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**American Studies English**

**American Authors Research**

**Guided Reading Questions: “The Outcasts of Poker Flat” Bret Harte**

1. What is the setting of the story?
2. Who is Mr. Oakhurst?
3. Evaluate the following DQ: “It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it” (674). What does this DQ suggest about the collective mentality of the people in Poker Flat?
4. Who are the people who are expelled from Poker Flat and what do they have in common?
5. Why does Mr. Oakhurst try to push the group to continue toward Sandy Bar?
6. Why is Mr. Oakhurst hesitant to set up camp and delay the journey?
7. What does Mr. Oakhurst not do and why?
8. How does Mr. Oakhurst know Tim Simson?
9. Why does Tom Simson like Mr. Oakhurst so much?
10. From what you know so far, should the town of Poker Flat have kicked out Mr. Oakhurst?
11. Why is Tom Simson running away with Piney Woods?
12. What do Piney and Simson have that is helpful for the Outcasts’ camp?
13. Evaluate the following DQ: “As the shadows crept slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine trees, and money through their long and gloomy aisles” (679). What mood does this imagery create?
14. What two things does Oakhurst discover when he wakes up?
15. Why do you think Oakurst doesn’t tell the other Outcasts about Uncle Billy’s “rascality”? What does this suggest about his character?
16. Why do you think the Outcasts start singing?
17. As time passes, what starts happening to the Outcasts’ provisions?
18. What happens to Mother Shipton?
19. What does Oakhurst make for Tom Simson and why?
20. What happens to Mr. Oakhurst at the end of the story?
21. Why is he referred to as “the strongest and yet the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat?”