

Instructions

As you watch the movie *Moana*, answer the following questions. Think critically about the characters' motivations, the story's themes, and the deeper meaning behind the events you see on screen. Try to provide detailed answers.

Questions

1. From the beginning, there is a conflict between Moana's duty to her village and her personal calling to the ocean. How does her grandmother, Tala, act as a bridge between these two worlds for Moana?
2. Maui is introduced as a boastful and self-centered demigod. What was his original motivation for stealing the Heart of Te Fiti? What does this reveal about his deep-seated need for acceptance?
3. Maui's magical fishhook is central to his identity. How does losing it, and then learning to succeed without it, change his character?
4. The song "I Am Moana" marks a critical turning point for the main character after she feels defeated. What does she realize about her identity and her connection to her ancestors in this moment?
5. Consider the character Heihei. While mostly used for comic relief, how does he unintentionally help Moana succeed in her quest, particularly in saving the Heart of Te Fiti?
6. In the final confrontation, Moana realizes that the lava monster Te Kā is actually Te Fiti without her heart. What is the symbolic meaning of this? What message does it send about anger, loss, and healing?
7. The ocean is presented as a living character in the film. List at least two specific instances where the ocean directly interacts with and helps Moana.
8. How has Moana's journey transformed her from the chief's daughter into a leader in her own right? What specific action does she take at the end of the film that proves this transformation is complete?

Answer Key

1. Grandmother Tala encourages Moana's connection to the ocean, secretly nurturing it. She reveals the hidden history of their people as voyagers (in the cave with the boats), showing Moana that her desire to explore isn't a strange impulse but a part of her heritage. This gives Moana the confidence that her personal calling and her duty to her people are actually the same thing.
2. Maui's parents, who were human, threw him into the sea as a baby. He was saved by the gods, who made him a demigod. He stole the Heart of Te Fiti to give the gift of creation to mortals, hoping that this grand act would finally earn him the love and gratitude from humans that he never received from his parents.
3. Maui's identity is completely tied to the hook and the praise he gets for using it. When he loses it, he feels powerless and worthless. By helping Moana, even without his hook, he starts to find self-worth based on who he is, not what he has. Getting the hook back becomes a bonus, not the source of his identity, which is why he is willing to risk it to help Moana fight Te Kā.
4. In this moment, guided by the spirit of her grandmother, Moana stops defining herself by Maui's failures or her own self-doubt. She accepts all parts of her identity: her love for her island, her connection to the sea, her heritage as a voyager, and the teachings of her family. She sings, "I am a girl who loves my island, I'm the girl who loves the sea... The call isn't out there at all, it's inside me... I am Moana!" This shows she has found her inner strength and purpose.
5. Heihei, in his cluelessness, accidentally saves the Heart of Te Fiti. When the Kakamora steal the stone, Heihei has accidentally swallowed it, and his chaotic movements allow Moana to retrieve it. Later, as Moana confronts Te Kā and the Heart falls from her necklace, Heihei catches it and brings it back to the boat, saving the quest from failure at the last second.
6. The revelation that Te Kā is a corrupted Te Fiti symbolizes that great anger, destruction, and pain can often come from a place of deep hurt and loss. Te Fiti was not evil; her identity had been stolen, and she reacted with rage. The message is one of empathy and healing: instead of fighting the "monster," Moana understands its pain and heals it by restoring what was lost (her heart). It shows that healing, not violence, is the ultimate solution.
7. (Answers may vary) **1.** When Moana is a toddler, the ocean pulls back to show her shells and the Heart of Te Fiti, and it protects her by creating a wall of water around her. **2.** When Moana's boat capsizes early in her journey, the ocean washes her and her boat back to shore. **3.** During the fight with Te Kā, the ocean creates a clear path for Moana to walk to reach the monster.
8. Moana begins the journey as someone who must follow rules, even if she disagrees with them. Through her trials, she learns to trust her own judgment, to lead, to inspire others (like Maui), and to take charge. The final proof of her transformation is when she teaches her people how to be wayfinders again, personally leading the new fleet of voyagers out onto the open ocean, restoring their lost heritage and embracing her role as a master navigator and chief.