

BOOK 9

Summary:

Odysseus tells king Alcinous and queen Arete of his story and journey home from Troy. He focuses majorly on the Cyclops, which he and his crew escape by blinding him and using a few other clever schemes that Odysseus thought of. The chapter ends with Odysseus being cursed by the Cyclops and Poseidon, and then the crew making libations that were not accepted by Zeus. If Odysseus had told the Cyclops that he did have a ship rather than saying it had been smashed, would the Cyclops have taken a different course of action? Or was the Cyclops' question truly out of curiosity?

Quotation Analysis:

Greek values are excellently depicted by the crew's actions after sacking the city on Ismarus. Even though Odysseus, their leader, told them it was time to depart the crew would not leave because there was "too much wine to swill, [and] too many sheep too slaughter" (213.52). The crew's choice to remain and have many large feasts rather than to leave and continue on their journey illustrates the focus in Greek culture on leisure over work.

BOOK 10

Summary:

Odysseus continues his story, starting with Aeolus sending him home with great winds. After seeing the land of Ithaca the crew commits a minor act of betrayal, looking through Odysseus' loot, which inadvertently leads the men far off course. From that point Odysseus and his crew narrowly escape the Laestrygonians, and then encounter the nymph Circe. Does Poseidon have the power, similar to when Athena gave the princess courage, to instill skepticism? Maybe Poseidon had encouraged the crew to open the bag.

Quotation Analysis:

There is much information about Odysseus' character revealed in this chapter. When Odysseus is blown far off course just after seeing his native land, he ponders whether or not he should continue to live. Odysseus asks himself if he should "leap over the side and drown at once" (232.56) or if he should "bear it" (232.57) and continue living. This is not the only point at which Odysseus questions if life is worth living, each time he does he points out that he does have limits. Odysseus' words also illustrate how the god's punishment has worn him down to the point that he no longer thinks he can go on.