

1. CYCLOPS (BOOK 9)

ODYSSEUS AND HIS CREW SAIL TO THE LAND OF THE CYCLOPES, A RACE OF ONE-EYED GIANTS. WHILE HUNTING SHEEP, THEY STUMBLE UPON THE ENTRANCE TO A CAVE. URGED BY HIS CREW, ODYSSEUS GOES INSIDE TO FIND THE CAVE FULL OF CHEESE, MILK, AND GOATS. HIS FRIENDS, WORRIED THAT THE CAVE'S OWNER WILL RETURN, CALL TO ODYSSEUS TO GRAB SOME FOOD AND RUN. UNFORTUNATELY, ODYSSEUS LINGERS A LITTLE TOO LONG AND THE OWNER RETURNS. IT IS **THE CYCLOPS POLYPHEMUS**, THE SON OF POSEIDON! (POSEIDON IS THE GOD OF THE SEA.) WHILE POLYPHEMUS MAKES A SHOW OF BEING NICE TO ODYSSEUS AND HIS CREW AT FIRST, HE SOON BECOMES HUNGRY AND EATS TWO OF ODYSSEUS'S MEN ON THE SPOT. HE IMPRISONS THE REST IN HIS CAVE TO HAVE FOR HIS LUNCH THE NEXT DAY.

LUCKILY FOR HIS FRIENDS, ODYSSEUS IS INCREDIBLY CLEVER AND COMES UP WITH AN ESCAPE PLAN. THE NEXT MORNING, WHILE POLYPHEMUS IS OUT FARMING, ODYSSEUS FINDS A WOODEN STAFF IN THE CAVE AND HEATS IT OVER THE FIRE.

2. CYCLOPS CONTINUED (BOOK 9)

WHEN POLYPHEMUS RETURNS, ODYSSEUS TRICKS HIM INTO GETTING DRUNK BEFORE HE EATS THE REST OF ODYSSEUS'S CREW. POLYPHEMUS, FEELING VERY HAPPY WITH A BELLYFUL OF WINE, ASKS ODYSSEUS HIS NAME. AS PART OF HIS CLEVER PLAN, ODYSSEUS TELLS HIM THAT HIS NAME IS "NOBODY". SOON AFTER, POLYPHEMUS FALLS ASLEEP. ODYSSEUS AND HIS FRIENDS CAREFULLY SNEAK UP ON THE CYCLOPS AND JAB HIM IN THE EYE WITH THE RED-HOT STAFF. POLYPHEMUS WAKES UP WITH A SHRIEK, BUT WHEN HE SHOUTS TO HIS NEIGHBOURS, "NOBODY IS KILLING ME!", THEY THINK EVERYTHING IS FINE! THE SURVIVING MEN THEN SNEAK OUT OF THE CAVE. WHEN THEY GET SAFELY BACK TO THEIR SHIP, ODYSSEUS FOOLISHLY SHOUTS HIS REAL NAME AT POLYPHEMUS TO TAUNT HIM. AS ODYSSEUS AND HIS CREW SAIL AWAY, THE NOW BLIND GIANT POLYPHEMUS SAYS A PRAYER TO HIS FATHER, THE GOD POSEIDON, AND ASKS HIM TO PUNISH THOSE WHO BLINDED HIM.

4. THE UNDERWORLD (BOOK 11)

ODYSSEUS AND HIS CREW BEGIN THEIR PERILOUS JOURNEY TO THE UNDERWORLD. ON THEIR MEANDERING COURSE, THEY ENCOUNTER THE SEA MONSTERS SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS, SIRENS, AND MORE.

EVENTUALLY, THEY REACH THE RIVER OF OCEANS IN THE LAND OF THE CIMMERIANS. ODYSSEUS BEGINS A RITUAL TAUGHT TO HIM BY THE WITCH CIRCE. HE DIGS A TRENCH AND POURS IN OFFERINGS OF HONEY, MILK, AND WINE. HE THEN PERFORMS RITUAL SACRIFICES ON A RAM AND AN EWE, USING THEIR BLOOD TO ATTRACT THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.

SOON, **TIRESIAS**, THE BLIND PROPHET FROM THEBES COMES AND REVEALS THAT POSEIDON IS PUNISHING ODYSSEUS AND HIS CREW FOR BLINDING HIS SON POLYPHEMUS. HE ALSO FORETELLS ODYSSEUS'S FATE, SAYING THAT HE WILL RETURN TO HIS HOME OF ITHACA AND RECLAIM HIS WIFE PENELOPE BEFORE MAKING A TRIP TO A DISTANT LAND TO APPEASE POSEIDON. TIRESIAS THEN DISAPPEARS WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD. ODYSSEUS ALSO ENCOUNTERS THE SPIRITS OF HIS FALLEN FRIENDS FROM THE TROJAN WAR, THE HEROES ACHILLES AND AJAX, WHO SPEAK BRIEFLY WITH HIM BEFORE DISAPPEARING TOO.

HAVING GOTTEN WHAT HE CAME FOR, ODYSSEUS BEGINS HIS JOURNEY BACK TO ITHACA, CAREFUL NOT TO WANDER TOO MUCH MORE FROM HIS COURSE.

WHO IS ODYSSEUS ANYWAY?

THE ODYSSEY IS AN ANCIENT TALE OF ACTION, ADVENTURE, AND ROMANCE, ABOUT THE GREEK HERO **ODYSSEUS** AND HIS **TEN-YEAR-LONG JOURNEY** HOME FROM WAR TO THE ISLAND OF ITHACA. IT IS THE SEQUEL TO THE ILIAD, WHICH TELLS THE STORY OF THE TROJAN WAR AND FEATURES ANOTHER FAMOUS ANCIENT GREEK HERO, ACHILLES. THE GODS AND GODDESSES OF ANCIENT GREECE ALSO APPEAR IN THESE STORIES. THE ILIAD AND THE ODYSSEY WERE FIRST WRITTEN AS VERY, VERY LONG POEMS IN THE 8TH CENTURY BCE, ALMOST 3,000 YEARS AGO. BOTH POEMS ARE DIVIDED INTO TWENTY-FOUR SECTIONS CALLED 'BOOKS' (WHICH CAN BE A BIT CONFUSING!), AND PEOPLE SAY THEY WERE WRITTEN BY A POET CALLED HOMER, BUT WE REALLY AREN'T SURE.

IN THE ODYSSEY, SOME OF THE EVENTS ARE DESCRIBED BY THE NARRATOR, BUT MANY OF THE STORIES ARE TOLD BY ODYSSEUS HIMSELF WHILE HE IS A GUEST AT THE COURT OF ALCINOUS, THE RULER OF THE PHAEACIANS. HERE ARE SOME OF THE ADVENTURES ODYSSEUS HAS.

3. CIRCE (BOOK 10)

AFTER ESCAPING THE CYCLOPS AND THE STORMS SENT BY POSEIDON, ODYSSEUS AND HIS CREW FIND THEMSELVES OFF THE COAST OF THE ISLAND OF AEAEA. THERE THEY FIND THE WITCH CIRCE, LIVING IN A SMALL CABIN IN A CLEARING IN THE WOODS. SHE INVITES THEM TO JOIN HER FOR DINNER. WHILE ODYSSEUS STRANGELY HAS NO APPETITE, HIS FRIENDS FEAST UPON A MEAL FIT FOR THE GODS. AT THE END OF THE MEAL, CIRCE STANDS UP FROM HER SEAT AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE AND CASTS A SPELL UPON ODYSSEUS'S FRIENDS, **TURNING THEM ALL INTO PIGS!**

ODYSSEUS IS THEN VISITED BY THE MESSENGER GOD, HERMES, WHO GIVES HIM A HERB THAT WILL ALLOW HIM TO RESIST THE WITCH'S SPELL. ODYSSEUS EATS THE HERB, OVERPOWERS CIRCE, AND FORCES HER TO RETURN HIS CREW TO THEIR HUMAN FORMS. ODYSSEUS AND CIRCE THEN BECOME FRIENDS, AND HE AND HIS CREW STAY ON AEAEA WITH HER FOR A YEAR. EVENTUALLY, THE DAY COMES WHEN ODYSSEUS'S MEN CONVINCED HIM IT IS TIME TO CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY BACK TO ITHACA. CIRCE TELLS ODYSSEUS THAT THE ONLY WAY FOR HIM TO FIND HIS WAY HOME IS TO TRAVEL TO THE LAND OF THE DEAD AND FIND THE SPIRIT OF TIRESIAS, A BLIND PROPHET, WHO WILL TELL HIM HOW TO GET HOME.

5. RETURN & DISGUISE (BOOKS 19-22)

AFTER MANY MORE ADVENTURES, ODYSSEUS EVENTUALLY REACHES HIS HOME, THE ISLAND OF ITHACA. HE SNEAKS ONTO THE ISLAND IN SECRET, **DISGUISED AS A BEGGAR**, AS HIS CASTLE IS NOW HOME TO VARIOUS SUITORS PLOTTING TO MARRY HIS WIFE, PENELOPE. WHILE SNEAKING ABOUT THE ISLAND, ODYSSEUS MEETS A KIND SHEPHERD NAMED EUMAEUS, WHO OFFERS TO LET HIM STAY IN HIS HUT. ONE EVENING, THE PRINCE OF ITHACA AND SON OF ODYSSEUS, TELEMACHUS, IS WANDERING THE ISLAND. HE HAS BEEN HAVING DREAMS THAT HIS FATHER WILL SOON RETURN FROM THE TROJAN WAR AND KILL ALL THE WRETCHED SUITORS TRYING TO CLAIM ITHACA'S THRONE.

6. DISGUISE, MURDER & REUNION (BOOKS 19-22)

HOPING BY SOME CHANCE TO FIND ODYSSEUS, TELEMACHUS WALKS FROM ONE SIDE OF THE ISLAND TO THE OTHER. HE MEETS THE SHEPHERD EUMAEUS, WHO INVITES HIM TO SIT WITH HIM AND HIS NEW FRIEND. ONCE ALONE WITH HIS SON, ODYSSEUS REVEALS HIS TRUE IDENTITY TO TELEMACHUS, WHO IS OVERJOYED AT THE SIGHT OF HIS FATHER. THEY TALK ALL NIGHT AND BEGIN TO PLOT THEIR REVENGE ON THE SUITORS. THE NEXT DAY, ODYSSEUS, STILL DISGUISED AS A BEGGAR, SNEAKS INTO THE CASTLE. HE WINS THE FAVOUR OF THE SUITORS AND THEY INVITE HIM TO DRINK WITH THEM. PENELOPE, WHO STILL DOESN'T KNOW ODYSSEUS BACK, THEN DECIDES TO SETTLE THE MATTER OF WHO WILL MARRY HER ONCE AND FOR ALL WITH **A COMPETITION**. SHE DECLARES THAT SHE WILL MARRY WHICHEVER MAN CAN STRING HER HUSBAND'S BOW AND SHOOT AN ARROW THROUGH A LINE OF TWELVE AXES. ONE BY ONE THE SUITORS ALL TRY AND FAIL TO STRING THE BOW. ODYSSEUS, STILL DISGUISED, IS THE LAST TO GO. WHEN IT IS HIS TURN, HE EASILY STRINGS THE BOW AND SENDS THE FIRST ARROW WHISTLING THROUGH ALL TWELVE AXES. THEN ODYSSEUS SUDDENLY TURNS THE BOW ON THE SUITORS AND SHOOTS ONE THROUGH THE NECK. HE REVEALS HIMSELF AS ODYSSEUS, SON OF LAERTES AND LORD OF ITHACA! ODYSSEUS AND TELEMACHUS THEN CUT DOWN THE SUITORS ONE BY ONE. AFTER THE BLOODBATH, ODYSSEUS REUNITES WITH HIS WIFE PENELOPE AND THEIR SON TELEMACHUS, AND THEY HAVE A FEAST IN CELEBRATION OF THEIR REUNION AND ODYSSEUS'S RETURN. ODYSSEUS IS FINALLY HOME!