

The Wanderer Study Guide

The Wanderer by Sharon Creech

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Wanderer Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Section I - Preparations.....	4
Section II - Shakedown.....	5
Section III - The Island.....	7
Section IV - Under Way.....	10
Section V - Wind and Waves.....	13
Part VI - Land.....	15
Characters.....	18
Objects/Places.....	21
Themes.....	23
Style.....	25
Quotes.....	27
Topics for Discussion.....	28



Plot Summary

The Wanderer is a story of thirteen-year-old Sophie's return to the sea to visit her Bompie in England. Although Sophie is ecstatic at the thought of sailing across the ocean, she struggles with a dark fear of the sea that will slowly unravel as the journey progresses.

At the opening of the novel, thirteen-year-old Sophie begins by writing about her love for the sea and describing a vivid nightmare she has about a giant black wave coming to consume her. This love/fear is central to the mystery surrounding Sophie's character, and history, throughout the novel. Sophie has fought her way onto the family's sail boat The Wanderer for a cross-country trip to visit her Grandfather, Bompie, who lives in England. As the novel progresses, the reader learns that this family is not Sophie's blood family but her adoptive family - she was adopted three years earlier - and that no one really knows the truth of what happened to Sophie's real parents. Sophie herself doesn't even acknowledge that she had other parents and refuses to talk about being adopted, much to the consternation of her two curious cousins, Brian and Cody.

When Sophie first arrives on the boat, she struggles to figure out where she belongs and often feels as if the with whom men she's traveling treat her differently because she's a girl. In time, however, she learns to adapt to the motto of being part of a team, and is able to showcase her strengths as a sailor without overshadowing the rest of her team. The crew makes various stops on their way to England, including a stop at Grand Manan where Sophie and Cody explore the old ghost island. This experience deeply bonds the two cousins, but opens up many more questions for Cody about what secrets are hiding in Sophie's past. When the crew is on their way to the Irish coast, disaster hits in the form of a giant white wave that crashes into the boat, nearly killing everyone aboard. The crew all manage to survive, but the boat is badly battered. In this moment, Sophie is forced to face her largest fear - a reoccurring nightmare she has of a giant black wave coming to consume her.

When the crew finally make it safely to Ireland and are reunited with Bompie, everyone is startled to hear that Bompie does know who Sophie is even though he's never met her before. Throughout the entire journey, Sophie had told the crew "Bompie stories" that they all believed she had made up even though she insisted Bompie had told her. When Sophie recounts the stories with Bompie in the room, he verifies that, yes, he did share all these stories with Sophie, except one. When Sophie recounts the story of Bompie's parents being lost at sea all eyes turn to Sophie. Clearly she is not recounting Bompie's story but her own. The tragic truth of Sophie's past is revealed, and her family still embraces her with open arms.



Section I - Preparations

Section I - Preparations Summary

In the opening chapter of the novel, an unnamed narrator laments a love for how the sea calls them. The sea is called a dangerous temptress, and the narrator dreams a terrible dream of a wall of towering black water creeping up behind them, but the narrator wakes before the water can consume them.

In the second chapter, the reader learns that the narrator is Sophie, a thirteen-year-old girl who loves the sea and is preparing for a sea voyage with her uncles and male cousins to visit her Bompie, grandfather. Sophie's mother is not very excited about Sophie taking part in the dangerous mission, but Sophie is steadfast. Her uncles, also, don't really want Sophie aboard, but Uncle Dock convinces them that she will be fine. The crew hopes to set sail in the first week of June, as soon as school is out for the children. Sophie is anxious to leave school because the kids there have too many questions - questions about who she really is, and where she came from - but Sophie doesn't want to get into that.

When the time comes, Sophie's father drives her out to Connecticut to meet up with her uncles aboard *The Wanderer*. When she arrives, her Uncle Dock is running around the boat, which he calls his "big baby," shouting out all the repairs that need to be completed before the boat will be seaworthy. Brian, Sophie's studious cousin, runs behind him writing everything down on a clipboard. After a few days of repairs and tough cleaning, *The Wanderer* finally sets sail.

Section I - Preparations Analysis

In this opening section, Sophie is presented as a normal thirteen-year-old girl from a loving family who is headed out on an amazing adventure. She appears to have loving parents and a handful of crazy uncles, but other than that, she seems completely average. The only thing out of the ordinary in Sophie's life is the reoccurring nightmare she has about a giant black wave coming to consume her. In this dream, Sophie's character is defined as a girl who loves adventure but is consumed by fear. The reader has no idea what the symbolism is, if any, in the black wave, but because Creech builds the foundation image of the novel on this wave, it would be safe to assume that this image will return.

It is also interesting to note, in this opening section, that the narration takes place in clear journal format. Although there are not dates, Sophie acknowledges that her mother bought her a journal to write down her memories of the adventure, and it is clear that these journal entries make up the narration. This is further acknowledged by the interruption of Cody's journal entries, which provide unique insight into the experiences on board from another character's perspective.



Section II - Shakedown

Section II - Shakedown Summary

Sophie is over the moon as *The Wanderer* sets out from the dock. She feels as if her heart will leap into the sky as the sky calls her name. The rocking of the boat on the waves makes Sophie think of Bompie - was it Bompie? - holding her on his lap when she was a child, whispering stories into her ear.

Both Sophie and Cody are keeping a journal of the daily activities aboard the boat. Not much happens the first few days, except Brian doles out daily chores for everyone. Since the trip is estimated to take three to four weeks, Uncle Stew thinks it will be a good idea for everyone on board to teach something along the way. He hopes everyone will choose something useful for the journey, but Cody decides to teach everyone to juggle, and Sophie decides to teach Bompie's stories.

Through Cody's journal, the reader sees that he is struggling with his relationship with his father, Uncle Mo. He also gives the reader insight into Sophie's character that doesn't come through in Sophie's own journal. For example, in his first journal entry, Cody states that he finds it strange that Sophie calls her aunt and uncle her "parents," which is strange because they only adopted her three years ago. Cody finds Sophie to be very brave - at least she doesn't sit around moping about being an orphan. Cody clearly likes spending time with Sophie away from their cousin Brian, who uses Sophie's situation as an orphan to rile her up.

While fishing, Sophie catches seven bluefish, then bludgeons and guts them herself, much to the surprise of the men on board. Sophie struggles to behead the fish and break its spine, calling this the hardest part about killing something - the pressure and then the release. A few days later, they dock the boat in Martha's Vineyard to visit with Uncle Dock's friend, Joey. That night, Brian feels like something is up, because Dock and Joey are whispering to each other, and his father, Uncle Stew, pulls out his sleeping bag to sleep out on the dock. When they return to sea, Brian gives his first lesson on the points of sailing. Cody purposefully jokes around during the lesson, infuriating Brian.

Sophie states that she can hardly keep days and night straight anymore. "Out here there isn't day and night and then a new day. Instead, there are degrees of light and dark merging and changing. It's like one long stream of time unfolding in front of you, all around you" (Page 42). As soon as they set back to sail, *The Wanderer* begins springing leaks. The tone of the novel begins to change as the men on board become more frequently annoyed with each other. Most of the annoyance seems to circle around Cody who can't seem to take anything seriously. Soon after leaving the borders of North America, Sophie tells her first Bompie story: Bompie and the Car. In this story, Bompie traded two of his farming mules for a car. Even though he had never driven one before, he volunteered to go into town and drive the car back. He accidentally drove the car into a flooded creek, and watched helplessly as it sank to the bottom. When he got home,



his father whipped him with the belt and his mother gave him a slice of apple pie, because she was so glad that he was alive.

Section II - Shakedown Analysis

In this section, Sophie continues to have flashbacks about her childhood before her adoptive home, although she never entertains them. In fact, she convinces herself that she didn't share those experiences with her "real" parents, but with Bompie, her adoptive grandfather whom she has never met. The rest of the crew struggles to understand Sophie's relationship with Bompie, particularly wondering how Bompie could have told Sophie the stories she claims to know from his childhood. Everyone on board seems to recognize that Sophie is fragile, so they entertain her fantasies about this relationship, or at the very least don't question it. Her cousin Brian is the only exception to this. Brian, who loves organization and rules, is perpetually frustrated by Sophie's lies, and torments Sophie by calling her an orphan.

Once she is aboard *The Wanderer*, Sophie quickly and clearly defines the relationship between her uncles and her cousins. Because it is the opening of the story, these characteristics seem blunt and bold, but as the novel progresses, each of the characters will be given opportunities to shake off their negative connotations to become well-rounded, flushed out characters instead of clichés. Perhaps the most interesting struggle Sophie has immediately upon boarding *The Wanderer* is her ever present desire to beat the boys. Sophie constantly feels like she has something to prove, that she really belongs. This desperate desire is so strong it leaves the reader wondering if this need is because of her gender or because of something much deeper.



Section III - The Island

Section III - The Island Summary

Uncle Dock docks *The Wanderer* in Grand Manan to make further repairs. He seems to know people everywhere, and the crew visits with his friend, Frank, a fellow sailor. Sophie loves the idea of a harbor town, and the way that everyone in the village is somehow related to fishing. The first day in Grand Manan, Frank takes everyone out on his lobstering boat, which he built from a shell he purchased on auction. Sophie loves that, too, when someone takes something decrepit and creates something grand out of it. On board, however, Sophie feels eerie when she hears about sea fleas - tiny organisms that eat flesh off bone in the sea.

On land, Sophie phones home and answers a million of her parents' questions. She felt fine before speaking to them, but something about their conversation makes her nervous that something terrible is going to happen to her. She is particularly worried when her mother says that she called Bompie to tell him that the kids are on their way, and Bompie didn't know who she was. He was fuzzy, and kept calling his daughter Margaret - his wife's name. By the end of the conversation, he had returned to normal and claimed that he was just joking.

Cody is interested in what happened to Sophie's real parents, but no one will tell him. The closest he gets to an answer is from Uncle Dock who says, "It's not a pretty story" (Page 55). Meanwhile, Sophie thinks she should be more like Cody, who doesn't let snide remarks from people affect him. Sophie feels particularly sensitive about people's assumptions that she does all the cooking and cleaning on the boat, when she actually knows more about sailing than her male cousins do.

Frank and his father take the kids out clamming. Sophie thinks the tiny air bubbles used to locate clams are creepy, and she fears that she might rake up a human from the mud rather than a clam. She says that she and Bompie went clamming once and pulled clams up with just their feet, but no one believes her. Brian gets especially annoyed when Sophie talks about Bompie because he insists she's never even met him. Back at Frank's house, Cody and Sophie meet a woman who lives on her own in a log cabin she built, which greatly impresses Sophie. She tells them that the island is haunted by ghosts that have returned to the place they once lived. This intrigues Cody and Sophie, so they take the dinghy out to Wood Island where the ghosts are supposed to roam. They wander around the island and find an altar, where they both kneel and say a little prayer. Cody finds a mangled string of beads and presents it to Sophie as a gift. He also works up enough courage to finally ask Sophie about her real parents, but she insists that her aunt and uncle are her real parents. Later, she tells Cody about a little kid she used to know who was forced to live in lots of different places with people who didn't really want the little kid around.



Sophie is overcome with fear twice in this section - first, when she and Cody are rowing back from Wood Island to The Wanderer and the fog rolls in so thickly she feels as if she can't breathe. Later, at Frank's cousin's baptism, Sophie feels weak in the knees watching the people dunked under the water by the pastor, and there's something about the song "Amazing Grace" that makes her feel as if she's heard it before - at a funeral? - and she nearly faints.

Sophie tells two more Bompie stories in this section. In the first story, Bompie is walking along a deep river when he approaches some train tracks. He wants to cross the river, but there is no bridge and the nearby pedestrian pathway is nearly two miles away. So he decides to cross on the train tracks. As soon as he's exactly halfway across, a train comes roaring down the tracks and there isn't enough time for Bompie to run either direction so he jumps into the rushing river below. He thinks he's going to die, but somehow, like a bobber, he floats back to the top and is saved. When he returns home, his father whips him with the belt and his mother serves him apple pie. In the second story, Bompie gets baptized by the local pastor whose daughter he's dating. The pastor doesn't like Bompie - he's kept his daughter out late too many nights in a row - so he holds Bompie under the water during the baptism, trying to drown him. Bompie bites the pastor's hand and manages to escape. When he gets home, his father whips him for biting the pastor, and his mother serves him apple pie.

Section III - The Island Analysis

While visiting Grand Manar, Sophie realizes her true desire in life, which is to be alone in nature, surviving off what she has caught, killed, and built with her own two hands. She loves the idea that everyone in the sleepy fishing community has a place, a sense of belonging, and clearly craves that peace in her own life. It is also interesting to note that Sophie has an extremely adverse reaction to the presence of sea fleas in the ocean. The image of the sea fleas swarming around a body and picking it clean to the bones unsettles her. She is clearly uncomfortable with the image of someone disappearing into the ocean, never to be seen or heard from again. These images continue to foreshadow the realization of who she really is to which Sophie will come by the end of the novel .

When Sophie speaks to her mother, she learns that Bompie has been less lucid lately. Sophie's mother fears that he may be slipping into Alzheimer's or dementia. If this were to happen, all his stories would disappear too, so it is very symbolic that Sophie claims to be the keeper of Bompie's stories. One story to which Sophie clings is the story of Bompie taking her out clamming when she was very young, and they caught the clams with their bare feet instead of rakes. This story is particularly interesting because Sophie was only adopted into the family three years ago, when she was ten. There is no logical way that Bompie could have taken her out clamming. Sophie doesn't acknowledge this impossibility, and the reader is left, along with Sophie's uncles, to question the reliability of Sophie's narration. Additionally, Sophie has an emotional and unexpected reaction to the baptism. She is terrified of the pastor holding people underwater too long, and is

physically ill when she hears the song "Amazing Grace." Clearly these images are clues into Sophie's hidden past.



Section IV - Under Way

Section IV - Under Way Summary

The Wanderer returns to the sea. On board, Uncle Mo sits on deck sketching drawings of the seals that play around their boat. When Sophie spots this, she asks if Uncle Mo is an artist. He explains that he's a "number cruncher" (Page 86), and that life doesn't always work out so everyone is working their dream jobs. Sophie doesn't buy it and thinks Uncle Mo is very talented. Overall, Sophie is thrilled to be crossing the ocean to Ireland, but worries that she and her family members will annoy each other with no land in sight, and she is equally worried when she hears that there are rough storms ahead. Meanwhile, Cody has played witness to some strange behavior from his father. During their last call home, his father spoke very softly to his mother, telling her repeatedly that he loves her. Later, he walked in on his father juggling oranges, although he quickly stopped as soon as he realized he was being watched.

The weather starts to pick up, further worrying Sophie, but she remembers Bompie's words of encouragement that, "suffering builds character" (Page 91). Later, she overhears a disturbing conversation between Uncle Stew and Uncle Dock. Uncle Stew doesn't sound like himself, and Sophie realizes that he's just been fired from his job. Soon after, they received their first contact with another sailor on the ham radio. This sailor is all alone, which deeply worries Sophie, although the sailor doesn't seem bothered by it. He had been having electrical problems and reached out to the closest boat, The Wanderer, for help. Later that night, Sophie overhears Uncle Stew still talking to the sailor, and she knows he's worried about the man's loneliness, too.

The waves continue to grow, and Sophie continues to have nightmares about being swallowed up by the sea. Meanwhile, Cody has learned the entire alphabet in radio code, and he and Sophie have taken to calling each other Charlie-Oscar (CO) and Sierra-Oscar (SO) for fun. Sophie is also teaching Cody how to tie various knots, like the clove hitch, but Sophie doesn't remember where she first learned them.

The first major fight breaks out on board after some grommets rip from the sails. Uncle Stew blames Cody and repeatedly calls him an "idjit" (Page 100), which really riles up Uncle Mo. In the end, Sophie sews the grommets back into place, with Brian making silly comments about how it's a good thing they have a girl on board who can sew. That night, everyone falls into a quiet panic when they see large blips on their scanning radar careening toward them. They frantically blow their air horn into the fog to alert a barge of their presence, but nothing ever passes them. Later, they realize that the radar was actually picking up on cloudbursts all night, not threatening ships, and everyone feels relieved and silly.

Sophie describes life on the boat in detail, highlighting the struggles of living full-time on a boat. For example, no one can walk at regular pace; each footstep must be carefully marked so as not to be thrown off balance by the thrashing waves. Additionally, one



must hold their plate in place with one hand while eating, making it impossible to eat and drink at the same time. Finally, everyone's clothes are always damp, particularly when it's foggy out, so they've taken to hoarding dry t-shirts and only breaking them out in case of emergency. Overall, Sophie is still glad she came on this trip and states that everyone is getting along relatively well, given their close quarters. One day, a battered little blackbird lands helplessly on the deck of the boat and everyone takes to nursing it back to health. Sophie, in particular, becomes almost obsessed with ensuring the bird's safety at all times. While the bird is healing, Uncle Dock tells the story of the woman he once loved, Rosalie, and how she left him to marry another man. Everyone is deeply saddened by the story and encourage Uncle Dock to try to find her, insisting that it's never too late for love.

Sophie tells yet another story of Bompie nearly drowning in the water - this time in an old swimming hole. Fed up, Brian finally questions why Bompie keeps going in the water if he is continually in danger. Sophie doesn't really have an answer, and Cody suddenly realizes how fragile his cousin is. Cody shouts that it's because Bompie is afraid of the water that he keeps going in - because he has something to prove. The next morning Sophie wakes and feels as if she hates the sea and the sea hates her. To try to cheer herself up, she asks Uncle Stew more about Dock's Rosalie. Uncle Stew claims that Rosalie's husband is dead now, and that's why Uncle Dock insists on making so many stops on their way to Ireland; he is searching for Rosalie. Feeling closer to her family, Sophie confesses the dreams she's been having about the big black wave to Cody - although she veils it by saying that "the little kid" she knows is having these dreams.

Section IV - Under Way Analysis

In this section, tensions on board begin to surface - both physically in fight, and emotionally, as many of the characters begin to exhibit strange behavior. Cody is very suspicious of his father, who seems to be desperately trying to connect with his wife. There is very clear foreshadowing to the coming sections as there are numerous references to the weather and fear that *The Wanderer* may not fare well in a storm. Also in this section, Sophie begins to see different sides of her Uncles, such as Mo's artistic abilities and Stew's loss of a job. These aspects of their characters help to create well-rounded characters that will allow for redemption later in the novel. Clearly, Uncle Mo is not just an angry violent man - he has a much a softer side. And clearly Uncle Stew is not just an obsessively organized, controlled man - he is sensitive and vulnerable as well.

Sophie describes the difficulties of living on a ship for weeks at a time with no contact with land. It is very intimidating, vulnerable, and lonely, as highlighted by the ham radio contact with the stranded sailor. Even though the crew is working together for their journey, it is very clear that each character struggles with their own sense of belonging. Uncle Dock's vulnerability is also highlighted in this section when he discusses Rosalie, the woman he first loved. It is clear that Uncle Dock has never truly gotten over Rosalie, and the reader is left wondering if this character may resurface later in the novel.



Sophie's own insecurities are further revealed as she watches the whales swimming next to the boat. She is concerned about the baby whale that swims without confidence next to its mother. Sophie feels distressed whenever she can't see all three whales - the father, mother, and baby - together. This further highlights Sophie's childhood traumas, although she doesn't seem to recognize the connection. Sophie also gets closer to telling Cody the truth of her childhood, but she veils the stories by saying they aren't about her but are about "a little kid" she knows. It is clear to everyone that Sophie is talking about herself when she discusses the little kid's childhood traumas, but it hasn't been directly identified yet.



Section V - Wind and Waves

Section V - Wind and Waves Summary

The sea has begun to pick up steam, rolling and tumbling The Wanderer in its violent waves. Both Cody and Sophie open their diary entries with acknowledgment of puking. The wind has been so bad that the main mast has snapped in half and they are now coasting without sails. Cody fears they are all doomed. When Sophie looks out into the dark, black sea, she sees shadow monsters in the waves. After the sails tear, there is no time for Bompie stories, no time for juggling, no time for radio code. All anyone is trying to do is keep the boat afloat. Everyone snaps on their safety harnesses - which are used to tie everyone to the ship in case it flips over - and gets to work. Sophie begs to climb up the mast to fix the torn trysail, but her uncles refuse. Sophie throws a fit and Brian accuses her of being selfish - she is part of a crew, and everyone needs to pull their own weight during crisis. Ego can't be involved. Everyone on the ship cries that day, except Sophie. Cody notes his fear when his father tells him repeatedly that he's been a good son. Are they all going to die?

In the midst of all the drama, Cody still musters up the courage to ask Uncle Dock if he thinks Sophie knows what happened to her real parents. Dock says only Sophie would know that, and reiterates that it's not a pretty story. Meanwhile, Sophie tells the story of Bompie's first visit to the ocean. He realized he had seen this ocean once before, when he was a very small boy. And a giant black wave towered over him and pulled him into the sea. Bompie fought with all his heart and made it safely back to shore.

The next morning, on deck, Cody shouts for Sophie to put on her safety harness. She doesn't want to because she's sure the sea is dying down again, but Cody insists. On watch with Cody that night, at about 3:30 in the morning, Sophie queasily watches the waves build height and then crash against the ship. Then she notices a wave further off in the distance that looks different from the rest of the waves - it is white, all foam, and at least fifty-feet high. She stares at it for a few seconds and realizes the wave is growing larger by the second. She shouts for Cody who turns around and immediately ducks for cover as the wave slams against him like a ton of bricks. Inside the wave, Sophie is spinning, thrashing, flailing, begging herself to hold her breath. She cannot remember if she put on her safety harness, and she is sure she is going to die. As she tumbles overboard, she hears a child's voice screaming "Mommy! Daddy!" (Page154).

In the next chapter, the reader learns that Sophie's harness has held and she hasn't flipped overboard as suspected. She is badly injured, though, and in shock. She slides down onto the floor struggling to take in the images of bodies, clothing, and food floating in the foot-deep water. She begins to panic, calling out people's names, and she slowly hears their responses. Brian has badly sprained his arms, and Cody's face is gashed wide open from slamming face-first into the wheel. Cody and Sophie crawl to the bathroom where she patches up his face, and they both sit rocking, repeating "It's okay. It's okay" (Page 157). When Sophie crawls back out from the bathroom, she sees the



magnitude of damage on the boat. All their communication systems have been ruined, and no one knows where they are.

In time, their injuries begin to heal and the damaged portions of the boat are slowly fixed. Their communication systems are still shot, but they think they might live through the storm. Cody copes with the trauma by working on the boat day in and day out. He doesn't even stop to eat or sleep. Sophie looks forward to finally seeing Bompie, although she also has an unexplainable fear about seeing him. At night, when he does manage to sleep, Cody dreams about Sophie as a scared little girl. He thinks often about "the little kid" Sophie mentions, and he wishes he knew what he could say to make that little kid feel safe. Since the storm, everyone is much kinder to each other, and no one gets into fights.

Section V - Wind and Waves Analysis

This section opens with the acknowledgment that the weather everyone's been hinting about has finally hit. Throughout the novel, the characters have been teaching each other useful information, such as radio code and sextant readings, that could be helpful in a storm situation. Cody proves that he has actually been listening to the other members of the crew when, in a time of crisis, he speaks in ship language instead of making fun of it. He realizes in this moment that he must communicate with the rest of the crew in the language they'll understand. Communication is an interesting theme in this section because Cody also has dreams about "the little kid" from Sophie's stories. He recognizes that there is something the little kid - who is clearly symbolic of Sophie - wants to say but she can't find the words to communicate them. Cody has a breakthrough, however, with his father as the two finally begin communicating emotionally with each other as Uncle Mo repeatedly tells Cody that he's been a good son. While it is likely that the trauma of the storm has prompted Uncle Mo's emotional outbursts, it is also likely that this experience will forever change their relationship and their communication.

Sophie finally faces the fear of her dreams when the wave returns, this time white, not black. It threatens to consume her, but she is saved. In a way, this storm finally brings the family together as one unit. Cody saves Sophie's life by telling her to put on her safety harness, and Sophie cares for Cody's injuries as a mother might, comforting him and promising that everything is going to be alright.



Part VI - Land

Part VI - Land Summary

After days of seeing nothing but the churning sea, Cody finally spots land ahead. Miraculously, the crew has managed to steer The Wanderer to the coast of Ireland without the use of electronic GPS or radar. Out of excitement, Uncle Dock jumps to the deck and begins reciting The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, an epic poem about the joys of sailing. Joyfully, the crew bounds from the boat and onto very unsteady legs on land. They immediately try to call their family members - who must be worried sick - but are shocked when no one answers. Clearly, no one knows the grave danger in which their loved ones had found themselves and therefore they aren't sitting around by the telephones waiting.

As soon as they're on land, the crew piles into an Irish pub and orders all the food they can stomach. They are surrounded by old Irish fishermen, so they all swap tales of their great sea adventures. Sophie especially is extremely talkative but she notices that Cody is keeping a close eye on what she's saying. Through Cody's journal entries from the same day, the reader hears that when Sophie had been telling her stories in the pub, she was mixing up her own stories from childhood with her Uncle's. She had also repeatedly called the wave that crashed into their boat "black," when it really was white. Cody had wanted to correct her, but again, felt as if she was too fragile.

After their first day in Ireland, everyone packs into a car to visit Bompie. Everyone is extremely excited to finally reach their destination, although Uncle Dock is saddened that they won't be sailing there as planned. The family has decided to rush to Bompie's after speaking with Sophie's mother who says that Bompie has been acting strangely lately - he's more confused on the telephone than before - and she is worried that he may not have much time left. Although she's also excited, Sophie has a fear about meeting Bompie that she doesn't quite understand. As they drive to Bompie's, they make one final stop at one of Uncle Dock's friend's houses. Uncle Dock knocks on the door and everyone is shocked when Rosalie answers. They spend a few hours at this house then head back toward Bompie's. Uncle Dock is clearly disappointed to leave Rosalie, but she is supposed to meet up with the family at Bompie's.

In the car, Brian continues to pester Sophie and wants to know why she always lies about her parents and why she lies about Bompie. Sophie doesn't answer any of these questions. When they finally drive over the border into England, all of the Uncles begin to cry and are very emotional. They explain that they are returning to their fatherland, and that there is something emotional about that. They acknowledge that if Bompie hadn't left England he probably wouldn't have met his wife or fathered his children, which means that Cody and Brian wouldn't be here either. When she hears this, Sophie whispers, "Would I be here?" (Page 197).



When the family finally arrives at Bompie, Cody sees Bompie lying in his bed and immediately fears that they are too late, Bompie's already dead. Bompie is not dead, however, but he cannot seem to recognize anyone. He thinks Cody and Brian are actually their fathers in a much younger form. Because he's never met Sophie, he obviously doesn't recognize her, which infuriates Brian who tells Sophie to leave him alone. As soon as Bompie hears Sophie's name, he reaches out to her and calls her his dear Sophie. For the rest of the time at Bompie's, Sophie is inseparable from him. She sits in his room and recites back his own stories to him - such as the story of Bompie and the train, Bompie and the car in the river, and Bompie and the baptism. Then one day, she asks Bompie if he remembers the story of the time Bompie's parents took him sailing, but the wind started howling. To keep him safe, Bompie's parents wrapped him in a blanket and put him in a dinghy. Then Bompie watched - and he was so scared - as a giant black wave overtook the boat his parents were on while Bompie floated safely away, away, away. When Bompie doesn't remember the story, Cody says softly, "Maybe that's not Bompie's story. Maybe that's your story" (Page 207).

Later, after she's composed herself from the crying, Sophie finds Cody sitting by Bompie's apple tree and presents him with a thick scrapbook. Ever since she was adopted, Bompie has sent her letters from England telling her about himself, so he could get to know his new grandchild. This notebook contains all Bompie's stories. Later, the Uncles get into a big fight about whether or not they should take Bompie back to America with them. Bompie can't really take care of himself alone anymore, but no one has room in their houses for him. Rosalie arrives and she and Uncle Dock go for a walk. When they return, Uncle Dock looks heartbroken and says that Rosalie's left him again, this time for Spain, but he will stay in England and take care of Bompie.

Later that night, the family has a goodbye party and Uncle Mo gifts everyone with a drawing he made for each of them. Sophie's drawing is a pencil sketching of her swinging in the air on the bosun's chair, and in the water beneath are a family of dolphins. In the closing chapters, it becomes clear that the family is living in unity once again. Brian and Cody come over to Sophie's for a few weeks in the summer and the three of them plan their next sailing adventure. Uncle Stew finds a new job with a company that charts the ocean bottom, and Uncle Mo enrolls in a nighttime art class.

Part VI - Land Analysis

The irony of this final section is that as soon as the crew reaches land, they attempt to reach their family members and no one is there - not because they don't care, but because they didn't know their loved ones had been in any danger. This further highlights the breakdown of communication and the theme that one needs to rely on themselves for support. Everyone aboard *The Wanderer* survives, not because their family back home loves and supports them, but because they fight to stay alive and work together as a team.

The duration of the closing section is devoted almost entirely to reunions. Uncle Dock is reunited with Rosalie, who abandons him again at the end of the novel, and the entire



family is reunited with Bompie, even though he doesn't recognize any of them at first. As the reader may have suspected, Bompie does know who Sophie is, and did share his stories with her as she claimed. This is a moment of enlightenment for Uncle Stew and Brian who spent the entire trip doubting Sophie's claims that she knew Bompie better than they did. In this way, Bompie's stories have come full circle. While he is clearly ailing in his old age and may not have many lucid years left, he has managed to pass his stories on to Sophie who is willing to share them with the rest of the family.

Perhaps the most important breakthrough of this section, however, is Sophie's understanding of her own past. In her final story about Bompie, she realizes that it had not been Bompie who was sent out to sea by his parents, but that it had been her. Sophie is devastated to face her real fears again. Clearly Sophie has spent the years of her life since her parents' death crafting a fantasy life for herself in which those parents, and thus that pain, never existed. But she can escape the truth no longer. In the end, however, Sophie has made the realization but hasn't changed drastically. She still doesn't talk about her past to her family and still refers to "the little kid." Through the course of the novel, however, the reader has grown close to Sophie and understands her emotions and fears. By the closing of the novel, the reader undoubtedly trusts that Sophie understands herself better since the trip, even if she doesn't vocalize that change to others.



Characters

Sophie

Sophie is the thirteen-year-old protagonist and narrator of the novel. In the opening chapters, she describes herself as "three-sided Sophie." One side is dreamy and romantic, particularly when discussing her relationship with the sea, one side is logical and down-to-earth, and one side is hard-headed and impulsive. At the opening of the novel, thirteen-year-old Sophie begins by writing about her love for the sea and describing a vivid nightmare she has about a giant black wave coming to consume her. This love/fear is central to the mystery surrounding Sophie's character, and history, throughout the novel. Sophie has fought her way onto the family's sail boat *The Wanderer* for a cross-country trip to visit her Grandfather, Bompie, who lives in England. As the novel progresses, the reader learns that this family is not Sophie's blood family but her adoptive family - she was adopted three years earlier - and that no one really knows the truth of what happened to Sophie's real parents. Sophie herself doesn't even acknowledge that she had other parents and refuses to talk about being adopted, much to the consternation of her two curious cousins, Brian and Cody. When Sophie first arrives on the boat, she struggles to figure out where she belongs and often feels as if the men with whom she's traveling treat her differently because she's a girl. In time, however, she learns to adapt to the motto of being part of a team, and is able to showcase her strengths as a sailor without overshadowing the rest of her team. As the novel progresses, Sophie continues to struggle with accepting the dark truth of her past, and it is finally revealed that Sophie's parents were both killed during a terrible storm when she was a child. They had bundled her into the safety of a floating dingy and she watched in horror as a massive black wave consumed their ship. Since being adopted into a loving family, Sophie has fought against these painful memories so she can appear normal. There are some good memories of her childhood, however, such as the memory of going clamming with her first grandfather, and Cody teaches Sophie that it's okay to remember these good times even if they go hand-in-hand with painful ones. By the end of the novel, Sophie has found her place in her new family and has accepted that her traumatic childhood helped shaped her into the strong young woman she is today.

Cody

Cody is Sophie's cousin and best-friend during the voyage on *The Wanderer*. Cody is described as charming "in a dangerous sort of way" and he seems to have selective deafness while aboard the ship. Sophie later learns that Cody tunes out much of what his father shouts at him because the two have a tumultuous relationship. Cody keeps a journal of his thoughts during the voyage, and this writing is often woven into the narrative, giving the reader two perspectives - Cody's and Sophie's - of the events aboard the boat. In the early chapters of the novel, Cody clearly enjoys his time on the ship but uses it as a way to rile up his father, Uncle Stew, and cousin Brian. Even



though Cody is intelligent, he feels the need to act silly, even stupid, to get negative attention from his family. This is exhibited by Cody's penchant to call sailing equipment by silly names like "rope-thingy" instead of "outhaul" and "metal-thingy" instead of "grommet" (Page 102). Cody has a very strained relationship with his father, whom he feels is always yelling at him or his mother. When everyone on board is tasked with teaching an important skill to the rest of the crew, Cody chooses juggling, even though everyone scoffs that it's not important enough. As the novel progresses, the reader witnesses Cody's relationship with his father changing through the images of Uncle Mo juggling. As he gets closer to his son through this "unimportant" skill, he treats him more lovingly, even tells him that he's a good son. Aside from acting as a nuisance on board, Cody also acts as Sophie's protector. He seems to be the only family member who understands Sophie's fragility and he desperately wants to protect that. Although Cody is very curious about what happened to Sophie's real parents, he never pressures her. When the truth about Sophie's dark past comes out, it is Cody who is there to support her and let her know she belongs in their family, no matter where she came from.

Brian

Brian is Sophie's cousin, and the son of Uncle Stew. Brian is very studious and organized, which is often an annoyance to Sophie and Cody, who don't really like having him around. Brian is obsessed with keeping lists and knowing where everyone is at all times. He is described as tall and gangly, with stiff limbs that jerk like a puppet's. Brian doesn't believe that Bompie actually told Sophie any of the stories she claims he did.

Uncle Stew

Uncle Stew, like his son Brian, is very detail-oriented and is considered to be a worrier. He is tall and thin, with a scrub of black hair on his head. He also walks in a clumsy, jerky kind of way.

Uncle Dock

Uncle Dock is Sophie's favorite uncle of the three. He is a carpenter in real life, and is in charge of all maintenance and repairs aboard The Wanderer. He is described as easygoing and calm, a direct opposite of his two brothers. While the rest of Sophie's uncles didn't want her aboard The Wanderer, Uncle Dock fought to include her, despite the fact that she's a girl.

Uncle Mo

Uncle Mo is Sophie's uncle and Cody's father. Uncle Mo is described as chubby, and he loves to lounge around in the sun without a shirt on, getting a tan. Uncle Mo has a dark, violent side that often comes out around his son, Cody. Cody feels very uncomfortable



around his father, as if he can never measure up to him. Uncle Mo has a deep bellowing voice, which he uses to shout orders at the kids, and violent temper: Cody even remembers seeing his father beat his mother with a belt. By the end of the novel, Uncle Mo realizes his true calling as an artist.

Bompie

Bompie is Sophie's grandfather, whom the travelers are going to visit in England. Sophie considers Bompie to be like a third-parent to her because, like her, he has three-sides and is so much like her. He is a sweet man with a honey tongue and is a teller of great tales. Bompie is now over seventy-years-old and to honor him, Sophie tells "Bompie stories" to her family aboard the ship. No one believes that Bompie actually told Sophie these stories, and they all think she's making them up: like the story of Bompie's baptism, and Bompie's car accident, and the time she and Bompie went clamming and caught their clams using only their feet.

Frank

Frank is Uncle Dock's friend who lives in Grand Manan. He owns the ship Frank's Fort, which he built from a shell he bought on auction. Frank works as a lobster fisherman, and takes the kids out clamming when they come to visit him.

Rosalie

Rosalie is Uncle Dock's first love. They first met on the island and Uncle Dock regularly took Rosalie out in search of whales because they were Rosalie's favorite animal. Once they saw a whale, however, Rosalie left Uncle Dock and married another man, breaking Dock's heart. Throughout the trip, Uncle Dock makes various stops to see if anyone knows what happened to Rosalie. At the end of the novel, even though the two have been reunited, Uncle Dock's heart is still broken.



Objects/Places

The Wanderer

The Wanderer is the boat Sophie and her family sail to England to meet Bompie. The boat belongs to Uncle Dock, and is forty-five feet long, navy and white, with two large masts and booms that wrap around the sails. Below deck, there is sleeping room for six, a table, a bathroom, a chart table, navigation equipment, and cubbies. Sophie loves how everything aboard a ship like this has a place and a purpose. There's no room for clutter.

Kentucky

Kentucky is the state where Sophie and her family live. They live in a sleepy town by the Ohio River.

The Ohio River

The Ohio River is the only spot of water in Kentucky. Sophie doesn't understand why everyone loves this river because it doesn't have any waves or tides. There are no crabs or jellyfish, or any other exciting animals living in it, and at times, it's not even wide enough for a ship.

Grand Manan

Grand Manan is the fishing town where Frank lives. The crew aboard The Wanderer stops there when they need to make repairs, and Frank takes the kids out lobster fishing and clamming.

Sea Fleas

Sea Fleas are the tiny organisms that live the ocean and eat flesh off bones. Sophie is terrified that if she were to fall overboard, the sea fleas would pick her bones clean and no one would know what happened to her body.

Wood Island

Wood Island is the small island twenty minutes away from Grand Manan where Sophie and Cody believe the ghosts freely roam. When they are sailing the dinghy back to The Wanderer, they run into a cloud of fog, petrifying Sophie.



Apple Pie

Apple pie is what Bompie's mother always used to give him when he came back from terrifying adventures because she was so pleased that he was still alive. Apple pie becomes the symbol for forgiveness and familial love in Sophie's boat family.

The Blue Bopper Wanderer

The Blue Bopper Wanderer is the name of the raft Sophie, Brian, and Cody plan to build together in the years after returning from the great sea adventure.

Dolphins

Dolphins are the one sea animal that most frequently visit the ship during its journey. Sophie loves to watch the dolphins swim together, particularly if they seem to be in a family. At the end of the novel, Uncle Mo gifts Sophie with a pencil sketching he did of Sophie swinging above the water while dolphins dance beneath her.

The Black Wave

The Black Wave is the image that haunts Sophie in her nightmares. By the end of the novel, the reader learns that the black wave killed Sophie's parents when she was a very young child.



Themes

Dreams

Much of this novel is centered around the mystery of Sophie's childhood traumas. Because Sophie is such an emotionally guarded character, the author needed to find another way for the reader to get insight into the mystery of her past. Creech has chosen to let the audience in through Sophie's dreams. The opening chapter of the novel is simply a description of one image: the black wave that stalks Sophie in her nightmares. Although this image isn't explained, it is so strong that the reader shouldn't doubt that the image will return. Throughout the course of the novel, dreams seem to be the best way for Sophie and Cody to decompress the complex fears and thoughts they've had while living aboard *The Wanderer*, and therefore their dreams are heavily steeped in symbolism. In all of Sophie's dreams, she is plagued with images of the family stranded, without food or water, having to make tough decisions about survival. Clearly, this is a direct reflection into Sophie's traumatic childhood and the memories of her parents perishing at sea. Cody's dreams are frequented by "the little kid" Sophie talks about when she's asked to discuss her childhood. Frequently, Cody wants to reach out to the little kid and help her, but they aren't communicating in the same language. This is symbolic of Cody's desire to reach out to Sophie and connect with her about her past, but Sophie is too fragile and scared to talk about these things with him.

Sea Animals

This novel is peppered with scenes of sea animals coming to visit *The Wanderer* during its trek across the Atlantic. Sophie in particular is enraptured by the animals that frolic near the boat, like whales and dolphins. For Sophie, the dolphins symbolize fun in the sea. Both when she first embarks on the journey and after the terrible storm, Sophie fears the sea and is haunted by terrible memories of her parents' deaths. When she sees the dolphins swimming and flipping in the waves, she encourages herself to enjoy this journey and to once again love the playfulness of the sea. Even Brian, who is characteristically subdued and unsympathetic, finds a way to soften himself around the playfulness of the animals. The whales play a different role in Sophie's emotional growth. When she first sees them, she is entranced by the way they move as one family - a father, mother, and baby. The baby is just learning to swim on its own, and often veers away from the mother. Sophie finds herself near panic when she sees the family separated, but doesn't understand where these strong emotions come from. For the reader, it is obvious that these emotions stem from Sophie's traumatic childhood and the loss of her parents. Likewise, Sophie feels very connected to the injured blackbird that lands on *The Wanderer's* deck. She becomes obsessed with knowing where the bird is at all times, and how they will care for it until its release. To Sophie, subconsciously, this injured bird is symbolic of her own injured spirit being nursed back to health by her adoptive family.



Storytelling

Storytelling is very important to Sophie's character for two reasons. First, storytelling is the way that she finds her place within her new family. When she had been adopted three years earlier, Bompie began writing long letters telling Sophie about himself, welcoming her into the family. When Sophie is aboard *The Wanderer*, she retells these stories to Bompie's sons, her uncles, as a way of letting them know that she belongs in this family too. Although none of Bompie's family members believe that he actually told these stories to her, they learn the truth once they arrive in England at Bompie's bedside. The second reason why storytelling is so important to Sophie's character is for preservation. Not only is she preserving Bompie's stories through retelling them, she is also preserving herself. Sophie often makes up stories - whether they are intentionally fictional or accidentally - about her childhood and her childhood memories. By refusing to acknowledge that she had parents before the parents she has now, Sophie preserves her innocence. She also preserves a bit of her sanity by not having to relive the traumatic events that claimed her birth parents' lives. By the end of the novel, however, Sophie learns that storytelling can still be an important element of self-preservation, but that preserving one's true history - the good and the bad aspects of it - is more important than weaving together an entertaining tale of lies.

Style

Point of View

The Wanderer is told through two points of view - Sophie's and Cody's although Sophie is undeniably the novel's protagonist. In both cases of narration, seen through the journal entries of the two characters, the story is told through first-person, limited omniscience in past tense. This point-of-view fluctuating narration is important to the novel so the reader can be given access to both Sophie and Cody's thoughts and emotions. In doing so, the reader learns much more about these two characters and the rising tension on the boat. For example, because Sophie hasn't yet accepted that she is adopted and that her birth parents are dead, she never mentions these facts in her own narration. It is only through Cody's narration that the reader learns these important elements of Sophie's character and emotional struggles. The main emotional conflict in the novel surrounds Sophie's struggle to accept her traumatic past, so structuring the point-of-view as vacillating between two narrators provides insight into all the characters' emotional struggles.

Because Sophie hides so much from herself, and thus from the reader, many audience members may question Sophie's reliability as a narrator. She has deceived herself into ignoring important facts about her past, and therefore deceives the reader as well. The story is told mostly through exposition, with scenes of dialogue. The story is completely filtered through the thoughts and emotions of the point-of-view characters - either Sophie or Cody - so the reader sees the world through either of their eyes. Without insight into both characters' thoughts, the reader would likely be confused as to the motivations of each character, particularly when dealing with their traumatic pasts, which undoubtedly affect their actions on the boat.

Setting

This novel takes place almost entirely aboard The Wanderer, the boat Sophie and her family sail to England to meet Bompie, Sophie's grandfather. The boat belongs to Uncle Dock, and is forty-five feet long, navy and white, with two large masts and booms that wrap around the sails. Below deck, there is sleeping room for six, a galley with an icebox, sink, and stove, a table, a bathroom, a chart table, navigation equipment, and cubbies. Sophie loves how everything aboard a ship like this has a place and a purpose. There's no room for clutter. From the deck of The Wanderer, Sophie has a great view of the sea and all the animals in it, such as whales, dolphins, fish, and birds, that play a large role in unpacking Sophie's emotions about her traumatic childhood. Once the family reaches the coast of Ireland in the final section of the novel, the setting of the novel shifts to Bompie's house in England. Bompie has a beautiful house with roses climbing up its sides, and lavender spreading in big clumps along the walkway. Inside the house are tiny rooms and "wee windows," and miniature fireplaces (Page



203). This home is so warm and welcoming that Sophie finally feels safe enough to accept the facts of her traumatic childhood.

Language and Meaning

Since the novel is written for young readers, the language tends to be very conversational and easy to follow. The sentences are constructed in a way that is not only easy to follow, but also gain momentum as the reader reads on. The sentences are constructed to entice the reader to turn the next page, and often this structure works. Occasionally, there are passages utilizing scientific sailing words and phrases which may be a hindrance to some readers. Most readers should be able to deduce what these vocabulary words mean contextually, and this language, in fact, adds a depth to the novel that allows the reader a glimpse into a world that is made believable through the language used by not only the characters but by the narrator as well. Most of the novel is told in exposition so there is not a lot of dialogue to distinguish secondary characters. Although the reader does learn a lot about Sophie and Cody through their narration, readers may struggle to characterize the three Uncles until the late stages of the novel when each of the characters starts to become defined. The narration quickly jumps between Sophie and Cody, so it is important that the narration remained streamlined and to the point.

Structure

This novel is comprised of seventy-eight short chapters ranging in length from a few lines to seven pages. This structure reflects the style of journal entries. Since the characters are aboard a ship on a cross-Atlantic trek, they wouldn't have time to write lengthy entries. Each chapter has a name that refers to some action or event within the novel that foreshadows what the reader is about to read. The chapters tend to be short and full of action, which propels the reader through the novel.

The plot of the novel is fairly simple with few subplots. The novel revolves around Sophie and her family's trek across the Atlantic Ocean to visit Bompie, and the troubles of sea life, particularly during a terrible storm. The journey of crossing the ocean stirs many hidden memories for Sophie, who has always tried to bury her dark past. The further she travels, the more difficult it is for her to deny that she is tied to the sea in a way she doesn't understand. The other subplot of the novel surrounds Bompie and his stories. Sophie seems to have detailed access to Bompie's past even though she was only adopted into the family three years earlier. Even though the majority of the conflict takes place in the characters' thoughts and emotions (with the exception of the terrible storm), the pace of the novel is quick. The novel is quite easy to read and the plot is engrossing once the reader is immersed in the story being painted in its pages.



Quotes

"It did feel as if it was something I had to do, but I couldn't have said why, and I was surprised and grateful that my father understood this without my having to explain it" (Page 11).

"Out here there isn't day and night and then a new day. Instead, there are degrees of light and dark merging and changing. It's like one long stream of time unfolding in front of you, all around you" (Page 42).

"I wondered if it was better to know about the bad things in advance and worry about them, or whether it was better not to know, so that you could enjoy yourself" (Page 71).

"If you are always lolling around and being pampered and life is too easy, then you turn into a spineless wimp, but if you encounter suffering, you learn to face challenges and you get stronger" (Page 91).

"I was just about to add 'you idjit' to that, but then I looked down on him and he looked so small below, small and rumped and a little pitiful, so I swallowed the 'idjit' part" (Page 103).

"If you think about it - if you conquered the thing that scared you the most, then maybe you'd feel - I don't know - you'd feel free or something" (Page 117).

"I am in one piece physically. Inside, though, I am in many pieces. I feel strange and raw and all jumbled up. Sometimes I feel as if one little roll of the boat or one quick movement will shatter me into a zillion pieces and all those pieces will go flinging off into the sea" (Page 161).

"We are all quieter than usual, thinking about being alive and how fragile a line there is between being alive and not being alive" (Page 165).

"The little kid wants to be right here, right now, and wants to look at now and at things ahead, on that horizon over there, not back at those times the little kid got left behind. But no matter what the little kid might want, something inside pushes the little kid ahead while something or someone pulls the little kid back" (Page 171).

"Most of what Sophie had told us was pretty much the way he had told it to her in his letters, except for the parts about struggling in the water. He was in the water all those times, but he hadn't written about struggling in it. Those parts had come from Sophie" (Page 208).



Topics for Discussion

Describe Sophie's family life in the opening chapters of the novel. Are there any clues present that Sophie might be adopted, or that these parents aren't her "real parents"? Do you think Creech successfully creates mystery and suspense around Sophie's childhood, or is the truth of her past too obvious?

Discuss Sophie's quote that, "Out here there isn't day and night and then a new day. Instead, there are degrees of light and dark merging and changing. It's like one long stream of time unfolding in front of you, all around you" (Page 42). In what way might this "long stream of time unfolding" symbolize the family's relationship with Bompie, particularly with his stories? In what ways might this quote symbolize Sophie's relationship with herself and her own dark (and light) past?

Why do you think Uncle Stew had the idea that everyone aboard *The Wanderer* should teach the rest of the crew a skill during the trek? What do each of the character's skills tell the reader about their personality? Do you think these skills helped bring the crew closer together, or pull them further apart? How can you tell?

Describe Sophie's relationship with the various sea animals with which she interacts while aboard *The Wanderer* - the dolphins, whales, and birds. What type of relationship does Sophie form with these animals? Why might these relationships be symbolic of Sophie's own childhood?

Describe Sophie's relationship with Uncle Stew and cousin Brian. Why don't these men want Sophie to join them on the boat? Why do you think Brian goes out of his way to be cruel to Sophie about her real parents? What events on the boat lead to the change in relationship between Sophie and Brian? Do you expect this new relationship to last? Why or why not?

Describe Sophie's relationship with Bompie. Why do you think she chooses not to tell her Uncles that Bompie had been writing her letters since she was adopted into the family? Why do you think Bompie chooses Sophie to share his stories instead of one of his own sons or grandsons? Which of Bompie's stories has the most symbolism within the greater context of the novel?

Discuss what Cody hears Sophie talking about in the Irish pub. Why doesn't Cody interject and correct Sophie's stories? In what ways does Cody act as a protector for Sophie during their trip across the Atlantic? Does this care seem out of character for Cody? Why or why not?