

Why bait the beast again? Let him alone!

410 'That tidal wave he made on the first throw
all but beached us.'

'All but stove us in!'

'Give him our bearing with your trumpeting,
he'll get the range and lob a boulder.'

he'll smash our timbers and our heads together!'
'Aye

415 I would not heed them in my glorying spirit,
but let my anger flare and yelled:

'Cyclops,
if ever mortal man inquire
how you were put to shame and blinded, tell him
Odysseus, raider of cities, took your eye:
Laertes' son, whose home's on Ithaca!'

420 At this he gave a mighty sob and rumbled:

'Now comes the weird upon me, spoken of old.
A wizard, grand and wondrous, lived here—Telemus,
a son of Eurymus; great length of days
he had in wizardry among the Cyclopes,
425 and these things he foretold for time to come:
my great eye lost, and at Odysseus' hands.
Always I had in mind some giant, armed
in giant force, would come against me here.
But this, but you—small, pitiful and twiggy—
430 you put me down with wine, you blinded me.
Come back, Odysseus, and I'll treat you well,
praying the god of earthquake to befriend you—
his son I am, for he by his avowal
fathered me, and, if he will, he may
435 heal me of this black wound—he and no other
of all the happy gods or mortal men.'

Few words I shouted in reply to him:

407–413 The near disaster of Odysseus' boast has frightened the crew. As earlier, in the cave, the men make reasonable appeals.

415–419 Odysseus uses the warlike epithet "raider of cities" in his second boast to the Cyclops. [Why do you think he reveals so much about himself?](#)

421 Now comes . . . of old: Now I recall the destiny predicted long ago.

422 Telemus (těl'è-mēs): a magician who could predict the future for the Cyclopes.

427–430 Polyphemus is not blind to the irony of being beaten by someone only about one-eighth his size.

432 the god of earthquake: Poseidon.

433 avowal: honest admission.

‘If I could take your life I would and take
your time away, and hurl you down to hell!
440 The god of earthquake could not heal you there!’

At this he stretched his hands out in his darkness
toward the sky of stars, and prayed Poseidon:

‘O hear me, lord, blue girdler of the islands,
if I am thine indeed, and thou art father:
445 grant that Odysseus, raider of cities, never
see his home: Laertes’ son, I mean,
who kept his hall on Ithaca. Should destiny
intend that he shall see his roof again
among his family in his father land,
450 far be that day, and dark the years between.
Let him lose all companions, and return
under strange sail to bitter days at home.’

In these words he prayed, and the god heard him.
Now he laid hands upon a bigger stone
455 and wheeled around, titanic for the cast,
to let it fly in the black-prowed vessel’s track.
But it fell short, just aft the steering oar,
and whelming seas rose giant above the stone
to bear us onward toward the island.

There
460 as we ran in we saw the squadron waiting,
the trim ships drawn up side by side, and all
our troubled friends who waited, looking seaward.
We beached her, grinding keel in the soft sand,
and waded in, ourselves, on the sandy beach.
465 Then we unloaded all the Cyclops’ flock
to make division, share and share alike,
only my fighters voted that my ram,
the prize of all, should go to me. I slew him
by the seaside and burnt his long thighbones
470 to Zeus beyond the stormcloud, Cronus’ son,
who rules the world. But Zeus disdained my offering;
destruction for my ships he had in store
and death for those who sailed them, my companions.
Now all day long until the sun went down

443–452 Note the details of Polyphemus’ curse on Odysseus. As you read on, you’ll find out whether the curse comes true.

455 **titanic for the cast:** drawing on all his enormous strength in preparing to throw.

457 **aft:** behind.

459 **the island:** the deserted island where most of Odysseus’ men had stayed behind.

WORDS

TO **disdain** (dī’s-dān’) *v.* to refuse or reject scornfully

KNOW

475 we made our feast on mutton and sweet wine,
till after sunset in the gathering dark
we went to sleep above the wash of ripples.

When the young Dawn with fingertips of rose
touched the world, I roused the men, gave orders
480 to man the ships, cast off the mooring lines;
and filing in to sit beside the rowlocks
oarsmen in line dipped oars in the gray sea.
So we moved out, sad in the vast offing,
having our precious lives, but not our friends.”

483 in the vast offing: toward the
open sea.



Connect to the Literature


1. What Do You Think?

What is your general impression of Odysseus, based on his adventures with the Cyclopes?

Comprehension Check

- What is Odysseus' ultimate destination?
- What does Odysseus think of the way the Cyclopes live?
- How does Odysseus injure Polyphemus?

Think Critically

2. **ACTIVE READING PREDICTING** What **predictions** did you make in your  **READER'S NOTEBOOK** as you read this episode? Discuss with a classmate the clues that prompted your predictions.

3. What positive and negative qualities of Odysseus' **character** are revealed by his behavior in the land of the Cyclopes?

THINK ABOUT

- why he insists on seeing the Cyclops in the first place
- how he defeats Polyphemus
- why he taunts Polyphemus and reveals his real name as he sails away

4. Do you consider Polyphemus a **villain**? Do Odysseus' actions toward him seem justified? Explain.

5. From the **characterization** of Polyphemus, what **conclusions** can you draw about the qualities that ancient Greek society considered barbaric or monstrous? Use specific examples from the excerpt to support your ideas.

Extend Interpretations

6. **Critic's Corner** Odysseus tells King Alcinous of his fame "for guile." According to critic Bernard Knox, Odysseus tries to preserve his reputation for "successful courage and intelligence." These are "values for which he stands, and to which he must be true." From what you have read about Odysseus so far, do you think this reputation is deserved? Support your opinion.

7. **Connect to Life** What qualities do people in today's society consider barbaric or monstrous? What qualities do we think of as civilized?

8. **Connect to Life** Look over the characteristics of your favorite monster that you recorded for the chart on page 893. How does Polyphemus compare with your monster?

Literary Analysis

EPIC HERO The larger-than-life central figure or "superhero" of an epic is known as the **epic hero**. Usually a male figure, he is a person of imposing stature who stands for the ideals of a nation or race. He performs deeds of great valor that require superhuman courage. Sometimes he is assisted by supernatural forces.

Paired Activity With a partner, create a two-column chart to evaluate the extent to which Odysseus acts like an epic hero in Book 9. In the first column, list the larger-than-life qualities and actions that show Odysseus to be an epic hero. In the second column, list Odysseus' human weaknesses and unwise actions that do not seem to fit the ideal of an epic hero. After you complete your chart, discuss with your partner the ways in which you think Odysseus' character needs improvement. As you read more of the *Odyssey*, you'll be able to decide whether Odysseus changes for the better.

Heroic Qualities of Odysseus	Weaknesses of Odysseus

Writing Options

1. Diary Entries Write one or two diary entries in which one of Odysseus' crew describes the events of this episode.

2. Cyclops' Story How might the Cyclops have viewed the events? Experiment with writing a draft of the episode as Polyphemus might tell it.

Writing Handbook

See page 1153: Narrative Writing.

Activities & Explorations

1. Dramatized Scenes With the class divided into small groups, act out scenes from Book 9 of the *Odyssey*. (Scenes could include Odysseus and his crew in the land of the Lotus Eaters, the

attack on the Cyclops, the escape from the Cyclops' cave, and the departure from the land of the Cyclopes.) Focus on portraying the character of Odysseus.

~ **PERFORMING**

2. Escape Plan If Polyphemus had not brought the rams into the cave, how might Odysseus and his men have escaped? With a partner, devise an escape plan and explain it to your classmates.

~ **SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

Inquiry & Research

Classical Influences The lasting effects of classical Greek culture extend beyond literature. In a small group, find out more about ancient Greek civilization and its impact upon later cultures of the world. Each group member may

want to research a different aspect of the subject, such as religion, the arts, government, or technology.



More Online: Research Starter
www.mcdougallittell.com



LaserLinks: Background for Reading
Art Gallery

Art Connection

Look again at the image on page 910. This painting from a 6th-century krater—a wide-necked, two-handled jar used as a mixing bowl by the ancient Greeks—depicts Odysseus hidden beneath the Cyclops' largest ram. How successful is this painting at illustrating the difficulty of Odysseus' feat?

Vocabulary in Action

EXERCISE A: ASSESSMENT PRACTICE For each group of words below, write the letter of the word that is an antonym of the boldfaced word.

- ponderous:** (a) dainty, (b) careless, (c) intelligent
- adversary:** (a) partner, (b) guarantee, (c) obstacle
- avenge:** (a) dare, (b) resist, (c) forgive
- disdain:** (a) stop, (b) accept, (c) scorn
- formidable:** (a) shapeless, (b) unimpressive, (c) likely

EXERCISE B: ANALOGIES Write the letter of the word pair that expresses the relationship most similar to that expressed by the capitalized pair.

- GUILE : FOX ::**
(a) loyalty : squirrel (c) timidity : mouse
(b) wisdom : sparrow (d) courage : sheep
- WHIM : NOTION ::**
(a) request : plea (c) letter : invitation
(b) idea : emotion (d) separation : link

3. ENTREAT : RESPOND ::

- (a) speak : shout (c) reject : refuse
(b) throw : catch (d) suggest : recommend

4. APPALLED : AWFUL ::

- (a) bored : amusing (c) tortured : helpful
(b) surprised : predicted (d) interested : fascinating

5. INDIFFERENT : SHRUG ::

- (a) rebellious : nod (c) enthusiastic : sigh
(b) sleepy : yawn (d) startled : groan

Building Vocabulary

For an in-depth lesson on analogies, see page 641.

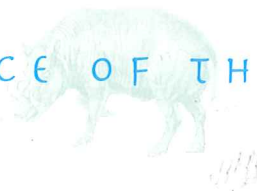
Read On

As you read the next adventure, pay attention to Odysseus' weaknesses as well as his strengths. Compare him with his loyal but cautious officer Eurylochus.



BOOK

THE GRACE OF THE WITCH



TEN



ODYSSEUS AND HIS MEN next land on the island of Aeolus, the wind king, and stay with him a month. To extend his hospitality, Aeolus gives Odysseus two parting gifts, a fair west wind blowing the ships toward Ithaca and a great bag holding all the unfavorable, stormy winds. Within sight of home, and while Odysseus is sleeping, the men open the bag, thinking it contains gold and silver. The bad winds thus escape and blow the ships back to Aeolus' island. The king refuses to help them again, believing now that their voyage has been cursed by the gods.

The discouraged mariners next stop briefly in the land of the Laestrygones, fierce cannibals, who bombard their ships with boulders. Only Odysseus, his ship, and its crew of 45 survive the shower of boulders. The lone ship then sails to Aeaëa, home of the goddess Circe, considered by many to be a witch. There, Odysseus divides his men into two groups. Eurylochus leads one platoon to explore the island, while Odysseus stays behind on the ship with the remaining crew.