

Characters and Motivations--Book Nine

As you read Book Nine, record the major descriptions, actions, motivations, and key quotations of Odysseus.

Description of Episode	Character Traits	Actions and Motivations	Key Quotations that Reveal Character Traits
<p>The Cicones</p> <p>On the way home from Troy, Odysseus and his men stopped to raid Ismarus, the home of the Cicones. He allowed his men to steal food, wine, and women, but when it was time to go, his men would not obey. Because they delayed, a strong ally of the Cicones came and slaughtered many of their men.</p>	<p>impulsive</p> <p>rash</p> <p>prideful</p>	<p>Odysseus is the one who allows the men to sack the city, yet he seems bewildered when they won't leave their feasting and partying to head back to the ships.</p>	<p>"There I sacked the city, killed the men, but as for the wives and plunder, that rich haul we dragged away from the place--we shared it round" (9.46-48).</p> <p>"Then I urged them to cut and run, set sail, but would they listen?" (9.50-51).</p>
<p>The Lotus-eaters</p> <p>After the storm, Odysseus and his men are driven to the land of the Lotus-eaters, men who eat flowers that make them lethargic.</p>	<p>resolved</p> <p>strong</p> <p>determined</p>	<p>Odysseus knows that if his men remain with the Lotus-eaters, they will never see home again; therefore, he forcibly puts the men back in the ship.</p>	<p>"But brought them back, back to the hollow ships, and streaming tears--I forced them, hauled them under the rowing benches, lashed them fast and shouted out commands..." (9.110-113).</p>

<p>The Cyclops</p> <p>Odysseus and his men stop at the land of the Cyclopes, giant one-eyed creatures. After being trapped in a cave with a cannibal named Polyphemus, Odysseus concocts an elaborate scheme to blind the giant and then escape. Upon leaving the land, he brags to the cyclops about who gouged out his eye, thus bringing down the curses of Poseidon upon himself and his men.</p>	<p>clever</p> <p>strategic</p> <p>foolish</p> <p>prideful</p>	<p>Odysseus does not have to go into the cyclops's cave, and he certainly doesn't have to stay to meet the creature; however, he wants to see Polyphemus so that he will have bragging rights. Additionally, Odysseus could have escaped scot-free but chose instead to yell his identity to the brute.</p>	<p>"From the start my comrades pressed me, pleading hard, 'Let's make away with the cheeses, then come back--hurry, ... to our swift ship, put out to sea at once!' But I would not give way--and how much better it would have been--not til I saw him..." (9.253-257).</p> <p>"So they begged but they could not bring my fighting spirit round. I called back with another burst of anger, 'Cyclops--if any man on the face of the earth should ask you who blinded you, shamed you so--say Odysseus, raider of cities, gouged out your eye, Laertes' son who makes his home in Ithaca!'" (9.257-262).</p>
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In the space below, explain what Odysseus was like at the beginning of his journey home from Troy.

Odysseus seemed to be puffed up with pride after leaving the Trojan War victorious. He makes some terrible decisions as a leader, and those decisions cost men's lives.

Characters and Motivations--Book Ten

As you read Book Ten, record the major descriptions, actions, motivations, and key quotations of Odysseus.

Description of Episode	Character Traits	Actions and Motivations	Key Quotations that Reveal Character Traits
<p>Aeolian Island</p> <p>After the encounter with Polyphemus, Odysseus and his men reach the Aeolian Island and are given a bag with wind to guide them home. Believing that Odysseus is deceiving them, some of Odysseus's men think the bag actually contains treasure and open it. They are blow back to the island of Aeolus right as they spot Ithaca.</p>	<p>weary</p> <p>untrustworthy</p>	<p>Perhaps Odysseus has given his men reason not to trust him.</p>	<p>"A mutinous crew undid me--that and a cruel sleep" (10.74-75).</p>
<p>The Laestrygonians</p> <p>Odysseus and his men stop at the land of the Laestrygonians, giant cannibals. Many of his men die--there is only</p>	<p>brave</p> <p>heroic</p> <p>quick-thinking</p>	<p>Odysseus thinks quickly and is able to rescue some of his men.</p>	<p>"I pulled the sword from beside my hip and hacked away at the ropes that moored my blue-prowed ship of war and shouted rapid orders at my shipmates..." (10.138-140).</p>

one ship left in his fleet.			
<p>Circe</p> <p>In the last episode of Book Ten, Odysseus and his men stop at Aeaëa, where they encounter a beautiful enchantress named Circe. Circe and Odysseus live together as man and wife for one year.</p>	<p>unfaithful</p> <p>disloyal</p>	<p>Motivated by a desire for an opulent life safe on land rather than a tumultuous existence on the sea, Odysseus decides to live with Circe. His men have to beg him to leave her.</p>	<p>"And there we sat at ease, day in, day out, till a year had run its course, feasting on sides of meat and drafts of heady wine... But then... my loyal comrades took me aside and prodded, 'Captain, this is madness! High time you thought of your own home at last, if it really is your fate to make it back alive and reach your well-built house and native land'" (10.513-523).</p>

In the space below, explain how Odysseus is a complex character.

Odysseus is a man of contradictions. He claims to want to go home to Penelope, but he also has no moral qualms concerning living with another woman.

Characters and Motivations--Book Twelve

As you read Book Twelve, record the major descriptions, actions, motivations, and key quotations of Odysseus.

Description of Episode	Character Traits	Actions and Motivations	Key Quotations that Reveal Character Traits
<p>The Sirens</p> <p>After receiving instructions from Circe, Odysseus plugs the ears of his men with wax and tells them to tie him to the mast of the ship so he can hear the song of the Sirens. They promise him knowledge of the future and Odysseus begs to be freed, but his men keep him restrained.</p>	<p>curious</p> <p>weak</p>	<p>Odysseus plugs everyone else's ears but he is bent on listening to the Siren's song. He is curious about what they will use to tempt him. As their message promises knowledge of the future, Odysseus is tempted because he wants to know the fate of his men as well as himself.</p>	<p>"So they sent their ravishing voices out across the air and the heart inside me throbbed to listen longer." (12.208-210)</p>
<p>Scylla and Charybdis</p> <p>The men drop their oars in fear as they approach Charybdis, then Odysseus gives a motivational speech encouraging them to row harder toward the crags and away from the whirlpool</p>	<p>Inspiring</p> <p>tactful</p> <p>defiant</p>	<p>Odysseus encourages the men to row on so that they do not lose the ship, but he leaves out the prediction that Scylla will take six of the men because he doesn't want them to stop rowing. He is willing to lose six to save the rest. As they pass, he acts against Circe's advice and</p>	<p>"But even from there my courage, my presence of mind and tactics saved us all, and we will live to remember this someday. I have no doubt. Up now, follow my orders, all of us work as one! You men at the thwarts— lay on with your oars and strike the heaving swells, trusting that Zeus will pull us through these straits alive. " (12.229-235)</p>

<p>as he turns to fight Scylla. She grabs six of his best men before the ship gets through.</p>		<p>attempts to fight Scylla because that is his nature.</p>	<p>"No mention of Scylla—how to fight that nightmare?— for fear the men would panic, desert their oars and huddle down and stow themselves away." (12..241-244)</p> <p>"But now I cleared my mind of Circe's orders— cramping my style, urging me not to arm at all. I donned my heroic armor, seized long spears in both my hands and marched out on the half-deck, forward, hoping from there to catch the first glimpse of Scylla, ghoul of the cliffs, swooping to kill my men." (12..245-250)</p>
<p>The Cattle of the Sungod</p> <p>The men vote to stay one night on the island, but a storm requires them to stay longer. Odysseus goes off to pray and despite numerous warnings, Eurylochus encourages the men to slaughter the cattle there. The Sungod calls on Zeus to punish the men, and he hits the ship with lightning. All of the men die except</p>	<p>Naive Determined</p>	<p>Odysseus is motivated to skip the island because he has been warned so many times. He naively leaves his men with the cattle after they have already defied him. The lengths that he goes to for survival show his determination.</p>	<p>"But then, when supplies aboard had all run dry, when the men turned to hunting, forced to range for quarry with twisted hooks: for fish, birds, anything they could lay their hands on— hunger racked their bellies—I struck inland, up the island, there to pray to the gods. If only one might show me some way home! Crossing into the heartland, clear of the crew, I rinsed my hands in a sheltered spot, a windbreak, but soon as I'd prayed to all the gods who rule Olympus, down on my eyes they poured a sweet, sound sleep ..." (12..254-264)</p> <p>"But heaving myself aloft to clutch at the fig-tree's height, like a bat I clung to its trunk for dear life—not a chance for a good firm foothold there, no clambering up it either, the roots too far to reach, the</p>

<p>Odysseus, who floats back toward Scylla and Charybdis. He survives by holding onto a fig tree, drifts for nine days then ends up on Calypso's island.</p>			<p>boughs too high overhead, huge swaying branches that overshadowed Charybdis. But I held on, dead set ... waiting for her to vomit my mast and keel back up again— " (12.266-272)</p>
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In the space below, explain how Odysseus is a complex character.

Odysseus seems tactful at times in dealing with his men as when he predicts their response and decides not to tell them about Scylla. At other times he is naive about their nature because he leaves them alone with the cattle despite numerous warnings and the fact that they were on the brink of starvation.