this sort of book can help young people work through these issues themselves and help adults remember the core of who they are.

Of course, that sort of analysis may make you think this is an "issues" novel or one that tries to be deep. Rather, Rebecca Stead does what the best authors do -- she writes a very good story with full characters. Any depth flows from these things. This story is a good story -- the kind that makes you smile, makes you a little sad and makes you want to keep reading.

I recommend picking up *When You Reach Me* regardless of what age you are. It is a good, quick read that can be mined for more depth if desired.

Erin Collazo Miller, www.about.com

1. Erin Collazo Miller’s text helps the reader
2. buy a book
3. work out an issue
4. connect with a character
5. determine interest in a book
6. “The Bottom Line” section provides information on the
7. book's theme
8. author’s writing style
9. appropriate audience
10. time it will take to read the book
11. The information in the last paragraph is meant to
12. reveal the plot
13. persuade you to read
14. define the type of book
15. discuss the author’s style
16. Why does the descriptive text structure fit with the author’s purpose? Use information from the text to explain your answer.

**Poets**

some poets write for loves loss
some for a moment of beauty

great poets burn the brightest
writing in a fury before their
light ends...fading in an empty bottle

 Anonymous

1. Explain how the poem’s free verse structure matches its meaning. Use information from the poem to support your answer.