

Name: _____

Tales from the Odyssey
Book One: The One-Eyed Giant
By: Mary Pope Osborne

Answer all questions at the end of each chapter. Make sure to use complete sentences and that you read the questions fully. You should highlight unknown words, new characters, and important or interesting points within the story when you are reading. If you have questions that come up when reading, write them down on the right hand side - sometimes asking yourself questions when reading helps you better understand the text.

Chapter 6:Odysseus' Plan	Note/Questions/Comments
<p>After many terrible hours, the light of dawn crept through the cracks at the mouth of the cave.</p> <p>Odysseus watched the Cyclops open his eye, then heave himself up from the ground. The giant lit a fire and milked his goats. When he was done with his chores, he snatched up two more Greeks.</p> <p>The terrified warriors again begged for Zeus to help them. But as before, the mighty god did not heed their cries.</p> <p>Odysseus and his men watched the monster smash their two comrades against a stone wall, then devour them for breakfast.</p> <p>The Greeks reeled at the horror of the sight. Again, Odysseus felt a murderous rage toward the monster, but again he fought to conceal it.</p> <p>After his gory meal. Polyphemus rolled away the boulder from the mouth of the cave. He called for his flock and led them out into the sunlight. Then he rolled the mighty rock back against the entrance, trapping the Greeks inside. They could hear the monster whistling as he drove his goats and sheep down the mountain slope.</p> <p>Odysseus and his men were sickened by the gruesome murder of their friends. The men moaned and wept, but Odysseus ordered them to be silent.</p> <p>"Weeping will not save us," he said.</p>	<p>← I doubt Odysseus slept that night. Do you think you could fall asleep in Polyphemus' cave?</p> <p>← begging for Zeus to help because he is the god of visitors</p>

“We must make a plan.”

His men were too distraught to think clearly, so Odysseus paced about the cave alone, searching for a way to destroy the giant.

Peering about the shadowy cave, Odysseus caught sight of the giant’s club. Made from fresh green olive wood, the club was as tall as the mast of a twenty-oared trading ship.

Odysseus seized the club and chopped off a six-foot stake. He ordered his men to carve the wood into a spike. When they were done, he honed one end until it was razor sharp.

“Now, let us draw lots to see who will help me,” he said.

Then men drew lots, and four were chosen to help. Odysseus told them his plan. Then he hid the stake in the shadows of the cave.

“All we can do now is wait,” he said.

His men huddled together like frightened children. But as Odysseus sat and stared at the entrance of the cave, his heart grew cold and hard.

Finally, he heard the awful whistling of the monster, then the bleating of sheep.

The huge rock was rolled away. Sunlight streamed into the cave. Flocks of sheep and goats bounded in. The one-eyed giant lumbered behind them.

Once all were inside, Polyphemus again rolled the boulder against the mouth of the cave. Without even a glance at the Greeks, he stoked his fires and set about milking his goats.

The Cyclops finished his chores. Then just as suddenly as before, he grabbed two more men. He bashed them against the stone floor and ate them for supper. When he had finished his meal of flesh and bone, the one-eyed giant grinned horribly at the remaining Greeks.

Odysseus’ men cried out in terror before the bloody monster.

Odysseus himself trembled with fury. But he forced himself to smile. He rose calmly and picked up his wineskin. With a steady

← How many Greeks has Polyphemus eaten now?

hand, he poured sweet red wine into a wooden bowl.

“Here, sir,” he said, offering the bowl to the Cyclops. “Please drink our good wine. I give it to you as a gift with the hope that you will take pity on us and help us find our way home.”

The giant snatched the bowl from Odysseus and gulped down the wine. When he was done, he held out the bowl and thundered, “MORE! MORE! Give me MORE!”

Odysseus poured more wine into the bowl, and Polyphemus gulped it all down.

“MORE!” the monster bellowed.
“MORE! And tell me your name!”

Odysseus filled the bowl a third time. The giant poured it down his throat. Then he put down the bowl and began to stagger about the cave. Odysseus saw that the wine had gone to the giant’s head. He knew it would soon be time to act.

“Sir, you have asked me for my name,” said Odysseus. “I will give it to you as a gift. But you must give me a gift in return. My name is No One. That is what everyone calls me. No One.”

The giant laughed cruelly.
“Ha! No One!” he said. “Thank you for your gift. Now I give you a gift in return. It is this: I will eat you and all of your men. But I will eat you last! That is my gift to you, No One. Ha-ha-ha!”

As he laughed, the giant lost his balance. He staggered back a few steps. Then he slid down the stone wall and crashed to the ground. His huge head drooped to one side. His eyes closed and he began to snore. The giant’s snores were so thunderous that all the milk pails rattled throughout the cave.

Odysseus moved quickly. He jammed the sharpened end of the stake into the burning embers. He beckoned to his men to stand near him. Then he pulled the stake from the fire.

“Help us, O Zeus!” Odysseus prayed.
The mighty god finally seemed to hear his prayer. As Odysseus took a deep breath, he felt a surge of strength and power.

Odysseus gave a sign. Then all together, the men raised the stake and rammed its burning point into the giant’s huge,

← Odysseus gives Polyphemus wine to “loosen him up”.

← Odysseus tells Polyphemus his name is “No One”

← YIKES!!

bulging eye.

The Cyclops let out a piercing howl.

The eye hissed and sizzled.

The Greeks let go of the stake and fled to the corners of the cave.

Polyphemus pulled the spike from his eye and hurled it away from him. Blinded and groaning with pain, he fell to the floor of his cave. He bellowed for help.

All the other Cyclops who lived on the island hurried over the dark rocks and gathered outside the cave.

“What ails you, Polyphemus?” one shouted. “Why do you break the stillness of the night with your cries? Who harms you?”

“NO ONE!” Polyphemus shouted, writhing on the floor of his cave. “No One tried to kill me! No One blinded me!”

“Well, if no one has harmed you, you must be ill,” said the other Cyclopes. “And when Zeus makes one of us ill, the others can offer no help.”

With no further talk, all the Cyclopes turned away and lumbered back to their own caves.

Odysseus felt laughter rise in his throat. His bold trick had worked!

Growling with rage, the giant felt along the walls with his huge hands, searching for the rock that sealed up the cave. When he found it, he pushed it away.

Odysseus was overjoyed—he and his men would soon be free! But before they could flee, the blinded Cyclops sat down in the open mouth of the cave and stretched out his huge arms. The monster grew very still. He was waiting to capture the first Greek who tried to escape.

Questions:

1. Why did Odysseus decide to conceal his real name from Polyphemus?

← Polyphemus is blind now!

← How are they going to get out now??

2. What did Odysseus plan consist of? What do you think Odysseus plans to do next?

Chapter 7: The Curse of the Cyclops

Hour after hour, Polyphemus waited at the mouth of the cave. House after hour, Odysseus wondered how he might save himself and his men. Near dawn, his gaze rested on the fat, fleecy sheep. *There must be a way to use them*, he thought.

← another day has passed

Odysseus stood up silently. He quickly chose eighteen of the largest sheep. Then, using long, young willow branches, he silently bound the sheep together in groups of three. When this was done, he lashed each of his men to the belly of a middle sheep.

← Where did the branches come from?

When all his men were concealed by the curly, white wool of the sheep, Odysseus chose the mightiest ram for himself and hid beneath it.

← those must be some really big sheep...

Dawn crept into the cave. Just as they did every morning, the sheep began to bleat and move out of the cave, heading for the mountain meadows.

← another day has passed?

As the sheep moved past the Cyclops, he ran his hands through their wool, searching for Odysseus' men. But the blind giant touched only the two outside sheep in groups of three. Little did he imagine that the Greek warriors were hiding in the wool of the center sheep.

One by one, Odysseus' men passed smoothly and secretly past the Cyclops and out of his reach. But when the mighty ram began to move out of the cave, the giant stopped him and stroked his wool.

← tricky tricky

Odysseus held his breath as he hid beneath the ram's belly.

"Ah, my old friend," Polyphemus said to the ram, "why do you move so slowly this morning? You are always the first to run into the flowery meadow or the bubbling spring. You are always the first to come home at night. Do you move slowly now because you know your master has lost his sight? Do you

grieve for me? If only you could speak and tell me where No One hides, I would catch him and bash out his brains.”

The ram bleated impatiently, and the giant let him go. The ram--and Odysseus--moved out of the giant’s reach and beyond the cave.

As soon as they were a safe distance away, Odysseus slipped out from beneath the ram’s belly. He quickly untied his men. He silently urged them to hurry. Then the men drove the giant’s flock down the water.

The Greeks who had waited by the ship rejoiced to see their friends alive. But they fell to weeping when they learned of the six who had been brutally slain.

“End your grieving now!” Odysseus ordered. “We must put out to sea at once, before the Cyclops discovers we are gone and comes after us!”

Odysseus and his men drove the Cyclops’ sheep onto their ship. Then they pushed off and rowed quickly through the calm, gray sea.

Once they were far away from shore, Odysseus stood up in the boat. “Polyphemus!” he shouted. “Polyphemus!”

In a moment, the monster, appeared at the edge of the cliff. He bellowed with rage when he realized Odysseus and his men had escaped.

“You should have thought twice before making a meal of my men!” shouted Odysseus. “See how Zeus has punished you!”

The blind giant answered with a shriek of fury. He tore a slab of rock from the high cliff, and with all his might he hurled it at the Greeks,.

The rock crashed into the water in front of the ship. A wave rose like a huge mountain. It scooped up the Greek ship and washed it all the way back to the Cyclopes’ island and hurled it onto the beach!

Odysseus grabbed a long oar and pushed the ship back into the water.

“Row! Row!” he shouted to his crew.

← after three days why didn’t anyone go looking for them?!?

← it seems kind of wrong that he’s stealing the sheep... I think Polyphemus is pretty attached to them.

← Uh, oh. Greeks should never show this much *hubris* (excessive pride or self-confidence)

“Row for your lives!”

The Greeks madly rowed their ship out to sea. As they moved far beyond the shore of the blind giant, Odysseus could not help jeering at the beast again.

“Polyphemus!” he bellowed.

His men begged Odysseus to hold his tongue. “Do not taunt the monster! He will sink our ship for certain!”

But Odysseus paid no attention to their pleas. His anger and pride were so great, he could not stop himself from making a terrible mistake: he told his true name to the giant.

“Polyphemus!” he shouted. “If anyone asks you who put out your eye, do not tell them it was No One. Tell them it was Odysseus, king of Ithaca! Odysseus, the great warrior and raider of cities! He was the one who blinded you!”

“Alas! The prophecy has come true!” boomed the giant. “Long ago, a soothsayer said a man named Odysseus would blind me. I had been waiting for someone of godlike strength. But you--you are a weakling! Come back, so I can give you a gift to prove my hospitality! To please your Zeus! So he will heal my eye!”

“Heal you?” Odysseus shouted mockingly. “Neither Zeus nor I wish to heal you, monster! I only wish to send you to the Land of the Dead!”

The giant lifted his hands and prayed to his father Poseidon, god of the seas. “Hear me, father!” he thundered. “Put a curse on Odysseus, king of Ithaca! May he never reach his home alive! If he must, may he lose his way, his ships, and all his men! May he find only sorrow and trouble on his journey!”

The Cyclops then picked up a rock even bigger than the first and hurled it at Odysseus. But this time the rock landed behind the ship, and a mountainous wave bore the Greek ship toward the goat island where the rest of the fleet waited.

Odysseus and his men were welcomed with great cries of relief. But once again joy turned to sorrow when the Greeks learned how the giant had brutally slain their friends.

As the sun went down, the Greeks feasted on mutton and wine.

← I thought Odysseus was supposed to be smart...

← that's not going to be good

← dang prophecies always come true in Greek myth

When night came, they lay down and slept soundly on the sand near the shore.

At dawn, Odysseus ordered his men aboard the ships. They all took their places. Then, with swift strokes, the Greeks left the goat island and headed across the rolling gray waves.

As the fleet of the ships glided into the unknown, Odysseus looked about worriedly. Would the sea god Poseidon do as his monstrous son had asked? Would he punish Odysseus for blinding Polyphemus? And if so, how? And when?

Questions

1. How many “dawns” rise in this chapter (how many days pass by while the Greeks are in the cave)?

2. How did Odysseus and the Greeks end up escaping the cave?

3. Why do you think Odysseus *needed* to tell Polyphemus his real name?

Chapter 8: The Palace of the Wind God

Soon Odysseus and his men came upon a great rocky island. A huge bronze fortress gleamed beyond its shore. Sounds of joyful music and laughter came from within the fortress.

“Seafarers once told me about this happy kingdom,” Odysseus said to his men. “It is home to Aeolus, god of the winds. He lives with his six sons and six daughters. Night and day they feast on roasted meats and listen to the music of whistles and pipes.”

“But how will they receive us?” a Greek asked fearfully. Odysseus’ men were still plagued with nightmarish memories of the Cyclops.

“The wind god is a friend to Zeus,” said Odysseus. “I believe he will honor the gods’ command that strangers must always be greeted with kindness.”

← hmmm god of the sea, probably going to hurt him in a sea related way

← are these friends or foes?

← Aeolus, god of winds and awesome parties!

Odysseus' words proved to be true. When the Greeks climbed ashore on the rocky island, Aeolus welcomed them warmly. he even invited them to stay at his palace and visit with him and his family.

Odysseus wished to be on his way as soon as possible, but he agreed to stay on Aeolus' island for a month. His men greatly needed to rest, and Odysseus had an idea of how the wind god might later help them get home.

In the following weeks, while his men enjoyed the luxurious palace life, Odysseus told the wind god the story of the long war between the Greeks and the Trojans. He told him about the wooden horse and the fall of Troy.

Aeolus was grateful to hear such exciting tales. When Odysseus finished his stories, the god offered to give him a gift in return.

"I ask only one thing," Odysseus said. "Will you help my fleet of ships get home safely to Ithaca? Will you spare us gales and storms and give us a gentle wind to open our sails?"

Aeolus enthusiastically agreed. He called together all the winds from the east and the west, and all the winds from the north and the south. At the god's bidding, each of the winds became perfectly still. Even fierce storm winds obeyed their master's command.

Aeolus bundled all the world's winds into a sack made of oxhide, so none could hinder the Greek ships from sailing home. He left out only a gentle west wind that would carry them swiftly to Ithaca.

The wind god tied the sack of winds with a silver cord and gave the bundle to Odysseus. Odysseus hid the sack in the hollow of his ship. He did not tell his men what was inside, for he did not want them to become lazy in their efforts to return home.

Odysseus bade farewell to the family of the wind god. Then with the help of the gentle west wind, he and his men pushed off from the rocky island.

In the days that followed, the Greek fleet kept a safe, steady course. Odysseus was so excited to be returning to his family that he could not sleep. For nine days and nights, he kept watch as the salty breeze swelled the sails of his ships.

← Wait, following weeks? I thought Odysseus wanted to leave right away?

On the tenth day, in the distance, he finally saw the rock wooded hills that rose from the rocky shores of Ithaca. Odysseus rejoiced. He was home! The curse of the Cyclops had come to nothing!

As the Greek ships drew closer to the island. Odysseus could see the smoke of cooking fires. Was Penelope, his beloved wife, preparing dinner for their son? The boy would be ten now, an age when he would most need a father. And were Odysseus' aging parents still alive? He prayed that they would be waiting to greet him.

The balmy west wind, the gentle waves, weariness--all soon lulled Odysseus into a deep sleep.

While he slept, some of his men began to grumble to one another.

“What is inside the sack that the wind god gave our captain?”

“I imagine it is filled with splendid gifts--gold and silver.”

“Why is it only Odysseus who receives the wind god's gifts? We do all the work and receive nothing.”

“Quick! Before he wakes, let us search the ship and find what he hides from us!”

And so the faithless men searched the ship and found the wind god's gift. They untied the silver threads of the ox-hide sack.

Suddenly, the mighty winds of the world rushed out and swirled into a hurricane. The storm picked up the twelve ships and sent them flying wildly over the seas, far away from the shores of Ithaca.

Odysseus leaped up from his sleep and frantically tried to change the ship's course, but it was too late. He could not fight the wild winds that his men had set free.

In great despair, Odysseus thought of hurling himself into the sea. But he clung to the mast of his ship as the winds of the storm swept his fleet back the way they had come--all the way back to the island of the wind god.

Once ashore, Odysseus ran to the god's bronze fortress. He found Aeolus feasting at the banquet table with his twelve

← on the home stretch!

← uh oh

← these do not seem like good guys

children.

Ashamed to present himself, Odysseus stood in the back of the hall, waiting to be noticed.

One of Aeolus' sons was the first to see him. "What has happened, Odysseus?" he called out. "Why have you returned?"

Odysseus stepped forward. He told Aeolus what his men had done. "I beg you to help us again to sail home," he said. "Will you again bundle the storm winds and give us the gentle west wind to ease our course?"

"No, Odysseus," said the wind god in a low, angry voice. "You were cursed by the Cyclops. And now, indeed, the gods punish you. We can help you no more."

Odysseus looked to the children of Aeolus, hoping to find pity. But they only stared at him in cold silence.

"Begone now!" said the wind god, "before we are punished for helping you. Leave this island at once!"

Odysseus knew the wind god spoke the truth: the curse of the Cyclops was truly upon him. The gods were punishing the Greeks for blinding Poseidon's monstrous son.

Odysseus returned to his men and ordered them to put out to sea. Ashamed of their foolish act, the men rowed valiantly. But with no wind to help, their ships drifted on the sea day after day.

As Odysseus stared at the hazy horizon, grief threatened to break his spirit. But each time he thought of Penelope and Telemachus, the fire of his determination to return to Ithaca was rekindled.

I will find my way back to my family again, he promised himself. And he leaned toward the horizon, yearning for home.

Questions

1. How did Aeolus treat Odysseus and his men when they first meet?

← that seems harsh

2. What did Aeolus give Odysseus to help in his journey home?

3. Why does Aeolus treat Odysseus differently at the end of the chapter?

Epilogue

While Odysseus longed for home, his wife, Penelope, longed for his return. Over the years, news had often come to Ithaca of the fate of warriors who had been slain by the Trojans--or who had died at sea returning from the war. No word, though, had ever come to the island about the fate of Odysseus.

Most people on the island assumed that Odysseus had died in battle or a shipwreck. Odysseus' mother had despaired of ever seeing him again and had taken her life. In his grief and despair, Odysseus' father had withdrawn to the country and lived in seclusion.

But to everyone's amazement, Odysseus' wife held fast to the belief that her husband was still alive. Every day, as she wove cloth at her loom, she frequently glanced up, as if to catch sight of him walking in the door.

Penelope most strongly sensed Odysseus' presence when she looked upon their son, Telemachus. As the boy grew older, he reminded her more and more of his father: tall and handsome, clever and brave. The boy often asked to hear stories about Odysseus. A thousand times, he imagined his father's ship sailing over the horizon.

Penelope and Telemachus had no idea that Odysseus had been so close to them the night of the great storm. It was just as well. Sadly, neither mother nor son would lay eyes upon Odysseus for many more days, months... or even years to come.

← this is the end of Book One: The One Eyed Monster, next up is Book Two: The Land of the Dead

← Odysseus' mom dead

← Odysseus' dad has become a recluse

← in the original tale Penelope weaves a giant burial cloth for Odysseus. She tells the men who want to marry her (and become the new king of Ithaca) that she will choose a new husband once she is done with the blanket. The only problem is, she unweaves the blanket every night.