

# *The Eudora Welty Ephemera Prize*

## *“Circe” Lesson Plan*

### **Preparation:**

Read Eudora Welty’s story “Circe” from *The Bride of Innisfallen*

As background, you may want to read or discuss the story from *The Odyssey* as well.

Have students write a one-paragraph free response to “Circe” before discussing together.

### **Some Questions for Discussion:**

How does the character Circe use magic or her divine powers to transform the men?

What other elements of magic or of transformation do you see in this story?

What do you think allows Odysseus to evade Circe’s spell, and how does she react?

How does hearing Odysseus’s story change the way the Circe views him and his men?

What are some of the unexpected things that happen as a result of Odysseus’s visit?

Why do you think Eudora Welty chose to retell this story from *The Odyssey*?

Why do you think she chose Circe’s perspective instead of Odysseus’s?

### **Assignment:**

Write a 1-3 page personal essay, poem, or story about a time you, someone you know, or a fictional character told a story that transformed the way you saw them. Perhaps the story is one of their travels or of an event that makes them seem heroic. Or perhaps their story transforms the way you or other characters see their own situation. Perhaps there are unintended consequences of the encounter with this character, or your story transforms the way you see the character or the situation.

### **Alternate assignment:**

Write a 1-3 page personal essay, poem, or story in response to “Circe.” You might take on one of the other characters and tell the story from their perspective or tell what you think happens to a character after the ending of the story. Or you might rewrite the story in a modern setting allowing for different characters, different choices, or a different ending.

### **Activity:**

Hold a class contest: Let all the students read each other’s work and decide together which pieces are the most compelling or give each other suggestions. Encourage students to revise their work and submit it to the contest. All students are welcome to submit, even if the class didn’t pick their work. Our judges might find value that your class overlooked, so encourage everyone to revise and submit! Holding a class contest might help some students get past the hurdle of submitting to the main contest.

Have your students submit their poems, stories, or essays to [ephemera@muw.edu](mailto:ephemera@muw.edu) by Sept. 15, 2023. See the prize announcement for full details.