

A.1.

- The main characters are Odysseus, Neoptolemos, and Philoctetes.
- Odysseus is one of the leaders of the Greek army. He is good at using his words and tricks to get whatever he or his army want. He and other Greek leaders abandoned Philoctetes on Lemnos island while they were on their way to Troy. Now, he is coming back to Lemnos and trying to take the bow and arrows of Philoctetes.
- Neoptolemos is the son of Achilles. He is a Greek soldier who accompanies Odysseus to Lemnos to meet Philoctetes. Neoptolemos is a caring and honest man. He has sympathy for the unfortunates and prefers using his strength to get things done to using tricks and telling lies. However, Odysseus assigns him a mission that makes him lie to Philoctetes to take his bow and arrows, which are necessary for the victory of the Greek. Neoptolemos has to decide whether to obey the order or keep his moral.
- Philoctetes is a Greek soldier in the first troops going to Troy. He was abandoned on the Lemnos because his injury smelled bad and he screamed so much from the pain, which upset his fellows. From that on, he hates the Greek army. Until he meets Odysseus and Neoptolemos, he has lived on the island for ten years and always wanted to go back to his homeland.

A.2.

- The story takes place during the time when the Trojan war happens. It is during the day at Lemnos, on a deserted, rocky part of the island. Odysseus and Neoptolemos come to the island to take the bow and arrows of Philoctetes as a Trojan prophet has said that these weapons would be necessary to take down Troy.

A.3.

- Philoctetes was left behind on the island because he had a terrible injury on his foot. The smell of the wound was bad, and he screamed and yelled so much from his pain that prevented other Greek soldiers performing the sacrifices or libations.

A.4.

- Odysseus and Neoptolemos have come to Lemnos because a Trojan prophet has said that the Greek could not win the war without the bow and arrows that Philoctetes, who was left on Lemnos, has. So, they come there to take those weapons.

A.5.

- Neoptolemos must lie/trick Philoctetes because of two reasons. The first reason is that Odysseus has ordered him to do so as it is a necessary deed for the Greek's victory and Neoptolemos has to obey his superior commander. The second reason is that Philoctetes hates the Greek army for abandoning him on a deserted island. Thus, he would never accept, even with force, to do anything to help the Greek, especially giving up his bow and arrows.

A.6.

- Odysseus prays for Hermes, the god of trickery, and Athena, the goddess of Victory, to guide them to success while Odysseus and Neoptolemos are conducting their plan.

- Zeus, the chief god of Olympus, is considered to protect the oath.
- Philoctetes usually prays for Zeus when he wishes for punishment upon Odysseus and other Greek leaders. He also prays for Zeus when he is in pain.
- Philoctetes prays for Hades when he thinks about death of his father or when he wanted to end his own life.
- Heracles, a demi-god, delivers messages from Zeus to Neoptolemos and Philoctetes, which helps change their mind to go to Troy.

B. Odysseus and Neoptolemos come to Lemnos, a deserted island, and try to take the bow and arrows of Philoctetes, who was left there alone by the Greek army. Neoptolemos is assigned to the mission that makes him lie to Philoctetes to gain his trust and take the weapons. However, Neoptolemos is not a dishonest man. So, he has to deal with his internal struggle to whether obey the order or keep his moral. At first, he agrees to take on the mission and succeed in making friends with Philoctetes and take his weapons. But later, he can not bear the guilt of deceit toward poor Philoctetes, who has already been suffering mentally and physically. Thus, Neoptolemos turns against Odysseus's order and returns the bow and arrows to Philoctetes. Even though Neoptolemos keeps persuading Philoctetes to go to Troy for their own good, Philoctetes insists on returning home. When they are about to leave the island to go home, the ghost of Heracles appears and reveals that it is Zeus's plan that Philoctetes and Neoptolemos must go to Troy and help each other to destroy it. Finally, they decide that they will obey god's plan and go to Troy.

C.2. By describing the struggle of Philoctetes throughout the play, Sophocles has reflected the negative attitude of the ancient Greek society toward people who suffered from a disability. Even though Philoctetes was a good soldier who was willing to join the army with seven of his ships,

his fellow warriors still abandoned him disgracefully when he bore a hurtful wound. Odysseus once confirms this himself when he tells Neoptolemos the story: “It was here where I have abandoned Poeas’ son, Philoctetes the Malian. The commanders had ordered it. You see, his foot was dripping pus from a dreadful sore that was eating away at it and he was screaming and yelling so much from the pain that none of us could find the peace to perform our sacrifices or libations” (line 1-10). It was even more cold-blooded of them when they left him on a deserted island with no one to talk to or help him with the wound or even just life's basic needs. He has struggled to barely survive with a bow and arrows and a rotting foot for 10 years (line 280 – 299). But within those years, no one heard about him or his miserable story as if he was completely forgotten and disappeared from the world. This reveals a sad reality for people with disabilities: to most of the ancient world, if you are no more useful to the community, they would leave you behind, and the world moves on without your existence.

However, there is still someone, a small part of the world, who can understand and sympathize with the pain of the misfortunes. Neoptolemos and the chorus show their pity for Philoctetes when they hear his story and witness his pain. They understand how difficult his life is (line 170 – 189). They mourn for the undeserved torture that he has to bear (line 680 – 719). Besides, Neoptolemos can not stand the guilty feeling when he has to trick such a poor man like Philoctetes. So, Neoptolemos disobeys Odysseus's order and return to Philoctetes the bow and arrows as which he considers his life. They also offer to take Philoctetes to Troy to cure his disease and agree to take him home. Thanks to Neoptolemos's help, Philoctetes become a hero who contributes to the victory of the Greeks. It proves that even though caring people such as the chorus and Neoptolemos only account for a portion of the community, they really make a difference to the outcome.

The terrible way that most people treat Philoctetes has made him become a victim of himself. As Neoptolemos says: “You’ve become like a wild savage. You listen to no one’s advice, even if that advice is genuine and is given for your own good. You turn your back on everyone who wants to help you and treat them as though they’re your personal enemy, as if they want to harm you in some way” (line 1320 – 1330), Neoptolemos is trying to convince Philoctetes to see his internal conflict. Philoctetes's behavior is understandable because he is deeply hurt from being betrayed, but he has let his pride rise so high that it prevents any chance to save him out of his misery. He devalues himself, but in fact, he is much more than his disability. He is a master of archery. And with Heracles’ bow and arrow, Philoctetes can kill anyone. Moreover, it is mentioned in the play that Zeus has planned for him to be the one who will take down Troy and become a hero with a glorious life. Thus, Philoctetes just needs someone to help him recognize his problems and them, then, he will be able to move on to his bright future.