

# **The Adventures of Ulysses Study Guide**

## **The Adventures of Ulysses by Bernard Evslin**

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# Plot Summary

"The Adventures of Ulysses" by Bernard Evslin is a modern interpretation of Homer's classic "The Odyssey." The story follows Ulysses' journey to Ithaca, his home, after his efforts in the Trojan War. While being plagued by the god of the sea, Poseidon, Ulysses and his crew falter through many adventures before Ulysses finally finds his way home. "The Adventures of Ulysses" allows the classic tale to be easily understood by readers of all skill levels.

Ulysses' adventures begin during the Trojan War after which he and his crew attempt to return to their homes in Ithaca. Greed causes many of the Hellenes' troubles in the beginning of their voyage. First, the Hellenes land on the island of the Ciconians in order to loot a small village along the coast. The Ciconians rally and attack the Hellenes, forcing Ulysses and his crew to retreat back to their ships leaving eighteen of their men dead on the shore. This hasty retreat damages their ships forcing them to unload their Trojan spoils. These baubles attract a shoal of naiads incurring the anger of Poseidon due to his belief that the Hellenes are attempting to steal his naiads from him. Poseidon convinces Aeolus, his son, to send a gale that drives the Hellenes around the Greek islands toward Libya in Africa.

The Hellenes dock in Libya and sleep. The inhabitants pile lotus-flowers, which induce sleep and dreams, around their visitors. This is the land where Morpheus plays and he hovers over the Hellenes fading their nightmares into pleasant dreams. He is unable to help Ulysses who has a foreboding dream of the monsters he will encounter on his voyage. When Ulysses realizes that the lotus-flowers are causing his men to sleep, he carries the men to the ship individually and sets sail. The Hellenes run out of food so in order to avoid mutiny, Ulysses lands on a mountainous island. Unfortunately, this is the island where the man-eating Cyclops live. Polyphemus entices the Hellenes to his cave with the scent of roasting goat in order to trap and eat them. Ulysses tricks Polyphemus into becoming intoxicated which allows Ulysses time to blind the Cyclops. Clinging to the bellies of Polyphemus' goats, the Hellenes escape their imprisonment to Polyphemus' chagrin. Ulysses makes the mistake of taunting Polyphemus by revealing his name, and Polyphemus prays to his father, Poseidon, to punish Ulysses with a long voyage.

Next, the Hellenes encounter a wall of bronze which they circle until they are pulled through the gate of Aeolus' fortress. Ulysses tells Aeolus the story of his adventures in the Trojan War and since leaving Troy. The god is greatly pleased and grants Ulysses a bag of winds in order to help him return to Ithaca. Just as the Hellenes near Ithaca, Poseidon rouses the greed of several sailors who, thinking the bag holds a treasure, cut open the bag of winds which returns them to the Island of the Winds. Aeolus cannot help Ulysses anymore since it is obvious that the hero is detested by the gods. The Hellenes land on a beautiful island where they are assaulted by giant cannibals and only one ship escapes. After this, they land on an island ruled by Circe who turns the Hellenes into pigs. With Hermes' help, Ulysses thwarts Circe's spells and rescues his men. He lives with the enchantress for a long time before resuming his voyage upon



which she tells him that he must first travel to Tartarus. In Tartarus, Ulysses learns of the many misadventures that await him and specifically is warned against eating Hyperion's sun-cattle.

The Hellenes attempt to avoid the dangers foretold in Tartarus and sail directly to Ithaca, but their efforts are thwarted by a group of wandering rocks. Passing through the strait of the Sirens, the crew's ears are blocked, but Ulysses hears and is maddened by the beauty of their song though he is horrified at their hideous appearance. When the Hellenes travel through the strait of Scylla and Charybdis, Scylla steals and eats six members of Ulysses' crew. The Hellenes arrive at Thrinacia and are stranded for thirty days because of a storm with little game to hunt. Eurylochus convinces the men to slay the cattle. Hyperion petitions Zeus for vengeance which is granted in the form of a sea storm which ends the lives of all of the Hellenes except Ulysses who floats on a raft. Ulysses awakes in Ogygia with Calypso, a daughter of the Titans, who teaches him to see the past and future in her fire though she forbids him to see his homeland. When Ulysses sends a crow to bring him word of Ithaca, the news causes him to pray to the gods to kill him if he cannot return home since Calypso forbids him from leaving her. Athene petitions Zeus for Ulysses, and Zeus sends Hermes to command Calypso to release Ulysses. When Poseidon sees Ulysses, he destroys the hero's ship. Lucky, Ino, a nereid, loans Ulysses a veil that will not sink until he swims up a river into Phaeacia.

Nausicaa, the unmarried princess of Phaeacia, rescues Ulysses on the same day that her father is warned by an oracle not to listen to sailors, storytellers or strangers. The king fears incurring the wrath of the gods by breaking the laws of hospitality so he holds a banquet in honor of his guest whom he learns is Ulysses. The king sends Ulysses to Ithaca where Ulysses lands on a lonely shore and dons the clothes of a beggar. As a beggar, Ulysses goes to the home of Eumaeus, his swineherd, who agrees to feed the beggar. That same night, Telemachus returns from searching for news of his father as a party of Penelope's suitors lie in wait to kill the prince. Athene thwarts the suitors' plot and changes herself into a swineherd to greet Telemachus and direct him to Eumaeus' hut. Ulysses cannot restrain himself from revealing his identity to his son and planning his attack on Penelope's suitors. At dusk the next day, Ulysses, dressed as a beggar, arrives at the castle where the suitors abuse him. Still disguised, Ulysses tells Penelope pleasing stories about Ulysses and convinces her to hold an archery contest to decide who her next husband will be. While Penelope announces the contest to the suitors, Ulysses arms himself. None of the suitors are able to string Ulysses' bow. Ulysses shoots an arrow through twelve axe rings and reveals himself. Ulysses, Telemachus, Eumaeus and the neatherd kill the suitors, and Ulysses claims his wife. He promises to teach Telemachus everything his son needs to know because Ulysses is home now.



# Section 1, Prologue & Ships and Men

## Section 1, Prologue & Ships and Men Summary

"The Adventures of Ulysses" by Bernard Evslin is a modern interpretation of Homer's classic "The Odyssey." The story follows Ulysses' journey to Ithaca, his home, after his efforts in the Trojan War. While being plagued by the god of the sea, Poseidon, Ulysses and his crew falter through many adventures before Ulysses finally finds his way home. "The Adventures of Ulysses" allows the classic tale to be easily understood by readers of all skill levels.

In "Prologue," the background to the adventure begins many years earlier at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, who forget to invite Eris, Lady of Discord to the celebration. Eris decides to attend uninvited and brings with her an apple, which is to be awarded to the fairest of the Goddesses. Hera, Athene, and Aphrodite all desire the apple as the trophy of the title. Paris is named the judge of this contest, but Aphrodite plots for the title. She bribes Paris by promising him any woman he desires and suggests the beauty Helen who is courted by all of the allied Greek kings and princes. Helen chooses to marry Menelaus. Paris kidnaps Helen and the Greeks sail to Troy to save her. Ulysses come up with the idea to hide soldiers in a giant wooden horse that is to be left at the Trojan gate as an offering. Once the horse is brought within the Trojan walls the soldiers are able to open the gates, allowing the Greek armies to invade and the Trojans are defeated.

In "Ships and Men," the defeat and destruction of Troy greatly angers Poseidon, God of the Seas, and he plagues Ulysses' return journey home. Ulysses sets sail with three ships and fifty men in each. The ships are not made for such long voyages. With smaller cargo holds, the ships begin to run low on food as the majority of the holds are filled with the booty taken from Troy. It is this greed that causes many of Ulysses' hardships at first. Hardships are seen as bad luck or the anger of the gods, but bad luck makes good stories.

## Section 1, Prologue & Ships and Men Analysis

The background information pertaining to the Trojan War places the stories of Ulysses in context of Greek mythology as a whole. The introduction to the gods and goddesses that attend Peleus and Thetis' wedding is important to the story in terms of its connection with the Greek pantheon. Aphrodite's mention of Helen as an apt prize for Paris leads to Paris kidnapping Helen which in turn leads to the Trojan War. Ulysses' part in the Trojan War is apparent as the wooden horse is his idea and obviously results in the defeat of the Trojans. Poseidon's anger over the defeat of Troy initiates his plagues against Ulysses and the Hellenes. The background provided about the structure of ships at the time allows the reader to understand why the Hellenes must stop so frequently on their journey. The number of men that Ulysses begins with is

symbolic when compared to the number he ultimately arrives in Ithaca with. The mention of Ulysses' bad luck or anger of the gods foreshadows the tragedies that befall the Hellenes.



## Section 2, The Ciconians

### Section 2, The Ciconians Summary

The Hellenes' voyage begins peacefully. On the second morning, they see a small village along the shore of an island. Savage from war, Ulysses' men want to attack. Ulysses does not want to risk spoiling their good luck by stopping. Eurylochus convinces Ulysses that the village is a gift from the gods, and Ulysses concedes. At Ulysses' command, the Hellenes land and the townspeople, the Ciconians, flee. Ulysses commands his men to take no slaves. The Hellenes sacrifice ten bulls to the gods. They feast and loot the village. The Ciconians gather in the hills and attack the Hellenes. The sentries warn the crew, causing the Hellenes to retreat to their ships. Ulysses shoots the Ciconian's horses to disable them from following, but six Hellenes from each ship are killed. Eurylochus offers himself as a sacrifice to appease the gods, but Ulysses refuses to kill him because their luck can change again. The ships are handled roughly in the Hellenes' retreat, and it is necessary to unload their Trojan spoils. The baubles attract a shoal of naiads which causes the first report of mermaids. Poseidon awakes and becomes angry that the Hellenes are trying to steal his naiads. Poseidon convinces his son, Aeolus, to send a gale to set the ships off course; the winds drive the Hellenes around Cythera, the southernmost of the Greek islands, toward Libya in Africa.

### Section 2, The Ciconians Analysis

Ulysses' lack of desire to stop at the village of the Ciconians for fear of spoiling their good luck foreshadows the bad turn that their luck takes. Eurylochus' efforts to persuade Ulysses to stop on the island succeed and foreshadow Eurylochus' role in the Hellenes' fate. Ulysses shows his honor somewhat in his command that his men do not take slaves. The Hellenes show honor to the gods by sacrificing ten bulls. The fact that Ulysses posts sentries in case the Ciconians return proves his skill as a leader. The fleeing of the Hellenes is the first of many repetitious retreats from the islands that they land on. The death of several Hellenes is also an event that is repeated at every stop along their way home. Ulysses refuses to kill Eurylochus as a sacrifice to appease the gods; this turns out to be a bad decision since Eurylochus leads to the deaths of many Hellenes. Ulysses' declaration that their luck can change again proves foreboding as the luck of the Hellenes does change again, for the worse. The fact that when it is necessary to unload their Trojan spoils, Ulysses unloads his first, shows that he is more concerned with his crew than his wealth. The naiads who appear spur the first rumors of mermaids. Poseidon's anger over the naiads following the Hellenes' ships introduces the angry god for the first time of many when he will plague Ulysses. The Hellenes being blown toward Libya in Africa foreshadows their arrival and adventure on that continent.





## Section 3, The Lotus-Eaters

### Section 3, The Lotus-Eaters Summary

Libya is the land where Morpheus, the dream god, plays. Morpheus' father, Hypnos, mixes colors of sleep for Morpheus; Hypnos refers to sleep as a little death. Persephone, Morpheus' aunt, provides him with dreams to give to humans. Morpheus is fascinated with dreams and convinces his aunt to make the lotus-flower which lures people to dream. Morpheus plants the lotus-flower in Libya where the people do nothing but eat the flowers and sleep. When the Hellenes land in Libya, they dock and sleep on the shore. Meanwhile, the hospitable lotus-eaters pile lotus-flowers around the Hellenes to eat. As the Hellenes awake, they eat the flowers and return to sleep. Morpheus hovers around the Hellenes, fading their nightmares into sweet dreams of home. Morpheus sees Ulysses but cannot help the hero's nightmares. Morpheus reads Ulysses' horrible dreams of monsters. Ulysses awakes from his nightmarish vision in which he foresees his disastrous journey. He sees his men asleep and begins to eat a lotus-flower. He forces himself to put the flower down as he realizes that the lotus-flower is what makes his men sleep. Though tired, Ulysses carries each of his men to his ship as he fights sleep himself. Ulysses pushes the ship to sea where the men awake. Ulysses worries about his vision.

### Section 3, The Lotus-Eaters Analysis

The foreshadowing of the previous chapter is fulfilled when the Hellenes land in Libya. Several minor gods are mentioned in this chapter as Morpheus, Hypnos and Persephone are introduced. Hypnos' callous view that sleep prepares humans for death is contradicted by Persephone, ironically the wife of Hades, god of death, who provides dreams for humans. The lotus-eaters lives are very peaceful as they do nothing but eat lotus-flowers and sleep; this contributes to their hospitable natures and may be the reason that this is the only land where the Hellenes are not forced to fight the inhabitants. The Hellenes react to the lotus-flowers as well as the indigenous people of Libya. Contrasted to the devious Poseidon, Morpheus presents a kind god who fades the Hellenes' nightmares into pleasant dreams of their homeland. Because of Ulysses' status as a hero, Morpheus is unable to prevent Ulysses' nightmares. Ulysses' dream is actually a vision that foreshadows the remainder of his horrendous journey. Ulysses' intelligence is revealed when he realizes that the lotus-flower causes his men to sleep; his strength and will are revealed when he carries each of his men to the ship, though tired himself.



## Section 4, The Cyclops' Cave

### Section 4, The Cyclops' Cave Summary

The fact that the Hellenes unknowingly land on the worst possible choice of places to land shows the continuation of Ulysses' bad luck. An allusion to Zeus, the king of the Greek gods, is made in reference to the exile of the Cyclops. The mention of the Cyclops enjoying human flesh explicitly informs readers that these creatures are cannibals. Ulysses offering wine to Polyphemus in the middle of the crisis of seeing his men being eaten shows his intelligence and cunning even in the face of peril. The fact that drunkenness causes Polyphemus to be vulnerable for the Hellenes to blind shows a condemnation of gluttony. By answering "nobody" to Polyphemus' request for Ulysses' name, Ulysses saves the Hellenes from the other Cyclops later when the other Cyclops ask who blinded Polyphemus; unfortunately, Ulysses falters when he taunts Polyphemus and brags that Ulysses is the one who blinded him. This seems to prove the saying that pride goeth before the fall as, ironically, Polyphemus happens to be the son of Poseidon who is already angry at Ulysses. Polyphemus' prayer to his father foreshadows the many misadventures that the Hellenes will face on their journey as well as the reception that Ulysses receives when he returns home.

### Section 4, The Cyclops' Cave Analysis

There is no food left on the ship and the crew grows hungry. In order to avoid mutiny, Ulysses lands on a mountainous island with no idea that this is the worst possible choice of places to land. This island is the home of the Cyclops, monsters with one eye whom Zeus exiles from Olympus for a treacherous act. All of the Cyclops enjoy human flesh, but Polyphemus is the worst of them all. Polyphemus is happy when he sees the Hellenes land and begin hunting his goats. He opens his cave while roasting eight goats in order to attract the Hellenes to him by the smell. Ravenous, the Hellenes run into the cave as Polyphemus rolls a boulder across the exit, trapping the horrified Hellenes. After Polyphemus eats two Hellenes, Ulysses, thinking quickly, offers wine to the Cyclops in order to better enjoy his dinner. When Polyphemus asks this guest's name, Ulysses names himself as "nobody." Polyphemus places one man in a niche high above the floor before guzzling the wine and passing out. The Hellenes hold Polyphemus down as Ulysses blinds the monster.

Bellowing in rage and pain, Polyphemus wakes and searches for the Hellenes who hide amongst the goats. Polyphemus removes the boulder so the goats will leave and allow him to search for the men, but at Ulysses' bidding, the Hellenes hug the goats' bellies, sneaking past Polyphemus to escape the cave. When the other Cyclops hear Polyphemus screaming, they ask who blinded him, but when he says nobody, they leave. As soon as the other Cyclops are out of sight, the Hellenes run for the ships with Polyphemus chasing them. Barely reaching their ships ahead of the monster, Ulysses taunts Polyphemus, telling him that Ulysses is the one who blinded him. Polyphemus

prays to his father, Poseidon, to punish Ulysses with wandering many years before returning to his home as a stranger. Poseidon hears and grants his son's prayer.



## Section 5, Keeper of the Winds

### Section 5, Keeper of the Winds Summary

As the ships sail northward, Ulysses dreams of his wife and son. The Hellenes encounter a wall of bronze which they circle until they fall into an enchanted sleep as they are sucked in at the gate in the wall. Unknown to Ulysses, the Hellenes have reached the Island of the Winds, where Aeolus lives in his fortress which contains the winds. When the Hellenes awake, Aeolus greets his guests and asks Ulysses for a story. Aeolus recognizes Ulysses' name from tales of the Trojan War. Ulysses tells Aeolus about the Trojan War and his adventures since leaving Troy; Aeolus is pleased because he dislikes Polyphemus so he grants Ulysses a favor. Ulysses asks for help in returning to Ithaca so Aeolus gives Ulysses a bag of winds, telling him not to let anyone else open the bag. As the Hellenes sail toward Ithaca, Ulysses guards the bag carefully without sleeping for nine days. On the morning of the ninth day, Ulysses rejoices as he sees Ithaca and decides to take a nap. Ever treacherous, Poseidon causes the bag to clink, making two sailors believe that there is treasure in the bag which Ulysses attempts to withhold from his crew. The two sailors cut the bag open, causing the winds to rip the ship back to Aeolus' fortress. Ulysses tells Aeolus that he has been betrayed and asks Aeolus to be generous again, but Aeolus cannot help Ulysses because the hero is detested by the gods. Heartbroken, Ulysses and the Hellenes board their ships and continue their attempts to return home.

### Section 5, Keeper of the Winds Analysis

Ulysses' dreams of his wife and son shows that he is constantly thinking of returning to Ithaca as well as demonstrates his love for his family. The enchanted sleep that seizes the Hellenes foreshadows their encounter with the magic of a god. Aeolus is introduced to Ulysses in this chapter; this is ironic since Aeolus sent the Hellenes to Libya at Poseidon's command. It is also ironic since Poseidon, Aeolus' father, hates Ulysses while Aeolus is pleased with Ulysses' company. Ulysses' fame is made apparent by the fact that Aeolus recognizes the hero's name from stories of Troy.

It is interesting that Aeolus rewards Ulysses for blinding Polyphemus since Polyphemus is actually Aeolus' brother. Aeolus gives Ulysses a bag of winds, foreshadowing the Hellenes' return to Ithaca, but Aeolus' warning against Ulysses allowing anyone else to open the bag foreshadows the turn of fortune that occurs. Ulysses refusal to sleep while guarding the bag is a repetition that occurs throughout his journey as he tries to return to his home. Poseidon shows his power and fury by causing the bag to clink, making some of the crew believe that Ulysses is greedily hoarding a treasure. Their greed causes them to be forced to continue their journey rather than reaching Ithaca. Aeolus is unable to help Ulysses because of the anger of the gods; this proves that Ulysses' misfortunes are not simply caused by bad luck and foreshadows many more tragedies for the Hellenes.



## Section 6, Cannibal Beach

### Section 6, Cannibal Beach Summary

Ulysses sails far away from the Island of the Winds and lands on a beautiful island. Ulysses fears the strangeness of this Island of the Racing Sun. Ulysses brings only two of their ships to the beach and sets up sentries. He sends one man to climb a distant tree and report back to Ulysses what he sees, but the man does not return. Two more men are sent to report without returning. Ulysses decides to scout himself. As he climbs the tree, Ulysses feels the hairy foliage and realizes that the tree is actually a giant who is luckily sleeping. Ulysses quickly climbs down the giant and returns to the Hellenes, ordering them to the ships. The day dawns, and the giants attempt to feast on the Hellenes. Ulysses attacks the giants with his sword, and the Hellenes join him in battle against the cannibalistic giants. The giants crush the two ships resting on the beach and eat some of the crew as the surviving Hellenes swim to the last ship. Only one ship with one crew remains.

### Section 6, Cannibal Beach Analysis

Ulysses' fear of the strangeness of the Island of the Racing Sun seems foreboding and foreshadows the dangers that the Hellenes will encounter on this island. The men who are sent up the tree do not return; this also is foreboding and foreshadows the dangers of the island. Ulysses shows his courage by deciding to scout the island personally. This also shows his love for his crew. When Ulysses realizes that the tree he is climbing is actually a giant, this fulfills the foreshadowing of the dangers that will be encountered. The giants' attempts to eat the Hellenes reveal that these giants are cannibals. Ulysses shows his courage and honor by attacking the giants; his crew shows their subservience to their leader by joining the fray. The fact that only one ship and one crew remains of the original three shows the dwindling numbers of the Hellenes and foreshadows their utter ruin.



## Section 7, Circe

### Section 7, Circe Summary

The Hellenes sail northward and come in sight of land. Running low on food and water, they dock in the waters near the island while Ulysses goes ashore alone to prevent harm from coming to his crew; he decrees Eurylochus captain if he fails to return by nightfall. Ulysses climbs a tree and sees smoke. Venturing nearer, he sees a castle and hears strange howling sounds. Unnerved by these sounds, he heads back to the beach, intending to seek food elsewhere. On his way, he sees a proud, white stag which he shoots and drags to the beach. Ulysses summons his crew, and they eat the stag. Ulysses guards his men as they sleep on the beach. During the night, Ulysses becomes more optimistic and decides to explore the island hoping their luck has changed and they will be able to provision their ship. In the morning, Ulysses wakes his men and divides them into two groups, one under Ulysses and one with Eurylochus in charge. He gives Eurylochus the choice of guarding the ship or investigating the castle; Eurylochus chooses to investigate the castle.

As the Hellenes approach the castle, they hear the howling Ulysses described and see wolves and lions with eyes like those of humans. A lion embraces Eurylochus, and the men hope that their host will be friendly as well since his animals are so tame. They hear a woman singing beautifully. Eurylochus sends the men into the castle while he waits in the woods to take word to Ulysses should anything happen to the men. The men enter the castle where they see a beautiful woman singing and weaving a tapestry on her terrace. The Hellenes wonder if she is a goddess, but appearing to read their minds, she states that she is immortal though not a goddess; her name is Circe. Circe welcomes the men, has them bathed and clothed in fresh garments. After the Hellenes begin to eat the porridge that Circe sets in front of them, they begin to eat like pigs. Then, Circe chants and turns the men into pigs though they retain their human minds. Circe locks them in the pigsty. Meanwhile, Eurylochus waits at the gate still. He looks into the castle to see Circe but not his men. Afraid, Eurylochus races back to the boat and tells Ulysses that the men went into the castle but did not come out. Ulysses decides to check on the others; if he is not back by sun fall tomorrow, the remaining men should assume he is dead and leave. Although his men plead with him, Ulysses swears an oath not to leave any man behind.

As Ulysses nears the castle, he sees a youth in a golden breastplate. Ulysses kneels because he senses the power of a god, knows that the youth is Hermes and hopes for good tidings because he fears that he has offended a god. Hermes introduces himself and admits that Poseidon is angry at Ulysses for blinding Polyphemus. He tells Ulysses about the sorceress Circe turning the Hellenes into swine. Hermes has come to help restore the balance of things; he gives Ulysses a magical flower, called a moly, to enable Ulysses to resist Circe's spells. Hermes directs Ulysses to then threaten to kill Circe after which she will use the power of her beauty against the hero. There is no counter spell, but Ulysses must make Circe swear an oath not to harm any one while he



is her guest before letting her go. Hermes disappears, and Ulysses continues to the castle past the wolves and lions who try to warn him away. Circe greets, bathes and feeds Ulysses. When Ulysses asks about her swine, Circe denies keeping pigs on the island. He asks about the wolves and lions with human eyes, and Circe attempts but fails to cast a spell. Ulysses grips his sword against the sorceress who, showing no fear, bespells Ulysses with her beauty and offers him love. Ulysses insists that his men be freed first, and Circe agrees. The next morning, Circe restores the Hellenes to their true form and Ulysses sends them to the ship to retrieve their fellow crew members. Ulysses and Circe live as husband and wife for some time as Ulysses falls deeper under Circe's spell and barely remembers Penelope's face.

Because Circe is immortal, she has been married many times, but she loves Ulysses more than any of her other husbands. Rather than let her husbands die, she turns them into animals to match their dispositions and keep them on the island with her forever. When Ulysses asks what animal she will turn him into, Circe says she would turn him into a fox but it is not his fate to stay with her. Ulysses can only stay with Circe if he banishes all thoughts of home and allows her to turn his crew back into animals; then, Circe will share her immortality with Ulysses. It is his choice whether he decides to stay with Circe or resume his voyage through many hardships. Ulysses looks around and, remembering Penelope, decides to go. Circe tells him that he must first go to Tartarus to hear the prophecies of certain ghosts which shocks and saddens Ulysses. Circe offers him the chance to stay, but Ulysses must go. Circe tells Ulysses to leave quickly before she changes her mind and forces him to stay. Ulysses and the Hellenes leave Circe's island; Ulysses' heart is heavy and his face is stained with Circe's tears. The sea breeze heartens Ulysses, and the last sound the Hellenes hear is the lament of the lions and wolves.

## Section 7, Circe Analysis

Ulysses demonstrates his love for his crew by going ashore alone to prevent harm from coming to his men as well as by guarding them while they are sleeping. The strange howling sounds that he hears foreshadows the discovery of the lions and wolves that were formerly men. Ulysses changes his mind about leaving the island after eating and sleeping; he hopes that Poseidon is no longer angry. The fact that Eurylochus is placed in charge of one of the groups of men to explore the island or guard the ship demonstrates Eurylochus' status while the fact that Ulysses allows Eurylochus to choose his assignment shows Ulysses' fairness.

The fact that the Hellenes notice that the wolves and lions have eyes like humans foreshadows the discovery that the lions and wolves were formerly men. The Hellenes' hope that their host will be friendly due to the attitudes of the animals is ironic since Circe is not at all friendly to them. Eurylochus demonstrates his responsibility by waiting outside the castle to take word to Ulysses should anything happen to his men; this also foreshadows that something bad will happen in the castle. Circe's beauty contrasts sharply with her ugly nature. Circe clothes and feeds the men before turning them into pigs. These actions serve as a foil to one another. The fact that the Hellenes begin to



eat like pigs foreshadows Circe turning them into pigs which is immediately fulfilled when she does so. Eurylochus reporting to Ulysses fulfills the earlier foreshadowing, and Ulysses again demonstrates his loyalty to his men by searching for them and swearing an oath not to leave anyone behind.

Ulysses demonstrates honor and respect for the gods by kneeling to Hermes. Hermes is introduced in this chapter. Through Hermes, Ulysses learns that he has angered Poseidon. Hermes helps Ulysses by giving him the magical moly which compares to the lotus-flower. Hermes' directions to Ulysses about how to deal with Circe foreshadows the hero's actions once he reaches the castle. The animals try to warn Ulysses away from the castle. Circe lies about keeping pigs on the island. Circe's failure to cast her spell on Ulysses fulfills the foreshadowing that occurred when Hermes gave Ulysses the moly. Circe bespells Ulysses with her beauty, fulfilling the foreshadowing that occurred earlier. Ulysses' demand that his men be restored to humanity before he will love Circe demonstrates his loyalty and love for his crew. Ulysses betrays Penelope by living with Circe as husband and wife. Circe loves Ulysses more than her other husbands. She tells him that his fate is not to stay with her, foreshadowing his imminent departure. When given the choice of resuming his voyage or staying with Circe, Ulysses decides to resume his voyage when he recalls Penelope, demonstrating his loyalty to his wife. Circe's prophecy that he must go to Tartarus foreshadows his journey to the Land of the Dead.





## Section 8, The Land of the Dead

### Section 8, The Land of the Dead Summary

Ulysses sails west toward Tartarus in accordance with Circe's foretelling. Ulysses does not sleep on the rough seas that are plagued with fog. He sends Elpenor to climb the mast to see ahead, but Ulysses stumbles against the mast, sending Elpenor to his death. A gull appears, and the Hellenes follow the gull. As Ulysses sleeps, several sailors whisper their belief that Ulysses killed Elpenor intentionally in order to follow his spirit to Tartarus. The sea slopes and narrows into the River Styx. At Ulysses' orders, the Hellenes disembark. They cut the throats of two black goats in order to be able to talk to the dead. Ulysses' mother, Anticleia, admonishes Ulysses for his disbelief that she would die. Many ghosts chide Ulysses for coming to Tartarus during his life. Ulysses asks for Teiresias and, learning that the prophet is coming, beats the ghosts away from the blood in order to save some for Teiresias. Achilles asks if he is remembered, and Ulysses assures him that he is renowned. Achilles warns Ulysses that he will encounter the Sirens. Ajax chides Ulysses for taking Achilles' golden armor, blaming his death on the unfulfilled desire of his covetousness, and warns him that he will find Penelope being courted and Telemachus being held captive upon his return to Ithaca. Although Anticleia knows of Penelope being wooed, she would not speak evil of her son's wife.

Elpenor arrives, and Ulysses swears that he did not kill Elpenor on purpose. Although Elpenor knows this, he will haunt Ulysses until he receives a funeral which Ulysses promises to fulfill. Elpenor warns Ulysses of Scylla and Charybdis, advising him to sail closer to Scylla which will cause him to lose six men opposed to his entire ship and crew being sucked into the whirlpool of Charybdis. Finally, Teiresias arrives and expresses honor at Ulysses' visit. He foretells that the Hellenes will next land on Thrinacia, the home of Hyperion the Sun-Titan and the future site of Sicily. It is imperative that the Hellenes do not eat Hyperion's golden cattle or they will never reach their home. Ulysses promises to heed Teiresias' warning. Teiresias tells Ulysses to leave, but Ulysses wants to see the famous sites of Tartarus. Teiresias forbids it because the Hellenes have already spent too much time in Tartarus and may be tainted with death; he warns them not to return until they are properly dead. He also tells them not to look back and to heed their advice while forgetting their reproaches. The Hellenes sail up the River Styx as Anticleia bids them goodbye, but they do not look back.

### Section 8, The Land of the Dead Analysis

The fact that Ulysses listens to Circe and sails toward Tartarus shows his respect for her opinion and his deep desire to return to Ithaca. Repetitiously, Ulysses does not sleep since the sea is plagued with fog. Elpenor's death foreshadows the Hellenes' encounter with him in Tartarus. The question of mutiny arises as the Hellenes debate whether Ulysses intentionally killed Elpenor. The River Styx is introduced in this chapter; this is important because of the vast importance of the River Styx in Greek mythology. The



Hellenes cut the throats of two goats because the dead must taste blood before they can speak to the living according to Greek mythology. Allusions to the Trojan War are made through Ulysses' encounters with Achilles and Ajax. Achilles' warning about the Sirens and Ajax's warning about what Ulysses will encounter when he returns to Ithaca foreshadows these events that occur later in the novel. Anticleia shows respect to her son by her refusal to defame Penelope; this also shows that Ulysses loves his wife greatly.

The importance of Elpenor receiving his funeral rites reverts back to Greek mythology since without a funeral, a ghost would be unable to cross the River Styx to the Elysian Fields, the paradise of the Greek afterlife. Elpenor's warning and advice about Scylla and Charybdis foreshadows the Hellenes' venture through the strait of the two monsters. Teiresias' appearance is important since he is a renowned prophet who can see the future; his warning about Hyperion and the sun-cattle foreshadows those tragedies that befall the Hellenes on Thrinacia. Ulysses' desire to see the famous sites of Tartarus is elicited by his natural desire to information as well as greed. The Hellenes follow Teiresias' advice against looking back since this would cause them to be stuck in Tartarus according to Greek mythology.



## Section 9, The Wandering Rocks

### Section 9, The Wandering Rocks Summary

The blue skies lift Ulysses' spirits, making him hopeful to avoid the tragedies foretold in Tartarus. At Ulysses' orders, the Hellenes attempt to sail straight to Ithaca. Ulysses hears a strange moaning and sees black things floating in the water. As the ship nears these anomalies, Ulysses realizes that they are rocks floating toward the ship and is amazed at the fact that rocks are floating. The Hellenes attempt to go around the rocks to the south sea which will take them to Ithaca, but the rocks float so as to block their course. Ulysses sets their course north by northwest, realizing that he will be unable to avoid the monsters that have been foretold for his journey. The Hellenes head toward the Isle of the Sun, also known as Thrinacia and which will one day become Sicily.

### Section 9, The Wandering Rocks Analysis

The Hellenes attempt to avoid the tragedies foretold in Tartarus by sailing straight to Ithaca; this is also an attempt to avoid their fates. The unnatural floating rocks appear which are obviously sent by the gods to direct the Hellenes' fates. The rocks prevent the Hellenes from altering their fates and direct them to what the Fates have ordained. Ulysses' realizes this and resumes their journey according to what was foretold in Tartarus because he knows that he cannot fight the will of the gods.



## Section 10, The Sirens & Scylla and Charybdis

### Section 10, The Sirens & Scylla and Charybdis Summary

In "The Sirens," Ulysses tells his men that they must stop at Thrinacia for provisions, but first they must sail through the strait of the Sirens. The men block their ears with wax while Ulysses has them tie him to the mast so that he will not direct them to the Sirens. The sail is lowered, and the men take their positions at the oars. Ulysses wishes his ears were blocked as he hears the Sirens and fights his desire to go to them. He breaks from the mast, but Perimedes and Eurylochus circumvent his attempt until the others help tie Ulysses back to the mast. As Ulysses fights against his bonds, his crew rows faster. As the ship passes the rock, Ulysses sees the Sirens who have the bodies of hideous birds with the faces of young girls; Ulysses closes his eyes against their ugliness but is once again maddened by their beautiful voices. The crew, who can only see the Sirens without hearing them, are appalled and row faster. After the Sirens' voices fade, Ulysses regains his senses and Perimedes and Eurylochus untie him.

In "Scylla and Charybdis," Ulysses knows from his venture into Tartarus that he must pass through the strait of Scylla and Charybdis on his way to Thrinacia. Charybdis was once a beautiful naiad and the daughter of Poseidon. She angered Zeus by claiming much land for her father, and Zeus changes her into a monster in the form of a whirlpool. Scylla was also once a beautiful naiad, but when Poseidon fell in love with her, Amphitrite's jealousy led her to turn Scylla into a monster resembling a large spider which uses its tentacles to capture and eat sailors within her reach. Ulysses prepares to pass through the strait, knowing that the ship cannot swerve a foot away from its exact course. He turns the helm over to Eurylochus and arms himself at the starboard rail. He knows that the ship has no chance against Charybdis and must veer toward Scylla if necessary. The Hellenes row carefully, but Charybdis seizes two of their oars and drags the ship toward her nearly causing Ulysses to fall overboard. Correcting their course, the Hellenes cause the ship to veer toward Scylla who quickly grabs six sailors. Ulysses assists the crew in rowing as he sees six members of his crew being eaten and hears their screams; there is no time to weep as they pass through the strait and approach Thrinacia.

### Section 10, The Sirens & Scylla and Charybdis Analysis

Ulysses tells his men that they must sail through the strait of the Sirens before they can stop at Thrinacia for provisions, foreshadowing the misfortunes that await the Hellenes. Ulysses has the Hellenes protect their ears against the Sirens' song in order to protect



them from the madness that the Sirens' song induces. The lure of the Sirens is shown to be very intense and powerful by the fact that Ulysses is drawn to them and manages to break loose from his bonds in his attempt to go to the Sirens. The fact that Perimedes and Eurylochus are designated as Ulysses' guards during his torment proves their status amongst the crew. The Sirens' song is contrasted by their hideous looks. Ulysses is so appalled by their appearance that he shuts his eyes to avoid seeing them while the appearance of the Sirens forces the Hellenes to row faster.

Ulysses' thoughts about the necessity of sailing through the strait of Scylla and Charybdis foreshadow his adventure there. The narrator describes the history of both Charybdis and Scylla; the two monsters have similar backgrounds and are both being punished by being cursed into their current forms. Scylla's form is a curse caused by Amphitrite's jealousy of Poseidon's affection for the naiad. When Ulysses turns the helm over to Eurylochus while he arms himself at the starboard rail, this once again shows Eurylochus' status and also Ulysses' courage. The forethought that, if forced, the Hellenes will need to veer towards Scylla to avoid Charybdis foreshadows that specific event occurring. Charybdis seizes the oars of the Hellenes' boat out of hunger and spite, forcing them to veer toward Scylla which fulfills the previous foreshadowing. Ulysses shows his love for his men by assisting them in rowing away from the dreaded strait. As the Hellenes approach Thrinacia, their adventures on the island are foreshadowed.



# Section 11, The Cattle of the Sun

## Section 11, The Cattle of the Sun Summary

Ulysses drops anchor near Thrinacia before calling a counsel with Eurylochus and Perimedes to remind them of Teiresias' warning about the sun-cattle. Ulysses proposes seeking another island, but Eurylochus and Perimedes persuade him to land since both the crew and their provisions are exhausted. Ulysses agrees but holds Eurylochus and Perimedes responsible for the safety of the sun-cattle. After landing, the crew hunts but can only find a few wild pigs though there is plenty of water. Ulysses decides to leave because the scarcity of game could prove too great a temptation to eat the sun-cattle. Unfortunately, a storm prevents the Hellenes' departure for thirty days, stranding them on Thrinacia. While Ulysses sleeps, Eurylochus gathers the men and suggests eating the sun-cattle, claiming that it is better to incur the gods' wrath than to starve. The men kill and cook several of the sun-cattle after offering a sacrifice. Ulysses awakes to the smell of food and pleads with the gods as he realizes what has happened.

Unfortunately, at the same time, Hyperion request vengeance from Zeus which Zeus grants. Ulysses draws his sword against Eurylochus, but Eurylochus claims that they hunted stags so Ulysses eats until the carcasses begin to low and resemble the sun-cattle. Again Ulysses draws his sword against Eurylochus who points out that the winds have changed and claims that it is a sign that the gods are no longer angry. The Hellenes sail, but then the sky darkens. The west wind destroys the ship and all of the Hellenes except Ulysses who clings to a raft. The raft drifts toward the strait where Scylla and Charybdis reside just as Charybdis takes her morning drink. When the raft veers toward Charybdis, Ulysses jumps from the raft and clings to the rocks until Charybdis spits the raft back into the sea. Ulysses climbs aboard the raft and keeps to Charybdis' side of the strait, far away from Scylla. Ulysses tries in vain to fish. Then he lies on his raft as though he is dead until gulls venture near to pick out his eyes upon which he kills and eats the gulls. On the tenth day of this situation, Ulysses approaches land and a fog covers the weak hero.

## Section 11, The Cattle of the Sun Analysis

The Hellenes' arrival on Thrinacia fulfills the earlier foreshadowing of their visit to this island. The fact that Ulysses calls counsel with Eurylochus and Perimedes validates their status within his crew. Ulysses demonstrates honor and respect by heeding Teiresias' warning about the sun-cattle. Since Eurylochus and Perimedes persuade Ulysses to stay on Thrinacia, they are given responsibility for the safety of the sun-cattle; this, along with the small amount of game found on the island and the storm that strands the Hellenes on the island for thirty days, foreshadows the Hellenes eating the sun-cattle. Eurylochus' suggestion to eat the sun-cattle fulfills the earlier foreshadowing; since he does this while Ulysses is sleeping, it is apparent that Eurylochus knows that what he is doing is immoral, and this is made more obvious by the fact that he lies to



Ulysses when the hero catches them eating the sun-cattle. The fact that Ulysses pleads with the gods when he smells the sun-cattle cooking demonstrates his love for his men and his desire to protect them.

Hyperion's request to Zeus for vengeance against the Hellenes demonstrates the vengeance and anger of the gods at the same time that it foreshadows the destruction of the Hellenes. Eurylochus attempts to deceive Ulysses when Ulysses attacks him for slaughtering the sun-cattle. The winds that blow favorably indicate the false hope of the restored favor of the gods, but this false hope is quickly overshadowed by foreboding as the sky darkens and the wind blows strongly. The foreshadowing concerning the deaths of the Hellenes is soon fulfilled when the storm destroys both the Hellenes and their ship, leaving only Ulysses. Ulysses method of evading Charybdis demonstrates his intelligence and cunning. His inability to fish foreshadows his weakening and starvation while his approach to land foreshadows his encounter with Calypso.



## Section 12, Calypso

### Section 12, Calypso Summary

When Ulysses awakes on sweet-smelling grass, he believes he is dead and in the Elysian Fields. A beautiful goddess welcomes him home, but Ulysses argues that this land is not Ithaca nor is she Penelope. The woman is Calypso, and Ulysses is in Ogygia; home is where one dwells. Ulysses sleeps again and is afraid to awake on the raft. When he wakes again, he believes he is still dreaming. Calypso enters and announces that Ulysses is awake in time for his wedding feast. When Ulysses asks how he arrived on her island, Calypso explains that she was watching for him and when she saw him roll from his raft, she changed him into a fish to escape the sharks. Then, Calypso shot a gull that tried to eat Ulysses before fishing him from the sea, restoring him to his true form and nursing him back to health. At Calypso's instructions, Ulysses eats, drinks and begins to regain his strength.

Although Calypso is a bit too large and bossy for his tastes, Ulysses decides that his situation could be worse. He asks her how she knew that he was coming and learns that she is the daughter of a Titan and can therefore see the past and future. Calypso watches Ulysses' whole voyage through her magical fire. When Ulysses asks to see Penelope, Calypso shows him his aged wife as she comments that Penelope has plenty of company in the form of suitors and brags that immortals do not age. Ulysses asks to see Telemachus and learns that he is nearly grown and defies his enemies, trying to drive Penelope's suitors from the castle because he is proud of his father. Although Ulysses wants to return to his home, Calypso forbids it. She shows him many of his adventures and praises him as a hero who deserves a better home; Ulysses begins to believe that he deserves to be with the daughter of the Titans.

In the past, Calypso amuses herself with shipwrecked sailors who she turns into birds when she grows bored of them. Since these birds clamor about, Ulysses asks about them and learns that they are Calypso's jealous former lovers. Ulysses compares Calypso to Circe, but Calypso finds these topics boring and asks if Ulysses finds her beautiful. Ulysses insists that she will appear more beautiful every day since he sees the penalty for any inattention in her former lovers. Calypso assuages Ulysses' fear because he is a hero. At Ulysses' request, Calypso commands the birds to disperse, causing Ulysses to praise her. Ulysses spends some time on Calypso's island, and she teaches him to see things in the hearth though she commands her log not to show him scenes of Ithaca because she does not want Ulysses to leave. Ulysses' thoughts of home begin to fade until he realizes that he is unable to see his home. Upon threat of death, Ulysses dispatches a crow to Ithaca to bring him a report of his wife and son. The crow returns and tells Ulysses that every day Penelope weaves a shroud which she un-knits at night because she has agreed to choose a suitor only when the shroud is finished; she has been knitting the shroud for three years and now the suitors are demanding that Penelope finish the shroud and choose a husband. Although





Telemachus opposes his mother's remarriage, the suitors threaten to kill Ulysses' son if he interferes.

Ulysses requests to leave Calypso's island, but Calypso wants to know why. Ulysses desires to return to Ithaca, kill his enemies and rule in his kingdom. Calypso shows Ulysses the future where he grows old, is driven from his throne and must carry an oar to the place where no man salts his meat and they believe the oar is a winnowing-fan. Once there, Poseidon might forget his rage and allow Ulysses to live a few more years if Ulysses abases himself to the god of the sea. She also shows Ulysses a fiercer, second son who will kill Ulysses. Ulysses' future will be different if he stays with Calypso because she will make him immortal so that he can never die. They will change shapes and live together forever. Ulysses praises Calypso's eloquence and beauty but argues that he does not want immortality. Calypso insists that he consider his options for another five to ten years, but Ulysses thinks that is too long to wait for a mortal.

The next morning, Ulysses sacrifices to the gods, asking them to allow him to die if he cannot return to his home. Athene hears Ulysses' prayer and goes to Zeus who calls a counsel of the gods while Poseidon is vacationing in Africa. Athene petitions Zeus who argues Poseidon's anger. Athene disputes that it is unjust because Ulysses has paid for Polyphemus' eye many times over. Zeus finally agrees and sends Hermes to Ogygia. Hermes is entranced by Calypso's song. When she finishes singing, Hermes approaches her, but Calypso knows why he has come to her and accuses Zeus of being jealous of mortals and desiring only to end her happiness. Hermes points out that Calypso cannot fight Zeus and she must allow Ulysses to build a raft with provisions in order to depart Ogygia. Hermes assures Calypso that there will be more sailors, but she argues that none of them will be like Ulysses. Hermes kisses Calypso's cheek and flies away.

## Section 12, Calypso Analysis

There is an allusion to the Elysian Fields which is the part of Tartarus where good souls go after death. Ulysses demonstrates loyalty to Penelope by declaring that Calypso is not Penelope when she says that he is home. Calypso shows herself to be pushy when applauding Ulysses for waking in time for his wedding feast. Calypso's explanation about changing Ulysses into a fish foreshadows her magical abilities, foreshadows the birds on the island being her former lovers and sets her in a position to be compared to Circe. Calypso reveals herself to be a daughter of the Titans, a reference to mythology. The visions of Penelope and Telemachus that Ulysses sees in Calypso's fire foreshadows what he finds when he finally returns to Ithaca. Calypso comparing herself to Penelope in terms of not aging because of her immortality foreshadows her loving Ulysses and her attempts to share her immortality with him. Calypso forbids Ulysses to return to Ithaca which is repeated later in the chapter as well. Ulysses demonstrates pride when he decides that he deserves to be with the daughter of the Titans.

Calypso reveals that the birds on her island are her former lovers, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. Ulysses compares Calypso to Circe due to their magic and their habit of



changing lovers into animals. Ulysses demonstrates fear of Calypso in his declaration that she will grow more beautiful every day since he sees the penalty for inattention. Like with Circe, Ulysses spends some time on Calypso's island, living as her husband. Calypso shares her magic with her prisoner, forbidding him only from seeing Ithaca. Ulysses shows his loyalty by dispatching a crow to report on the events of his home. Penelope shows her loyalty by prolonging the completion of Ulysses' shroud in order to prolong accepting a suitor. The crow reports on the suitors' threats to kill Telemachus which foreshadows the suitors' plot in the cove once Ulysses returns to Ithaca. Ulysses' request to leave Calypso's island is repeated and foreshadows his departure. Calypso shows Ulysses the future in an attempt to lure him to stay with her. Like Circe, Calypso offers to share her immortality with Ulysses. Ulysses shows his loyalty to his wife and son by praying for the gods to kill him if he cannot return to them. Athene interferes in Ulysses' life by petitioning Zeus who sends Hermes to Ogygia, foreshadowing Ulysses' departure. Calypso's claim that Zeus is jealous of mortals alludes to the many myths where Zeus kills mortals for their relationships with gods. Calypso reluctantly agrees to what Hermes commands because she knows that she cannot win a fight with Zeus.



## Section 13, Ino's Veil

### Section 13, Ino's Veil Summary

Calypso provides Ulysses with a sturdy vessels and sufficient provisions, but seventeen days after Ulysses leaves Ogygia, Poseidon returns from his vacation in Africa and angrily calls a storm when he notices Ulysses. The storm rips Ulysses ship apart, and Ulysses wonders why he continues fighting; he fights by instinct, grabbing a plank. Weakened drastically, Ulysses fears that the next wave will drown him. Ino, a beautiful nereid who hates Poseidon, is near. She approaches Ulysses who questions if she serves Poseidon. Ino assures Ulysses that she wants to injure Poseidon by saving Ulysses. She loans him her veil which does not sink and tells him to swim for the coast then toss the veil back into the water where it will find its way back to her. Ino gives Ulysses the veil and swims away. Although Ulysses doubts Ino, he decides to try the veil's powers and is able to swim like a fish. He swims for two days until he reaches the coast of Phaeacia. The great boulders along the shore present a huge danger as the current sweeps Ulysses into the rocks while the back-tow pulls him out to sea. Finally, Ulysses swims along the coast until he finds a river. He swims up the mouth of the river until he drags himself to land. After throwing Ino's veil back into the river so that it will be able to return to its rightful owner, Ulysses collapses amongst the reeds.

### Section 13, Ino's Veil Analysis

Poseidon's return from Africa foreshadows his attack on Ulysses which is quickly fulfilled as he calls forth a storm, demonstrating his vengeance and ensuing hatred for the hero. Ulysses is unable to resist fighting because he is a hero. Ino hates Poseidon and demonstrates the saying "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" by helping Ulysses. Ino's assistance by providing Ulysses with the veil compares to Hermes' assistance on Circe's island of providing Ulysses with the moly to counteract the enchantress' spells. The veil demonstrates the supernatural abilities of the gods. Ulysses reaches the coast of Phaeacia, foreshadowing his adventures in that country. The veil's ability to return to its rightful owner once in the water further demonstrates the abilities of the gods, while the fact that Ulysses throws it into the river immediately after reaching land validates his honor.



## Section 14, Nausicaa

### Section 14, Nausicaa Summary

Nausicaa, the sixteen year old princess of Phaeacia, turns down all of her suitors, causing her parents to lose patience. Her father, King Alcinous, tells Queen Arete that they may have to force their daughter to choose a husband, but Queen Arete dissuades him though she knows that he is correct. One night, Nausicaa dreams that Athene tells her to wash her clothes in the river tomorrow because she cannot have a wedding with dirty clothes. When Nausicaa tells her mother, Queen Arete advises her to follow Athene's orders. Nausicaa and her serving girls go to the river, wash their clothes and toss a ball around because of the beautiful day. Ulysses awakes in the reeds nearby and, seeing the maidens, hides because he is naked and bruised. When Nausicaa throws the ball hard and it lands near Ulysses, the other girls scream and run away; only Nausicaa remains calm, chiding her servants and inquiring who Ulysses is and what he wants. Ulysses, thinking Nausicaa is Artemis, begs her not to punish him. Nausicaa corrects Ulysses and asks again for his identity. Ulysses replies only that he is an unlucky sailor who has incurred the wrath of a god. He tells her about his time spent with Calypso. Nausicaa tells the stranger to bathe and dress, providing him with clothes, before leading him to the castle. On the way to the castle, Ulysses praises Nausicaa's beauty.

On the same day, King Alcinous visits the oracle who prophesies that he will incur the wrath of the god of the sea causing Poseidon to block their harbor with stones. The oracle warns King Alcinous against strangers, shipwrecks and storytellers. Leaving Ulysses in the guesthouse, Nausicaa goes to her mother, tells her about their guest and recounts his tales about the lotus-eaters and the cannibals. Queen Arete chides her daughter, especially since Nausicaa cannot provide the name of the stranger. Nausicaa suggests having a banquet for their guest, but Queen Arete decides to talk to him before telling the king about their visitor. Queen Arete, pleased with the stranger, enrages King Alcinous when she tells him of their visitor; the king wants to sacrifice Ulysses to Poseidon. Queen Arete reminds King Alcinous of the laws of hospitality and the danger of incurring the wrath of all the gods by breaking those laws. King Alcinous grudgingly orders a banquet to honor their guest.

At the banquet, some young men decipher the king's displeasure, and their leader, Euryalus, decides to have games in the courtyard in order to challenge the stranger to participate, hoping to cause Ulysses' accidental death. The young men begin their games and invite Ulysses to join, but he declines. Euryalus mocks the older man, causing Ulysses to become angry and throw a chariot wheel, knocking a hole in the inner wall of the courtyard. Ulysses offers to play games of sword, spear, dagger or wrestling, threatening Euryalus for the insults. When Ulysses refuses to give Euryalus his name, Euryalus accuses him of being discourteous, and Ulysses again threatens the younger man who only wants to know the stranger's name. Ulysses confides that he will not say his name because a god hunts him and he does not want to draw attention to



himself. Euryalus imparts this knowledge to King Alcinous who intends to make their guest leave the next morning.

Meanwhile, Nausicaa thinks about the stranger and determines to learn who he is. She intoxicates the bard and locks him in the stable. Then, she tells King Alcinous that the bard is ill and offers to sing during dinner. Nausicaa sings of Troy and the heroes that fought in the Trojan War. She watches as Ulysses' eyes seem dreamy and is confident that he fought there. When Nausicaa begins to sing of the feats of Ulysses, Ulysses cries and admits that it is he. The young men cheer, the women weep, and King Alcinous is honored. The king offers to grant Ulysses any favor. Ulysses declares that he would ask for Nausicaa in marriage if he were twenty years young because she is lovely, witty, courteous and kind, but since he is not, he asks only for a ship to return him to Ithaca. Queen Arete agrees that this should be done quickly because Nausicaa is smitten, and King Alcinous orders a ship to sail the next day. When Ulysses departs the next day, Athene drugs Poseidon, putting him into a heavy sleep; he awakes in time to see King Alcinous' ship returning to Phaeacia at which point he uses Athene's Gorgon-head shield to turn the men into stone, blocking the harbor of Phaeacia. Nausicaa never accepts suitors because she is wedded to song, and she becomes the first female bard, traveling the world singing of the heroes of Troy, especially Ulysses. Some say that she makes it to Ithaca where she stays, but others say she falls in with a blind poet who weaves all of her songs into one huge tapestry of song.

## Section 14, Nausicaa Analysis

Nausicaa's parents' impatience over her rejecting her suitors is an indication of the culture she lives in. Athene's visit in Nausicaa's dream shows her interference in Ulysses' life. The fact that Nausicaa obeys her vision of Athene demonstrates her honoring the gods. Ulysses hides from the girls in shame of his nakedness and the fact that he is bruised. Nausicaa's servants scream and run away from the strange man, demonstrating the proper behavior for young maidens. Nausicaa contrasts this behavior by remaining calm which shows her courage and pride. It is a sign of courtesy for Ulysses to praise Nausicaa's beauty. King Alcinous' visit to the oracle is cultural and foreshadows the events that later occur in the chapter. King Alcinous' anger when he learns of Ulysses' arrival is a result of his discussion with the oracle earlier in the day.

Nausicaa's suggestion to hold a banquet in honor of their guest demonstrates her adherence to the policies of hospitality. Despite his anger, he is governed by the gods and their laws of hospitality. Euryalus' intent to cause Ulysses' accidental death during their games is an example of discourteous behavior that might anger the gods. It is therefore ironic when he accuses Ulysses of being discourteous for refusing to provide his name. Ulysses demonstrates his physical strength when he throws the chariot wheel through the inner wall of the courtyard, and he demonstrates fear of Poseidon in refusing to speak his name for fear of drawing the god's attention to himself. Nausicaa's interactions with her father's bard foreshadow her own future as a bard. The fact that she sings about Troy shows that she suspects that Ulysses fought there. The reaction of

everyone at the banquet when they learn Ulysses' identity validates his fame. Athene drugging Poseidon is another example of her helpful interference in Ulysses' journey.

At this point, Athene's influences are heavily contrasted to Poseidon's actions to deter Ulysses' journey. Athene's shield alludes to Medusa and the Gorgons of mythology. The fact that Nausicaa never marries can be attributed to her never finding a man as worthy as Ulysses as well as her love for song. The concept of Nausicaa falling in with a blind poet who weaves all of her songs into one huge tapestry alludes to Homer's "Odyssey."



## Section 15, The Return

### Section 15, The Return Summary

Ulysses lands on a lonely part of the shore in Ithaca; his home seems strange and unfriendly and will not feel like home again until he slays his enemies and regains his throne. Ulysses stores his treasure in a cave and dons the rags of a beggar. Dressed as a beggar, Ulysses goes to Eumaeus, his swineherd, who he tells that he has met Ulysses in his travels. Eumaeus claims that all beggars say that when they come to Ithaca, but he will feed the beggar anyway because even liars need to eat. Eumaeus feels like he has seen this beggar before, but Ulysses denies this. Ulysses, as a beggar, tells Eumaeus of his plans to go to the castle to beg, but Eumaeus explains that the suitors hate Ulysses and will not applaud the beggar for bringing news of their king. Ulysses asks about Telemachus and why he does not make the suitors leave; Eumaeus explains that there are too many suitors for the boy to fight. Currently, Telemachus is at sea, searching for his father. When Ulysses, as a beggar, insists upon visiting the castle the next day to beg, Eumaeus states that fools will practice their folly, but it is time to sleep for now.

During the same night, Telemachus is returning home from sea with no news of Ulysses. Meanwhile, a party of Penelope's suitors lies in wait in the cove to kill Telemachus. Athene sees the plot and convinces Poseidon that the ship contains Ulysses' friends who are waiting to greet the king. In order to cause mischief, Poseidon winds a thick mist around the suitors' ship so that they cannot see, though he still claims to owe Ulysses a great mischief. Because the suitors are helpless in the fog, Telemachus sails past safely. Athene changes herself into a swineherd, greets Telemachus and informs him that Eumaeus has summoned him to his hut. Ulysses hears the clamor of Eumaeus' hounds just as Telemachus enters. Telemachus asks the stranger to leave them so that he can speak privately to Eumaeus, but when Eumaeus tells the prince that the beggar knows Ulysses, Telemachus asks the beggar about meeting his father. At the word father, Ulysses can no longer restrain himself and thus reveals his identity to his son. Telemachus and Eumaeus weep for joy. Ulysses informs Telemachus that he has a plan to overthrow the suitors which Telemachus doubts will succeed due to the great number of suitors. Ulysses forbids Telemachus to reveal his arrival to Penelope because women are unable to keep a secret. Ulysses warns his son that he must control his rage when Ulysses is humiliated as a beggar amidst the suitors. Ulysses directs Telemachus to inform Penelope that Ulysses is dead and she must choose a suitor.

At dusk the next day, Ulysses goes to his castle. Argo, his old and decrepit favorite hunting hound, wags his tail and leaps into his master's arms before dying. Antinous, an arrogant suitor, suggests that the beggar wants to eat the dead dog and offers to feed him since things are not so bad. He instructs the beggar to bury the dog, causing Ulysses to mutter his wish to perform a like service for Antinous one day. Antinous smashes a footstool over the beggar's back, and the beggar pleads that he was only



joking before going to bury the dog. The suitors crowd around Telemachus to learn Penelope's choice, excited over the news of Ulysses' death. Ulysses returns as the feasting begins, earning a scowl from Eurymachus, the leader of the suitors. Iros, another beggar, enters and fights Ulysses for invading his turf. Eurymachus praises Ulysses' fighting skills, and Ulysses mocks the suitors about becoming beggars tomorrow. Eurymachus threatens to stab Ulysses who claims that he is only joking. Telemachus informs Ulysses that Penelope wishes to meet him. Eurymachus dissents, but Telemachus reminds the suitor that Penelope has not yet chosen and is free to do as she likes. Ulysses praises Telemachus after they leave the room because he is afraid he would have killed Eurymachus if he spent another minute with the arrogant man.

It is time for Penelope to enter Ulysses' plans. Once the beggarly Ulysses is alone with Penelope, he tells her that he fought in Troy with Ulysses. He tells her of Helen's trick in mimicking Greek wives' voices and how it struck Ulysses' heart when Helen impersonated Penelope. Pleased with the story, Penelope gives the beggar a bracelet. Penelope is less pleased with the story of how Ulysses leaves Circe because he must return to Penelope, but she still gives the beggar a necklace for the story. Next, the beggar tells Penelope that Ulysses knew that he would likely leave Penelope a widow and wished to advise her to take a man strong enough to bend Ulysses' bow. Only that man, the beggar explains, would be strong enough to serve as Penelope's husband and Ithaca's king. Penelope worries about offending her suitors with the suggestion, but the beggar suggests that she simply tell the suitors that she will be holding an archery contest to decide who will be her future husband. After leaving Penelope's room, Ulysses encounters his nurse, Eurycleia, who recognizes him immediately despite his garb; he begs her to keep his secret. Ulysses lurks outside of the banquet hall until Penelope announces the contest to the suitors. Then, he arms himself and places his rags over his armor before returning to the courtyard where all is ready for the contest. Penelope instructs Telemachus to make sure the rules are observed before returning to the castle.

The suitors examine Ulysses' bow. Samos goes first and is unable to string the bow, as are all of the other suitors who mutter about trickery. Antinous insists that the bow be rubbed with tallow and set by the fire to soften, but he is still unable to string the bow. Eurymachus refuses to try because he insists that it is a trick and Penelope will only be taken by force causing the suitors' clamor. The beggar Ulysses asks to try to string the bow. Antinous draws his sword, but Telemachus reminds the suitor that Penelope is watching from her window and it would be dishonorable to kill the beggar. Antinous grudgingly allows the beggar to make the attempt, threatening to cut off the beggar's arms when he fails. Ulysses strings his bow and shoots an arrow through twelve axe rings, claiming what is rightfully his. Antinous dies shouting Ulysses' return as Ulysses shoots him. The suitors freeze in fear. Eurymachus attempts to apologize and offers to repay Ulysses, but Ulysses insists that the offense is too great and the suitors must die.

The suitors begin to fight back as Ulysses kills Eurymachus and many of the other suitors. He rushes out of the dining room, shutting the doors and instructing Telemachus and Eumaeus to overturn the benches in the outer hall to make a barricade. The suitors rush through the doors as the neatherd joins Ulysses. When Ulysses' quiver is empty,





he grabs two javelins. The suitors throw spears, and one of them hit Telemachus. This enrages Ulysses who hurls a slab of rock at the suitors killing all but four who are quickly slaughtered by Ulysses, Telemachus, Eumaeus and the neatherd. Ulysses instructs Eumaeus to tell Penelope that the winner of the contest claims her hand. When Telemachus asks his father if he will be able to bend the bow when he reaches his full strength, Ulysses promises to teach his son everything he needs to know because he has finally returned home.

## Section 15, The Return Analysis

The fact that Ulysses' home seem strange and will not feel like home until he slays his enemies and regains his throne foreshadows his defeat of Penelope's suitors. His apparel as a beggar foreshadows Ulysses presenting himself as such. Ulysses goes to Eumaeus first because he trusts the swineherd's loyalty. Even though Eumaeus believes the beggar lies about meeting Ulysses, he still feeds him, showing his honor and kindness. Eumaeus explains the situation in the castle to Ulysses which is prompted by Ulysses' determination to beg there. Eumaeus tells Ulysses that Telemachus is at sea searching for his father; this foreshadows Telemachus' return while demonstrating the boy's love for his father. The suitors are shown to be treacherous in their plot against Telemachus. Athene interferes for Ulysses' benefit once again by convincing Poseidon to send a mist to disorient the suitors and by sending Telemachus to Eumaeus' hut. This summons also foreshadows Telemachus' reunion with his father. Ulysses' love for Telemachus shows when he is unable to refrain from revealing his identity merely from hearing his son say the word father. Telemachus and Eumaeus' tears of joy at learning the beggar's identity demonstrate their love for Ulysses. Cultural beliefs dictate that women cannot keep a secret. Ulysses reveals his plot to Telemachus, foreshadowing future events in this chapter.

Argo's loyalty to Ulysses is apparent by his surviving old age and disease only to die in his master's arms. Antinous and Eurymachus show their arrogance by beating and threatening the beggar. Ulysses is barely able to conceal his anger toward the suitors with his constant threats that he barely disguises as jokes. Eurymachus shows himself to be controlling when he attempts to prevent Penelope from meeting the beggarly Ulysses. Ulysses admits to Telemachus that his anger almost overwhelmed him while he was surrounded by the suitors. Ulysses finally see Penelope after ten years, and he immediately claims familiarity with her husband. Penelope gives the beggar gifts for telling her stories of her husband, demonstrating her love for Ulysses. She also shows that she is jealous by liking the story about Circe less than the first story. The beggar's suggestion of holding an archery contest foreshadows the contest that is held to determine Penelope's future husband. Eurycleia is the only person who recognizes Ulysses while he is dressed as a beggar. Ulysses arms himself, foreshadowing his participation in the archery contest. Penelope shows her disinterest in the contest by assigning Telemachus as judge.

The fact that none of the suitors are strong enough to string Ulysses' bow both demonstrates their weakness and Ulysses' strength. Eurymachus' suggestion that



Penelope must be taken by force is very dishonorable and shows his pride, as does the fact that he draws a sword against the beggar when Ulysses suggests participating in the contest. Ulysses' success in the archery contest fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that occurs, and he finally claims his possessions which include his kingdom and his wife. The suitors demonstrate fear of Ulysses by offering to pay for what they have taken from him, but Ulysses demonstrates righteous pride in insisting that they must die for their offenses. The deaths of the suitors fulfill the earlier foreshadowing. The neatherd demonstrates loyalty to Ulysses by joining in the fray on Ulysses' side of the battle. Ulysses' claim to Penelope's hand fulfills the earlier foreshadowing. Ulysses' promise to teach Telemachus everything he needs to know culminates Ulysses' journey home from Troy while foreshadowing a happy future in Ithaca for the hero.



# Characters

## Ulysses

Ulysses is the king of Ithaca. He is the title character of this novel, and his adventures are documented. Ulysses' adventures begin during the Trojan War after which he and his crew attempt to return to their homes in Ithaca. First, Ulysses and the Hellenes land on the island of the Ciconians in order to loot a small village along the coast. Ulysses commands that the Hellenes take no prisoners. The Ciconians attack the Hellenes, forcing Ulysses and his crew to retreat, damaging their ships in the process and causing them to unload their Trojan spoils. These baubles attract a shoal of naiads incurring the anger of Poseidon due to his belief that the Hellenes are attempting to steal his naiads from him. Poseidon convinces Aeolus, his son, to send a gale that drives the Hellenes around the Greek islands toward Libya in Africa. In Libya, Morpheus is unable to assuage Ulysses' nightmarish vision of his continued journey. When Ulysses realizes that the lotus-flowers are causing his men to sleep, he carries the men to the ship individually and sets sail. The Hellenes run out of food so in order to avoid mutiny, Ulysses lands on the Cyclops' mountainous island where the Hellenes are lured into Polyphemus' cave. Ulysses tricks Polyphemus into becoming intoxicated which provides Ulysses time to blind the Cyclops, allowing the Hellenes to escape. Ulysses makes the mistake of taunting Polyphemus by revealing his name, and Polyphemus prays to his father, Poseidon, to punish Ulysses with a long voyage.

When the Hellenes are swept into the Island of the Winds, Ulysses tells Aeolus the story of his adventures in the Trojan War and since leaving Troy. The god is greatly pleased and grants Ulysses a bag of winds in order to help him return to Ithaca. Betrayed by several members of his crew, Ulysses is returned to Aeolus' fortress where Aeolus is unable to help Ulysses anymore since it is obvious that the hero is detested by the gods. On the Island of the Racing Sun, Ulysses realizes that the tree he is climbing is actually a cannibalistic giant, and Ulysses fights the giants, escaping with only one crew and one ship. On Circe's island, Ulysses ventures to the castle to learn what has become of his men. On the way, Hermes greets Ulysses and provides him with moly to thwart Circe's spells and rescue his men. Ulysses lives with the enchantress for a long time before resuming his voyage upon which she tells him that he must first travel to Tartarus. In Tartarus, Ulysses learns of the many misadventures that await him and specifically is warned against eating Hyperion's sun-cattle.

Ulysses' attempts to avoid the dangers foretold in Tartarus are thwarted by the wandering rocks. Passing through the strait of the Sirens, Ulysses is maddened by the beauty of their song though he is horrified at their hideous appearance. On Thrinacia, Ulysses reminds his crew of Teiresias' warning against eating Hyperion's sun-cattle, but he is ignored. Due to Hyperion's wrath, Ulysses is the only one to survive the sea storm sent in vengeance. Ulysses floats on a raft until he is overcome by a thick fog; he awakes to find himself in Ogygia with Calypso who teaches him to see the past and future in her fire though she forbids him to see his homeland. When Ulysses sends a



crow to bring him word of Ithaca, the news causes him to pray to the gods to kill him if he cannot return home since Calypso forbids him from leaving her. This prayer enlists Athene's help who convinces Zeus to order Calypso to provide Ulysses with a ship to leave Ogygia. When Poseidon sees Ulysses, he destroys the hero's ship. Luckily, Ino, a Nereid, loans Ulysses a veil that will not sink until he swims up a river into Phaeacia.

Nausicaa rescues Ulysses on the same day that her father is warned by an oracle not to listen to sailors, storytellers or strangers. The king fears incurring the wrath of the gods by breaking the laws of hospitality so he holds a banquet in honor of his guest whom he learns is Ulysses. The king sends Ulysses to Ithaca where Ulysses lands on a lonely shore and dons the clothes of a beggar. As a beggar, Ulysses goes to the home of Eumaeus, his swineherd, who agrees to feed the beggar. When Telemachus, with Athene's help, arrives at Eumaeus' hut, Ulysses cannot restrain himself from revealing his identity to his son and planning his attack on Penelope's suitors. At dusk the next day, Ulysses, dressed as a beggar, arrives at the castle where the suitors abuse him. Still disguised, Ulysses tells Penelope pleasing stories about Ulysses and convinces her to hold an archery contest to decide who her next husband will be. While Penelope announces the contest to the suitors, Ulysses arms himself. None of the suitors are able to string Ulysses' bow. Ulysses shoots an arrow through twelve axe rings and reveals himself. Ulysses, Telemachus, Eumaeus and the neatherd kill the suitors, and Ulysses claims his wife. He promises to teach Telemachus everything his son needs to know because Ulysses is home now.

## Poseidon

Poseidon is the god of the sea. He is angered by the defeat of Troy and plagues Ulysses' journey home. Poseidon is again angered when the naiads are attracted by the Trojan baubles and, feeling that the Hellenes are trying to steal the naiads from him, has his son, Aeolus, send a gale to set the Hellenes' ships off course toward Africa. Poseidon also grants Polyphemus' prayer to punish Ulysses for blinding the Cyclops. When the Hellenes near Ithaca with the help of Aeolus' bag of winds, Poseidon causes the bag to clink which makes two sailors untie the bag, thinking the bag contains a treasure. Aeolus is unable to help Ulysses further because the gods detest the hero. When Hermes sees Ulysses on Circe's island, he confesses that Poseidon is angry with the man.

Poseidon is vacationing in Africa when Athene convinces Zeus to disregard his brother's anger and free Ulysses from Calypso. When Poseidon returns seventeen days later, he angrily calls a storm to destroy Ulysses' ship. Ino helps Ulysses because of her hatred of Poseidon. The oracle in Phaeacia predicts the god's anger at King Alcinous, warning him to be wary of strangers, shipwrecks and storytellers. Athene drugs Poseidon when Ulysses departs from Phaeacia, but when the god awakes, he uses Athene's Gorgon-head shield to turn the sailors into stone, blocking the harbor and fulfilling the oracle's prophecy. Athene tricks Poseidon into sending a thick fog to allow Telemachus to evade the suitors' plot by claiming the suitors are Ulysses' friends waiting to greet their king. Poseidon still owes Ulysses a great mischief.



## Eurylochus

Eurylochus is Ulysses' second-in-command. When the Hellenes approach the Ciconians' island, Eurylochus convinces Ulysses to stop because the village is a gift from the gods. After that adventure goes negatively, Eurylochus offers himself as a sacrifice to appease the gods, but Ulysses refuses. When the Hellenes land at Circe's island, Ulysses elects Eurylochus as captain should Ulysses fail to return by nightfall. Later, Ulysses divides the Hellenes into two groups, placing one under his command and the other under Eurylochus' command, and giving Eurylochus the choice of whether he wants to lead the group who investigates the castle or who guards the ship; Eurylochus chooses to lead the group which investigates the castle. Later, Eurylochus reports to Ulysses when the men do not return from Circe's castle.

Eurylochus is one of the guards who protects Ulysses' from falling prey to the Sirens' song, and he also steers the ship while Ulysses arms himself as the Hellenes pass through the strait of Scylla and Charybdis. Eurylochus, along with Perimedes, convinces Ulysses to stop at Thrinacia to provision the ship and is put in charge of the safety of the sun-cattle. Eurylochus calls the Hellenes together and decides to slay the sun-cattle because it is wiser to anger the gods than starve to death. Eurylochus lies to Ulysses when Ulysses attacks him over the deaths of the sun-cattle. He also points out the change in the weather and convinces Ulysses to set sail. The fact that Hyperion's wrath causes the Hellenes to die in storm at sea is Eurylochus' fault.

## Nausicaa

Nausicaa is the sixteen year old princess of Phaeacia who rejects all of her suitors. Athene visits her in a dream and directs her to the river where Ulysses has swum ashore. Nausicaa is not frightened by the naked, strange man's sudden appearance, and she helps Ulysses by escorting him to the castle and introducing him to her parents. Nausicaa is enthralled by Ulysses' stories. Determined to learn who the stranger is, Nausicaa traps the bard in the stables and sings at dinner of the Trojan War. When she begins to sing about the feats of Ulysses, Ulysses begins to weep and reveals his identity. Nausicaa never marries because she is wedded to song; she becomes the first female bard, traveling the world singing of the Trojan War, especially of the deeds of Ulysses. It is rumored that she either made her way to Ithaca where she stayed or that she teamed up with a blind poet, a reference to Homer, who turned her songs into one large tapestry of song.

## Calypso

Calypso is the daughter of the Titans who lives on Ogygia. She saves Ulysses from drowning only to imprison him as her husband. She is able to see the past and future in her fire and teaches Ulysses to do the same, prohibiting him only from seeing Ithaca. Calypso turns her former lovers into birds when they displease her. When Ulysses asks to leave Ogygia, Calypso shows him the future if he leaves her but offers to share her



immortality if he stays. Since Ulysses still wants to leave, Calypso tells him to consider it for five to ten years. Hermes arrives to inform Calypso of Zeus' mandate, and Calypso enchants him with her song. She knows why Hermes has come to visit her. Calypso claims that Zeus is jealous of mortals, but she is forced to allow Ulysses to leave her because she cannot win in a fight against Zeus. Calypso provides Ulysses with a well-provisioned ship in order to make his journey home.

## Penelope's Suitors

Penelope's suitors are a bunch of ungracious, inhospitable, rude men. They want to marry Penelope, primarily for her wealth and power as Ulysses' widow. The suitors invade the castle, eating Ulysses' food and demolishing his stores. They nearly imprison Telemachus in his own home. The suitors, specifically Antinous and Eurymachus, attack Ulysses when he appears as a beggar in their midst. Starting with Samos, none of the suitors are able to string Ulysses' bow. The suitors are terrified when Ulysses reveals himself after stringing and shooting his bow; their attempts to apologize are scorned by Ulysses who, with the help of Telemachus, Eumaeus and the neatherd, kills all of the suitors.

## Athene

Athene pleads with Zeus to free Ulysses from Calypso because the hero has suffered enough from Poseidon's wrath and Polyphemus' eye. She also visits Nausicaa in a dream, directing her to the river in order to find Ulysses. When Ulysses leaves Phaeacia and heads to Ithaca, Athene drugs Poseidon into a deep sleep so that he cannot torment the hero any longer. Athene also tricks Poseidon into confusing the suitors' plot by sending a thick fog over them which allows Telemachus to safely return to Ithaca. Finally, Athene appears to Telemachus as a swineherd and directs him to Eumaeus' hut where he is finally reunited with his father.

## Circe

Circe is an immortal enchantress who turns the Hellenes into pigs. Hermes helps Ulysses against Circe's spells causing Circe to offer her love to Ulysses. Circe loves Ulysses more than her other husbands who she has turned into different animals so that they will not die. She tells Ulysses that his fate is not with her, but she offers for him to stay and share her immortality. Circe insists that Ulysses leave quickly so that she does not change her mind because she is very sad that he decides to leave her.

## Elpenor

Elpenor is a member of Ulysses' crew who climbs the mast on the way to Tartarus in order to scout ahead; unfortunately, Ulysses bumps the mast, sending Elpenor plummeting to his death. In Tartarus, Elpenor tells Ulysses that he will haunt him until



Ulysses gives him a funeral. He also warns Ulysses about encountering Scylla and Charybdis, warning Ulysses to veer towards Scylla if necessary.

## Penelope

Penelope is Ulysses' wife and Telemachus' mother. She has many suitors who she evades to the best of her abilities, finally agreeing to choose a husband after she finishes knitting Ulysses' shroud. For three years, Penelope knits the shroud during the day and undoes her work at night. When Ulysses, disguised as a beggar, tells Penelope stories about her husband, she rewards him with jewelry. Penelope agrees to the beggar's idea for an archery contest to determine her next husband.

## Telemachus

Telemachus is Ulysses' and Penelope's son. He is very proud of his father and defends his mother against her suitors. Telemachus searches for Ulysses and almost falls prey to the suitors' plot in the cove but is protected by Athene. Telemachus is reunited with his father in Eumaeus' hut and joins Ulysses' plot against the suitors, helping his father kill the suitors. Telemachus wants to be able to shoot Ulysses' bow when he reaches his full strength.

## Polyphemus

Polyphemus is Poseidon's son and one of the Cyclops that were exiled from Olympus by Zeus. He is the most flesh-hungry of the Cyclops. Polyphemus lures the Hellenes into his cave with the smell of roasting goats, trapping and eating the Hellenes. He becomes intoxicated from the wine that Ulysses gives him and passes out. Ulysses blinds Polyphemus who chases the Hellenes. When Ulysses taunts the Cyclops, Polyphemus prays to Poseidon for vengeance.

## Aeolus

Aeolus is Poseidon's son and the keeper of the winds. At Poseidon's request, he sends a gale to set the Hellenes off course, sending them to Libya in Africa. When the Hellenes arrive at the Island of the Winds, Aeolus is pleased with Ulysses' stories and loans him a bag of winds to help him get to Ithaca. When Ulysses' men betray him and he ends up back at Aeolus, Aeolus can help Ulysses no further because Ulysses is detested by the gods.

## Hellenes

The Hellenes are the crew of men that fight under Ulysses in the Trojan War. They depart Troy on their way to Ithaca with their leader. Several of the Hellenes are killed on



nearly every island where they stop. Eventually, the entire remainder of the Hellenes is killed in a sea storm sent by Hyperion as vengeance for their slaughter of his sun-cattle.

## Morpheus

Morpheus is a god of sleep and dreams. He is the son of Hypnos and the nephew of Persephone who gives him the lotus-flower to induce sleepers to dream. He plays in Libya amongst the natives' dreams. When the Hellenes land in Libya, he turns the nightmares into sweet dreams of home, but Morpheus is unable to help Ulysses' nightmares.

## Ajax

Ajax is a great warrior during the Trojan War who Ulysses meets again in Tartarus. He is angry at Ulysses for taking Achilles' armor because Ajax's envy drove him to suicide from insanity. Ajax warns Ulysses that when he returns to Ithaca, he will find Penelope pursued by suitors and Telemachus living as a prisoner in his father's castle.

## Charybdis

Charybdis is once a beautiful naiad and the daughter of Poseidon. She claims much land for her father which causes Zeus to angrily curse her into becoming a monstrous whirlpool which demolishes ships and sailors. Charybdis sucks at the Hellenes' oars, causing them to veer towards Scylla. Charybdis also sucks in and spits out Ulysses' raft after he escapes Hyperion's wrath.

## Hermes

Hermes is the messenger of the gods. He appears to Ulysses on Circe's island as a youth wearing a golden breastplate and hat. He informs Ulysses that Poseidon is angry and provides Ulysses with moly to circumvent Circe's spells. Hermes is sent by Zeus to demand that Calypso free Ulysses.

## Anticleai

Anticleai is Ulysses' mother who he encounters in Tartarus. She chides her son for his disbelief when she used to tell him that she would die. Anticleai is aware that Penelope is pursued by suitors but does not tell Ulysses because she refuses to speak ill of his wife.





## Scylla

Scylla is once a beautiful naiad who Poseidon falls in love with. In jealousy, Amphitrite curses Scylla into the form of a spider-like monster who eats sailors. When the Hellenes veer away from Charybdis in the strait, Scylla snatches and eats six of Ulysses' crew.

## Sirens

The Sirens are creatures with birdlike bodies and the faces of young girls. They are hideous but have very alluring voices which they use to lure sailors who they then eat. The Hellenes block their ears against the Sirens' song, but Ulysses, who listens, is maddened by desire.

## Paris

Paris is a prince of Troy. He is chosen to judge which goddess should receive Eris' apple for the fairest and succumbs to Aphrodite's bribe. Paris kidnaps Menelaus' wife, Helen, causing the Trojan War.

## Helen

Helen is a beautiful Greek woman courted by all of the Greek kings and princes. She weds Menelaus once the others swear alliance to her chosen husband. Paris kidnaps Helen which causes the Trojan War.

## Ciconians

The Ciconians' village is raided by the Hellenes. The Ciconians flee, rally and attack the Hellenes, killing eighteen of Ulysses' men. Their attack causes much damage to the Hellenes' ships.

## Naiads

The naiads are attracted to the baubles from the Trojan spoils and follow the Hellenes' ships, causing the first report of mermaids. This angers Poseidon who believes the Hellenes are trying to steal his naiads, and he has Aeolus send a gale to set the Hellenes off course.



## Giants

The giants live on the Island of the Racing Sun. They are mistaken for trees which the Hellenes climb and are eaten by the cannibalistic giants. The giants attack the Hellenes, crushing two of their boats and allowing only one crew to escape.

## Hyperion

Hyperion, the Sun-Titan, lives on Thrinacia and owns a herd of sun-cattle who he zealously protects. When the Hellenes eat some of his sun-cattle, Hyperion appeals to Zeus for vengeance and, when Zeus grants it, kills all of the Hellenes except Ulysses in a sea storm.

## Zeus

Zeus is the king of the gods. Zeus grants Hyperion's vengeance against the Hellenes for slaughtering the Sun-Titan's sun-cattle. Zeus is also persuaded by Athene to send Hermes to Calypso, ordering her to allow Ulysses to depart Ogygia.

## Argo

Argo is Ulysses' favorite hunting hound. He is twenty-one years old, crippled, blind and flea-ridden. When Ulysses approaches, Argo thumps his tail, leaps into his master's arms, and dies. Ulysses buries Argo.

## Eurycleia

Eurycleia is Ulysses' nurse when he is a child. When Ulysses, dressed as a beggar, encounters her in the hallway outside of Penelope's room, Eurycleia is very happy to see her lord; she is the only person who recognizes Ulysses in his disguise.

## Ino

Ino is a beautiful Nereid who hates Poseidon. She loans Ulysses her veil in order to injure and anger the god of the sea.

## Eumaeus

Eumaeus is Ulysses' faithful swineherd. He houses Ulysses when Ulysses shows up on his doorstep as a beggar. Eumaeus also helps Ulysses and Telemachus kill Penelope's suitors.



## Teiresias

Teiresias is a blind prophet that Ulysses seeks in Tartarus. He warns Ulysses about Hyperion the Sun-Titan and his sun-cattle.

## Achilles

Achilles is a great warrior during the Trojan War who Ulysses meets again in Tartarus. Ulysses assures Achilles of his renown on earth. Achilles warns Ulysses about the Sirens.



# Objects/Places

## Troy

Troy is the land where Paris is prince. This is where Ulysses' adventures begin during the Trojan War.

## Ships

Ulysses sails from Troy with three ships. Unfortunately, the cargo area is small and requires frequent stops to provision the ships.

## Trojan booty

The Hellenes leave Troy with much treasure from their victory. Storing this treasure on the ship causes less room for food and water. When the ships begin to sink after leaving the Ciconians, the Hellenes dump their treasure into the sea, drawing the attention of a shoal of naiads which results in Poseidon's anger.

## Village of Ciconians

After leaving Troy, the Hellenes are attracted to a small village on an island they pass. They stop to raid this island and are assaulted by the Ciconians. In their hasty retreat, the Hellenes' ships are damaged.

## Cythera

Cythera is the southernmost island of Greece which the Hellenes circle around on their way to Libya after angering Poseidon.

## Libya

In Libya lives a race of men who do nothing but eat lotus-flowers and sleep. The Hellenes land in Libya and sleep because of eating the lotus-flowers. Ulysses has a vision of the great dangers that plague his journey home.

## Lotus-flower

The lotus-flower is a gift from Persephone to Morpheus that enables sleepers to dream. Morpheus plants the lotus-flower in Libya where the inhabitants sleep all day and gather more flowers to eat at night.



## Isle of the Cyclops

On the Isle of the Cyclops, the Hellenes are lured into Polyphemus' cave where they are trapped and several men are eaten. After blinding Polyphemus, the Hellenes escape; unluckily, Ulysses' taunt causes the Cyclops to unleash the wrath of Poseidon on the Hellenes.

## Olympus

Olympus is the home of the Greek pantheon of gods.

## Ithaca

Ithaca is Ulysses' home where he rules as king. His adventures result from his attempts to return home. When he finally does return home, Ulysses finds a large group of suitors pursuing his wife.

## Island of the Winds

The Island of the Winds is Aeolus' fortress where he stores all of the winds, releasing them only for specific purposes.

## Bag of Winds

After Ulysses pleases him with stories of his adventures, Aeolus rewards him with a bag of winds to assist Ulysses in returning to Ithaca.

## Island of the Racing Sun

On the Island of the Racing Sun, several of the Hellenes are eaten by giant cannibals.

## Moly

Moly is the flower that Hermes gives to Ulysses to thwart Circe's enchantments

## Circe's Island

Circe turns the Hellenes into pigs when they visit her castle. Many of her former lovers live on her island as animals as well. Ulysses and the Hellenes live with Circe for some time before resuming their journey.



## Tartarus

Tartarus is the Land of the Dead where Ulysses goes after leaving Circe's island. He must travel to Tartarus to consult Teiresias about his coming adventures.

## Wandering Rocks

The wandering rocks prevent the Hellenes from sailing directly to Ithaca after leaving Tartarus.

## Narrow Strait

In the narrow strait, the Hellenes encounter the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis.

## Thrinacia

Thrinacia is the island of Hyperion. The Hellenes land here and game is scarce, forcing them to slay Hyperion's sun-cattle. This incurs the god's wrath, and he petitions Zeus for vengeance which comes in the form of a sea storm that kills all of the Hellenes except Ulysses.

## Sun-cattle

The sun-cattle belong to Hyperion and reside on Thrinacia. The Hellenes condemn themselves by ignoring Teiresias' warning against eating the sun-cattle.

## Ogygia

Ogygia is the home of Calypso. Ulysses resides on Ogygia as Calypso's lover for some time.

## Ino's Veil

After Ulysses leaves Ogygia, Poseidon wrecks his ship. Ino approaches and loans Ulysses her veil which can never sink. After Ulysses reaches dry land, he throws the veil back into the sea so that it can return to Ino.

## Phaeacia

Phaeacia is the land where Ulysses arrives with the help of Ino's veil. It is here that he meets Nausicaa and finally gains assistance in his quest to return home.



## Penelope's Shroud

Pressed to accept a suitor, Penelope promises to choose her future husband only once she finishes knitting a funeral shroud for Ulysses. She works many years on the shroud, knitting during the day and taking her stitches out at night in order to prolong being forced to decide.

## Ulysses' Bow

As a beggar, Ulysses approaches Penelope and convinces her to choose a suitor based on who can string Ulysses' bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axe-rings. All of the suitors fail in their attempt; only Ulysses is able to succeed, and he promises Telemachus that he will teach him how to use the bow as well.



# Themes

## Interference of the gods in humans' lives

One major recurring theme throughout "Adventures of Ulysses" is the influence of the gods in humans' lives. Eris arrives uninvited to Peleus and Thetis' wedding, bringing an apple for the fairest. This causes Aphrodite to bribe Paris, the judge, with the promise to have any woman he desires, suggesting Helen. Paris kidnaps Helen, causing the Trojan War and all of Ulysses' adventures. Angrily believing the Hellenes are trying to steal his naiads, Poseidon has Aeolus send a gale to set the Hellenes' ships off course. Morpheus causes sleepers to dream, especially the inhabitants of Libya. Persephone creates the lotus-flower for her nephew in order to induce sleepers to dream. Morpheus manipulates the Hellenes' nightmares into pleasant dreams of home though he is unable to help Ulysses. Poseidon grants Polyphemus' prayer to punish Ulysses for blinding the Cyclops, causing Ulysses to wander for many years and return home to Ithaca as a stranger. Aeolus provides Ulysses with a bag of winds to help the hero reach Ithaca, but Poseidon, still angry, causes the bag to clink incurring the greed of two of Ulysses' sailors who cut open the bag and send the ship back to Aeolus who is unable to further help Ulysses because he is detested by the gods.

On Circe's island, Hermes appears to Ulysses and offers assistance after admitting Poseidon's anger. Hermes tells Ulysses about Circe's spells and provides the hero with moly to help Ulysses resist Circe's spells. When Ulysses decides to leave Circe's island, she directs him to Tartarus to hear the prophecies of certain ghosts. After leaving Tartarus, Ulysses is thwarted in his attempts to evade the disasters foretold in Tartarus by wandering rocks that will not let his ship pass. Zeus curses Charybdis, the naiad, for claiming land for her father, making her into a monstrous whirlpool. Scylla is cursed by Amphitrite who is jealous of Poseidon's affections, becoming a spider-like monster who eats all sailors within her reach. When the Hellenes eat Hyperion's sun-cattle, the Sun-Titan appeals to Zeus for vengeance and causes the deaths of all of the Hellenes except Ulysses in a sea storm. Calypso holds Ulysses prisoner on Ogygia; when Ulysses prays to the gods, Athene intervenes and convinces Zeus to send Hermes to order Calypso to allow Ulysses to leave her island on a well-provisioned ship.

When Poseidon realizes what has happened, he sends a storm to destroy Ulysses' ship. Ino, a beautiful Nereid who hates Poseidon, loans Ulysses' her magical veil which does not sink in order to help him reach the coast of Phaeacia. Athene visits Nausicaa in a dream, directing her to the river where the Phaeacian princess discovers Ulysses. An oracle warns King Alcinous about incurring Poseidon's wrath and advises the king to avoid strangers, shipwrecks and storytellers. Although King Alcinous wants to sacrifice the stranger to Poseidon, his wife reminds him that breaking the laws of hospitality will bring the wrath of all of the gods. When Ulysses departs from Phaeacia for Ithaca, Athene drugs Poseidon so that he cannot prevent Ulysses' homecoming; though when Poseidon awakes, he uses Athene's Gorgon-head shield to turn the Phaeacians into stone, blocking the harbor of Phaeacia and fulfilling the oracle's prophecy. Athene also





tricks Poseidon into sending a fog to disrupt the suitors' plot against Telemachus by telling the god of the sea that the ship is full of Ulysses' friends waiting to greet their king. Finally, Athene appears to Telemachus in the form of a swineherd who tells him that he has been summoned to Eumaeus' hut, initiating the reunion between Telemachus and Ulysses.

## Greed and Pride

Greed and pride motivate many actions throughout this novel. Hera, Athene and Aphrodite desire Eris' apple and the title of the fairest. As a result, Aphrodite bribes the judge, Paris, by promising him the ability to have any woman he desires and suggesting Helen, Menelaus' wife. This causes the Trojan War and Ulysses' subsequent adventures. Due to the large booty acquired in Troy, the Hellenes have less room for food and water, but since they refuse to leave their booty behind them, they accept this and plan to stop more frequently; thus, greed causes many of the Hellenes' troubles in the beginning of their voyage. The Hellenes desire stopping at the village of the Ciconians to raid due to their greed; Eurylochus even convinces Ulysses that the small village is a gift from the gods and it would anger the gods to refuse such a present. Unloading their Trojan spoils due to the damage the ships suffer in their retreat from the Ciconians, the Hellenes attract the attention of a shoal of naiads and incur the anger of Poseidon who has Aeolus send a gale that directs the Hellenes to Libya.

Ulysses' pride in taunting Polyphemus with the true name of the one who blinds him proves to be his downfall since the Cyclops now has the ability to ask Poseidon to plague Ulysses' journey which the god of the sea willingly does. After Aeolus bestows the gift of a bag of winds upon Ulysses, the greed of two of the Hellenes causes them to open the bag, making the winds send them back to Ulysses. Circe turns the Hellenes into pigs due to their swine-like manners while eating. Circe's jealousy causes her to tell Ulysses he can stay with her only if he banishes all thoughts of home from his head. The ghosts in Tartarus chide the living for visiting Tartarus, and due to the ghosts' greed for the blood the Hellenes provide, Ulysses has to beat them back in order to save some of the blood for Teiresias. Ajax laments the fact that Ulysses takes Achilles' golden armor, even blaming the madness that caused his death on this unfulfilled desire.

Ulysses' greedy attempt to avoid the tragedies mentioned in Tartarus is circumvented by the wandering rocks that prevent him from sailing southerly to Ithaca. Ulysses' pride insists that he hear the Sirens while his crew's ears are stopped. Zeus is jealous of his land and changes Charybdis into a whirlpool for claiming much land for Poseidon, her father. In jealousy over Poseidon's love for Scylla, Amphitrite changes the naiad into a spider-like monster. Eurylochus causes the deaths of all of the Hellenes except Ulysses by his pride in slaughtering and eating Hyperion's sun-cattle, despite Teiresias' warning. Calypso demonstrates her jealousy by prohibiting her magical fire from showing Ulysses any scenes of Ithaca. Also, Calypso calls Zeus jealous of mortals since he commands her to release Ulysses. The suitors' are greedy and proud, as demonstrated by their depletion of Ulysses' store as well as their contempt for Ulysses when disguised as a beggar. The beggar Iros also shows pride when he attacks the beggarly Ulysses for



begging in his domain. Penelope shows jealousy in the fact that she likes the story of Ulysses' time with Circe less than the story about Ulysses' tenderness toward hearing Helen mimic Penelope's voice in Troy. The suitors show their envy of the beggar when they forbid him to attempt to string Ulysses' bow. Ulysses shows pride in killing all of the suitors for their offenses against him.

## Courage and Honor

Courage and honor are two characteristics that Ulysses and others demonstrate repeatedly throughout this novel. The Greeks demonstrate honor in adhering to their alliance with Helen's chosen husband, Menelaus. Ulysses shows courage in suggesting the wooden horse that allows the Greeks to defeat the Trojans. When the Hellenes raid the Ciconian village, Ulysses demonstrates honor by forbidding his men from taking slaves and later by shooting the Ciconian horses only to prevent them from catching his men. Eurylochus shows courage and honor in offering himself as a sacrifice to appease the gods after his ill advice concerning the Ciconian village. Ulysses shows honor in Libya by carrying his men to the ship when he realizes that the lotus-flower makes them sleep. He also shows courage in the way that he handles Polyphemus, causing the Cyclops to become intoxicated and then blinding the monster. On the Island of the Racing Sun, Ulysses demonstrates courage and honor by scouting the island himself after three of his men do not return.

On Circe's island, Ulysses shows courage and honor in searching for his men who have not returned from the castle, as well as through his oath not to leave another man behind. Ulysses honors Hermes when he encounters the god by kneeling and then following Hermes' advice about dealing with Circe. He shows honor in refusing to abandon his home and his men for immortality with Circe, despite the fact that it also means that he must venture to Tartarus. Ulysses demonstrates courage by sailing to Tartarus to hear the ghosts' prophecies.

While passing through the strait of Scylla and Charybdis, Ulysses arms himself at the starboard rail in order to protect the Hellenes while turning the helm over to Eurylochus. Ulysses demonstrates honor in his reminder to Eurylochus and Perimedes of Teiresias' mandate concerning Hyperion's sun-cattle. Ulysses even offers to kill Eurylochus for betraying him. On Ogygia, Ulysses honors his wife and son by sending a crow to bring him a report of proceedings at his home, and when Calypso refuses to allow Ulysses to leave, he prays for death if he cannot return to Ithaca. Ino risks Poseidon's anger to help Ulysses, and Nausicaa shows great courage in dealing with the naked stranger. Ulysses shows honor to the Phaeacians who honor who more thoroughly once they learn his true identity. Nausicaa honors Ulysses for the remainder of her life by becoming the first female bard and singing of Ulysses' adventures. Eumaeus demonstrates that he is an honorable man by feeding the beggar even though he believes the beggar lies about having met Ulysses. Telemachus shows honor and courage by searching the seas for his father and by fending off Penelope's suitors. Ulysses, Telemachus, Eumaeus and the neatherd show courage and honor in their defeat of the dishonorable suitors.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel is third person. This point of view is omniscient and appears reliable; this is proven by the fact that the narrator is able to report on the thoughts and feelings of Ulysses and other notable characters in addition to the action of the story. This point of view is important since it allows the reader to anticipate events by being privy to Ulysses' thoughts. It is also important because it conveys Ulysses' thoughts concerning his journey home. The many adventures that Ulysses faces would not be as impressive if the reader did not have access to his thoughts and feelings throughout the story. This is so because of the saying that courage is not the absence of fear but the decision that something else is more important than that fear; by seeing Ulysses' fear of many of his adventures, the reader is able to verify how truly courageous Ulysses is.

The story is told mostly through exposition with small patches of dialogue scattered throughout the description of the action. This method is likely used in order to keep the focus of the story on the events that occur as they are more important than the few discussions that are held. Ulysses spends the novel attempting to return home to Ithaca after the Trojan War. During the end of his journey, he travels alone. Without access to his thoughts, the reader would be unable to comprehend the tragedies that assault him. The novel spans over ten years but, without access to Ulysses' thoughts, it would be difficult to see the transitions that occur in Ulysses' mind. The events of the novel are seen through an impartial narrator who tends to focus the attention on Ulysses' encounters with rare diversions into the realm of the Greek pantheon.

## Setting

The novel is set in the area of ancient Greece. Ulysses and his crew sail through the Aegean Sea in their attempt to return to Ithaca, their home, after the Trojan War. There are many islands that the Hellenes dock on in order to procure provisions and refresh themselves from the long journey. Each landing introduces the Hellenic crew to different cultures and even species. Simultaneously functioning is the world of the Greek gods where the gods convene to discuss the fate of humans, particularly Ulysses.

After leaving Troy, the first place that the Hellenes stop is the island of the Ciconians where they are forced to do battle when they try to loot the village. The Hellenes next sail to Libya where they encounter the lotus-eaters who do nothing but sleep and gather lotus flowers for sweet dreams. Next, the Hellenes arrive at the island where the Cyclops are gathered; they lose several men in Polyphemus' cave. Also, it is on this island that Ulysses' taunt to Polyphemus about blinding him causes the rage of Poseidon which haunts Ulysses' journey onward. Ulysses and his crew are next swept into Aeolus' fortress, Island of the Winds, where Aeolus bestows a gift upon Ulysses, a



bag of winds to assist the Hellenes in returning to Ithaca. Within sight of Ithaca, Ulysses falls asleep and his crew unties the bag, causing the winds to return the Hellenes to Aeolus' fortress.

After Aeolus forbids the Hellenes to return to his fortress, they land on the Island of the Racing Sun where several crew members are eaten by giant cannibals. The Hellenes are detained for a long time on Circe's island before traveling to Tartarus, the Land of the Dead, along the River Styx. After the wandering rocks inhibit the Hellenes' journey to Ithaca, they sail along the strait foretold by the ghosts in Tartarus in an attempt to avoid the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis. The Hellenes, with the exception of Ulysses, are destroyed after eating Hyperion's sun-cattle on Thrinacia. Ulysses lives on Ogygia with Calypso for a long time before deciding to resume his journey to Ithaca. After Poseidon destroys his ship, Ulysses encounters the nymph, Ino, who helps him reach Phaeacia. After revealing his identity, the king of Phaeacia assists Ulysses in returning to Ithaca where Ulysses intends to remain as king.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is informal and easy to read. The sentences are constructed in a manner that simplifies the Greek mythology surrounding Ulysses. Most readers should have absolutely no problem comprehending the style in which the book is written. The language adds a modern day lilt to the stories that allows the reader to envision the ancient tales as though they were much more modern.

The language of the novel characterizes the different characters and cultures that are introduced. Since much of the novel is told through exposition, there is not much dialogue to distinguish the individual characters; however, the language that is used by the different people that the Hellenes encounter on their journey differentiates the different characters. A lot of time passes in the story novel so it is important for the concept of time to be conveyed clearly. The use of language allows the writer to convey the action in depth without expanding the story to its original length. The language enhances the original story by extracting extraneous details that do not assist the reader in understanding the story. Overall, the language is easy to read and makes the story of Ulysses journey from Troy to Ithaca much easier to read.

## Structure

This novel contains seventeen chapters, each varying between three and twenty-six pages long. Each chapter has a title which refers to the land or character that the Hellenes visit within that chapter, foreshadowing the story that is about to be revealed. The chapters are fairly short and are full of descriptive accounts of the adventures that Ulysses meets during his long journey from Troy to Ithaca.

The plot of the novel is simple with no subplots. "The Adventures of Ulysses" follows Ulysses and the Hellenes through their many adventures at sea as they attempt to return to Ithaca after the Trojan War. Plagued by the god of the sea, Poseidon, the hero



and his crew encounter many monsters as they make their way homeward. The crew diminishes as each adventure progresses, taking the lives of Ulysses' men. Eventually, only Ulysses is left alive to continue his journey to return to his kingdom, his wife and his son.

The pace of the novel is rather rapid as the passages are full of action that conveys Ulysses from one location to the next. The novel is very easy to read and the plot is engrossing. This novel is a modern reinterpretation of a classic tale that has been told for thousands of years. The author simply makes the story easier to understand for modern readers. The story is linear with no flashbacks. The only back-story that is exhibited occurs in the prologue which provides the reader with minimal details about the Trojan War in order to enable the reader to understand why Ulysses needs to journey home to begin with. The novel is very easy to read and extremely enjoyable.



## Quotes

"This greed for treasure caused many of his troubles at first. But then troubles came so thick and fast that no one could tell what caused them; hardships were simply called bad luck, or the anger of the gods. But bad luck makes good stories." Ships and Men, page 3

"Our luck has changed, but what has changed can change again." Ulysses, The Ciconians, page 7

"It is a little death you lay upon men each night, my son, to prepare him for the kingdom of death." Hypnos, The Lotus-Eaters, pages 10-11

"Wine. A gift of the gods to man, to make women look better and food taste better. And now it is my gift to you." Ulysses, The Cyclops' Cave, page 21

"God of the Sea, I beg you, punish Ulysses for this. Visit him with storm and shipwreck and sorceries. Let him wander for many years before he reaches home, and when he gets there let him find himself forgotten, unwanted, a stranger." Polyphemus, The Cyclops' Cave, page 26

"I can't help you. No one can help he whom the gods detest. And they detest you, man- they hate you. What you call bad luck is their hatred, turning gifts into punishment, fair hopes into nightmares. And bad luck is very catching. So please go. Get on your ship and sail away from this island and never return." Aeolus, Keeper of the Winds, pages 39-40

"This is a wonder. And truly, all my life I have sought wonders. But just now I would wish for a more ordinary course of events. All strangeness holds danger now, and we have had our bellyful of adventure for the time. What I pray now is a space of days without surprise or wild encounter- to have a fair wind and a calm sea and a swift voyage home. Alas, I fear it is not yet to be. I fear this Island of the Racing Sun. And yet I must land here and mend my ships and rest my crew." Ulysses, Cannibal Beach, page 42

"It is true. Somebody up there doesn't like you. Can't say who, not ethical, you know. But if you should suspect that he may have something to do with the management of sea matters, well, you're a good guesser, that's all." Hermes, Circe, page 58



"It is almost worth dying to be overcome by so mighty a warrior. But I think living might be interesting, too, now that I have met you." Circe, Circe, page 63

"It is better that you go. You have been here too long already, I fear; too long exposed to these bone-bleaching airs. You may already be tainted with death, you and your men, making your fates too heavy for any ship to hold. Embark then. Sail up the black river. Do not look back. Remember our advice and forget our reproaches, and do not return until you are properly dead." Teiresias, The Land of the Dead, page 81

"I see that I can avoid nothing that was foretold. I cannot bear southward around the Isle of the Sun where lurk the demons and monsters I have been warned against but must speed toward them as swiftly as toward a rendezvous with loved ones. These rocks shepherd me; they herd this vessel as a stray sheep is herded by the shepherd's dog, driving me toward that which the vengeful gods have ordained. So be it then. If I cannot flee, then I must dare. Heroes are made, I see, when retreat is cut off. So be it." Ulysses, The Wandering Rocks, page 85

"For in those voices were the sounds that men love: Happy sounds like bird railing, sleet hailing, milk pailing.... Sad sounds like rain leaking, tree creaking, wind seeking.... Autumn sound like leaf tapping, fire snapping, river lapping.... Quiet sounds like snow flaking, spider waking, heart breaking.... It seemed to him then that the sun was burning him to a cinder as he stood. And the voices of the Sirens purred in a cool crystal pool upon their rock past the blue-hot flatness of the sea and its lacings of white-hot spume. It seemed to him he could actually see their voices deepening into a silvery, cool pool and must plunge into that pool or die a flaming death." The Sirens, page 88

"If this voyage has taught you nothing else, it should have proved to you that there is nothing in the world so uncertain as man's intentions, especially his good ones." Ulysses, The Cattle of the Sun, page 97

"After all, things could be worse. In fact they have been much worse. This may turn out to be quite a pleasant interlude. She is certainly beautiful, this Calypso. Rather large for my taste and inclined to be bossy, I'm afraid. But who's perfect?" Ulysses, Calypso, page 109

"I am one of the Titan brood. Daughter of mighty Atlas, who stands upon the westward rim of the world bearing the sky upon his shoulders. We are the elder branch of the gods, we Titans. For us there is no before or after, only now, wherein all things are and always were and always will be. Time, you see, is a little arrangement man has made for himself to try to measure the immeasurable mystery of life. It does not really exist.



So when we want to know anything that has happened in what you call 'before' or what will happen in what you call 'after', we simply shuffle the pictures and look at them." Calypso, Calypso, page 109

"It's a depressing topic, dear. Let's talk about me. Do you find me beautiful today?" calypso, Calypso, page 113

"I am Ino... And I am no servant of the windy widowmaker. I would like to do him an injury by helping you. Take this veil. It cannot sink even in the stormiest sea. Strip off your garments, wrap yourself in the veil, and swim toward those mountains. If you are bold and understand that you cannot drown, then you will be able to swim to the coast where you will be safe. After you land, fling the veil back into the sea, and it will find its way to me." Ino, Ino's Veil, page 126

"Why, you are Artemis, of course, Goddess of the Chase, maiden of the silver bow. I have heard poets praise your beauty, and I know you by your white arms. By your hair, and eyes, and the way you run- like light over water." Ulysses, Nausicaa, page 133

"A god hunts me. If I say my name, it may attract his notice." Ulysses, Nausicaa, page 141

"I have a wife I must return to, and a kingdom, and there are sore trials I must undergo before I can win again what belongs to me. So all I ask of you, great king, is a ship to take me to Ithaca, where my wife waits, my enemies wait, my destiny waits." Ulysses, Nausicaa, page 144

"Some say that [Nausicaa] finally came to the court of Ithaca to sing her song, and there she stayed. Others say that she fell in with a blind poet who took all her songs and wove them into one huge tapestry of song. But it all happened too long ago to know the truth of it." Nausicaa, page 146

"[Ithaca] seemed as strange and unfriendly as any of the perilous isles he had landed on during his long wanderings. And he knew that Ithaca would not be his again until he could know it as king, until he had slain his enemies and regained his throne." The Return, pages 147-148

"I didn't say that. Even liars have to eat. Ulysses never turned a beggar away, and neither will I." Eumaus, The Return, page 149



"It will prove a kindness later. Women cannot keep secrets, and we have a battle to fight. No, bid her dress in her finest garments, and anoint herself, and be as pleasant as she can to the suitors, for this will disarm them." Ulysses, *The Return*, page 155

"Sire, I shall do as you bid. I don't see how we can overcome a hundred strong men, but to die fighting at your side will be a greater glory than anything a long life can bestow. Thank you, Father, for giving me this chance to share you fortune." Telemachus, *The Return*, pages 155-156

"'Father,' said Telemachus. 'When I reach my full strength, shall I be able to bend the great bow?' 'Yes,' said Ulysses. 'I promise you. I will teach you everything you have to know. I have come home.'" *The Return*, page 172

## Topics for Discussion

Describe one way in which Ulysses angers Poseidon, god of the sea.

Why is Scylla preferable to steer towards opposed to Charybdis?

Why does Ulysses dread going to Tartarus?

Circe has many husbands but is not a widow. Explain.

What is Eurylochus' reason for killing Hyperion's sun-cattle? Does his reasoning stand given the events that follow?

Why does Ulysses say Calypso will appear more beautiful everyday?

Compare and contrast Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa and Penelope.

Compare "The Adventures of Ulysses" to its predecessor, Homer's "The Odyssey."