

“The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” Discussion Questions

- 1) At the beginning of the story, the writer (Ursula K. Le Guin) asks *us* to imagine Omelas. She tells us to add whatever we want to make it the perfect place—great food, festivals, technology, or whatever makes us happy. Only after we have pictured this amazing city does she reveal the kid suffering in the basement.
 - **The Question:** Why do you think the author waited until the middle of the story to tell us about the suffering child?
 - **Keep talking:** How did it feel to go from imagining a beautiful, fun city to realizing it was built on something so terrible? Did you feel a little bit guilty for wanting to visit Omelas at first?

- 2) In Omelas, everyone gets to live a perfect, happy life with no worries, no sickness, and no sadness. But there is a catch: for this happiness to exist, one innocent child must be kept locked in a dark, dirty basement, starving and miserable. If anyone helps the child, the magic of the city breaks, and everyone’s happiness is instantly destroyed.
 - **The Question:** If you lived in Omelas and were taken to see this child, would you choose to **stay** and enjoy your perfect life, or would you **walk away** forever?
 - **Keep talking:**
 - If you decide to **stay**, how would you live with yourself knowing *why* you are happy?
 - If you decide to **walk away**, where are you actually going? By just leaving, are you actually helping the child, or are you just running away from the problem?