

THE ENCHANTRESS CIRCE

After sailing from the Cyclops's island, Odysseus and his men land on the island of Aeolia. There the wind king, Aeolus (ē'ə·ləs), does Odysseus a favor. He puts all the stormy winds in a bag so that they will not harm the Ithacans. The bull's-hide bag containing the winds is wedged under Odysseus's afterdeck. During the voyage, when the curious and suspicious sailors open the bag, thinking it contains treasure, the evil winds roar up into hurricanes that blow the ships back to Aeolia. Aeolus drives them away again.

On the island of the Laestrygonians (les·trig·ō'nē·ənz), gigantic cannibals, all the ships but one are destroyed and their crews devoured. Odysseus's ship escapes and lands on Aeaea, the home of the enchantress and goddess Circe. Here a party of twenty-three men, led by Eurylochus, goes off to explore the island. Odysseus is still telling his story to Alcinous and his court.

540 "In the wild wood they found an open glade,
around a smooth stone house—the hall of Circe—
and wolves and mountain lions lay there, mild
in her soft spell, fed on her drug of evil.
None would attack—oh, it was strange, I tell you—
but switching their long tails they faced our men
545 like hounds, who look up when their master comes
with tidbits for them—as he will—from table.
Humbly those wolves and lions with mighty paws
fawned on our men—who met their yellow eyes
and feared them.

550 In the entranceway they stayed
to listen there: inside her quiet house
they heard the goddess Circe.

Low she sang

in her beguiling voice, while on her loom
she wove ambrosial fabric sheer and bright,
by that craft known to the goddesses of heaven.
555 No one would speak, until Polites^o—most
faithful and likable of my officers—said:

'Dear friends, no need for stealth:^o here's a young weaver
singing a pretty song to set the air
atingle on these lawns and paven courts.
560 Goddess she is, or lady. Shall we greet her?'

So reassured, they all cried out together,
and she came swiftly to the shining doors
to call them in. All but Eurylochus—
who feared a snare—the innocents went after her.



Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.

Pigs, swineherd, and Odysseus by the Pig Painter. Pelike, or jar (470–460 B.C.).

555. **Polites** (pō·lī'tēz').

557. **stealth** (stelth) *n.*: sneaky behavior.



Circe offers the magic potion to Odysseus. Detail from Greek vase from Thebes.

British Museum, London.

- 565 On thrones she seated them, and lounging chairs,
while she prepared a meal of cheese and barley
and amber honey mixed with Pramnian wine,^o
adding her own vile pinch, to make them lose
desire or thought of our dear fatherland.
- 570 Scarce had they drunk when she flew after them
with her long stick and shut them in a pigsty—
bodies, voices, heads, and bristles, all
swinish now, though minds were still unchanged.
So, squealing, in they went. And Circe tossed them
- 575 acorns, mast,^o and cornel berries—fodder
for hogs who rut and slumber on the earth.

- Down to the ship Eurylochus came running
to cry alarm, foul magic doomed his men!
But working with dry lips to speak a word
- 580 he could not, being so shaken; blinding tears
welled in his eyes; foreboding filled his heart.
When we were frantic questioning him, at last
we heard the tale: our friends were gone. . . .”

(from Book 10)

567. Pramnian wine: strong wine from Mount Pramnos in ancient Greece.

575. mast *n.*: various kinds of nuts used as food for hogs.

 **549–583.** Note your responses to this horrible experience. What have the men done to deserve being turned into pigs? How does Circe violate the laws of hospitality?

Odysseus leaves the ship and rushes to Circe's hall. The god Hermes stops him to give him a plant that will weaken Circe's power. (Homer calls it a moly; it might have been a kind of garlic.) Protected by the plant's magic, Odysseus resists Circe's sorcery. The goddess, realizing she has met her match, frees Odysseus's men. Now Circe, "loveliest of all immortals," persuades Odysseus to stay with her. Odysseus shares her meat and wine, and she restores his heart. After many seasons of feasting and other pleasures, Odysseus and his men beg Circe to help them return home.

She responds to their pleas with the command that Odysseus alone descend to the Land of the Dead, "the cold homes of Death and pale Persephone," queen of the underworld. There Odysseus must seek the wisdom of the blind prophet Teiresias.



Odysseus pursuing Circe.
Greek vase.
Louvre, Paris, France.

THE LAND OF THE DEAD

In the Land of the Dead, Odysseus seeks to learn his destiny. The source of his information is Teiresias, the famous blind prophet from the city of Thebes. The prophet's lack of external sight suggests the presence of true insight. Circe has told Odysseus exactly what rites he must perform to bring Teiresias up from the dead. Odysseus continues telling his story to Alcinous's court.

- 585 "Then I addressed the blurred and breathless dead,
vowing to slaughter my best heifer for them
before she calved, at home in Ithaca,
and burn the choice bits on the altar fire;
as for Teiresias, I swore to sacrifice
a black lamb, handsomest of all our flock.
- 590 Thus to assuage the nations of the dead
I pledged these rites, then slashed the lamb and ewe,
letting their black blood stream into the well pit.
Now the souls gathered, stirring out of Erebus,
brides and young men, and men grown old in pain,
- 595 and tender girls whose hearts were new to grief;
many were there, too, torn by brazen lanceheads,
battle-slain, bearing still their bloody gear.

From every side they came and sought the pit
 with rustling cries; and I grew sick with fear.
 600 But presently I gave command to my officers
 to flay^o those sheep the bronze cut down, and make
 burnt offerings of flesh to the gods below—
 to sovereign Death, to pale Persephone.^o
 Meanwhile I crouched with my drawn sword to keep
 605 the surging phantoms from the bloody pit
 till I should know the presence of Teiresias. . . .

Soon from the dark that prince of Thebes came forward
 bearing a golden staff; and he addressed me:

‘Son of Laertes and the gods of old,
 610 Odysseus, master of landways and seaways,
 why leave the blazing sun, O man of woe,
 to see the cold dead and the joyless region?
 Stand clear, put up your sword;
 let me but taste of blood, I shall speak true.’

615 At this I stepped aside, and in the scabbard
 let my long sword ring home to the pommel silver,
 as he bent down to the somber blood. Then spoke
 the prince of those with gift of speech:

‘Great captain,
 a fair wind and the honey lights of home
 620 are all you seek. But anguish lies ahead;

601. flay (flā) *v.*: strip the skin from.

603. Persephone (pər·sefʹə·nē).



Persephone, queen of the underworld, with her husband, Hades (4th century B.C.).
 British Museum, London.

the god who thunders on the land prepares it,
 not to be shaken from your track, implacable,^o
 in rancor for the son whose eye you blinded.
 One narrow strait may take you through his blows:
 625 denial of yourself, restraint of shipmates.
 When you make landfall on Thrinakia first
 and quit the violet sea, dark on the land
 you'll find the grazing herds of Helios
 by whom all things are seen, all speech is known.
 630 Avoid those kine,^o hold fast to your intent,
 and hard seafaring brings you all to Ithaca.
 But if you raid the beeves,^o I see destruction
 for ship and crew. Though you survive alone,
 bereft of all companions, lost for years,
 635 under strange sail shall you come home, to find
 your own house filled with trouble: insolent men
 eating your livestock as they court your lady.
 Aye, you shall make those men atone in blood!
 But after you have dealt out death—in open
 640 combat or by stealth—to all the suitors,
 go overland on foot, and take an oar,
 until one day you come where men have lived
 with meat unsalted, never known the sea,
 nor seen seagoing ships, with crimson bows
 645 and oars that fledge light hulls for dipping flight.
 The spot will soon be plain to you, and I
 can tell you how: some passerby will say,
 “What winnowing fan^o is that upon your shoulder?”
 Halt, and implant your smooth oar in the turf
 650 and make fair sacrifice to Lord Poseidon:
 a ram, a bull, a great buck boar; turn back,
 and carry out pure hecatombs^o at home
 to all wide heaven's lords, the undying gods,
 to each in order. Then a seaborne death
 655 soft as this hand of mist will come upon you
 when you are wearied out with rich old age,
 your countryfolk in blessed peace around you.
 And all this shall be just as I foretell. . . .”

(from Book 11)

Vocabulary

rancor (ran'kər) *n.*: bitter hatred; ill will.

622. implacable (im • plak'ə • bəl) *adj.*: unyielding; merciless.

630. kine (kīn) *n.*: old term for “cattle.”

632. beeves *n.*: another old term for “cattle.”

648. winnowing fan: device used to remove the useless dry outer covering from grain. (These people would never have seen an oar.)

652. hecatombs (hek'ə • tōmz') *n.*: sacrifices of one hundred cattle at a time to the gods. In Greek, *hecaton* means “one hundred.”

 **618–658.** What prophecy does Odysseus receive? Take notes on how you might film this important scene in the underworld. How many actors would you need? What props would you use? You might sketch the scene as you **visualize** it.

THE SIRENS; SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

Odysseus and his men return to Circe's island, where Circe warns Odysseus of the perils that await him. In the following passage, Odysseus, quoting Circe, is still speaking at Alcinous's court.

- “Listen with care
- 660 to this, now, and a god will arm your mind.
Square in your ship's path are Sirens, crying
beauty to bewitch men coasting by;
woe to the innocent who hears that sound!
He will not see his lady nor his children
- 665 in joy, crowding about him, home from sea;
the Sirens will sing his mind away
on their sweet meadow lolling. There are bones
of dead men rotting in a pile beside them
and flayed skins shrivel around the spot.
- Steer wide;
- 670 keep well to seaward; plug your oarsmen's ears
with beeswax kneaded soft; none of the rest
should hear that song.

- But if you wish to listen,
- let the men tie you in the lugger, hand
and foot, back to the mast, lashed to the mast,
- 675 so you may hear those Harpies^o thrilling voices;
shout as you will, begging to be untied,
your crew must only twist more line around you
and keep their stroke up, till the singers fade. . . .”

The next peril lies between two headlands. Circe continues her warning.

- “ . . . That is the den of Scylla, where she yaps
- 680 abominably, a newborn whelp's^o cry,
though she is huge and monstrous. God or man,
no one could look on her in joy. Her legs—
and there are twelve—are like great tentacles,
unjointed, and upon her serpent necks
- 685 are borne six heads like nightmares of ferocity,
with triple serried^o rows of fangs and deep
gullets of black death. Half her length, she sways
her heads in air, outside her horrid cleft,

675. Harpies (här'pēz): monsters, half bird and half woman, who are greedy for victims.

680. whelp's (hwelps) *n.*: puppy's.

686. serried (ser'ēd) *adj.*: crowded together; densely packed.

Vocabulary

abominably (ə·bām'ə·nə·blē) *adv.*: in an extremely unpleasant or disgusting manner.

hunting the sea around that promontory°
 690 for dolphins, dogfish, or what bigger game
 thundering Amphitrite° feeds in thousands.
 And no ship's company can claim
 to have passed her without loss and grief; she takes,
 from every ship, one man for every gullet.

 695 The opposite point seems more a tongue of land
 you'd touch with a good bowshot, at the narrows.
 A great wild fig, a shaggy mass of leaves,
 grows on it, and Charybdis lurks below
 to swallow down the dark sea tide. Three times
 700 from dawn to dusk she spews it up
 and sucks it down again three times, a whirling
 maelstrom;° if you come upon her then
 the god who makes earth tremble could not save you.
 No, hug the cliff of Scylla, take your ship
 705 through on a racing stroke. Better to mourn
 six men than lose them all, and the ship, too. . . .

689. promontory (präm'ən·tôr'ē)
n.: high area of land that juts out
 into a body of water.

691. Amphitrite (am'fi·trīt'ē):
 goddess of the sea and wife of
 Poseidon.

702. maelstrom (māl'strəm) *n.*:
 large, violent whirlpool.



National Gallery of South Africa, Cape Town.

The Sirens (c. 1875) by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

710

680 **Collection 10** Epic and Myth • Evaluating an Argument

and rolled them in my hands until they softened—
 no long task, for a burning heat came down
 from Helios, lord of high noon. Going forward
 745 I carried wax along the line, and laid it
 thick on their ears. They tied me up, then, plumb°
 amidships, back to the mast, lashed to the mast,
 and took themselves again to rowing. Soon,
 as we came smartly within hailing distance,
 750 the two Sirens, noting our fast ship
 off their point, made ready, and they sang. . . .

The lovely voices in ardor appealing over the water
 made me crave to listen, and I tried to say
 ‘Untie me!’ to the crew, jerking my brows;
 755 but they bent steady to the oars. Then Perimedes°
 got to his feet, he and Eurylochus,
 and passed more line about, to hold me still.
 So all rowed on, until the Sirens
 dropped under the sea rim, and their singing
 dwindled away.

760 My faithful company
 rested on their oars now, peeling off
 the wax that I had laid thick on their ears;
 then set me free.

But scarcely had that island
 faded in blue air when I saw smoke
 765 and white water, with sound of waves in tumult—
 a sound the men heard, and it terrified them.
 Oars flew from their hands; the blades went knocking
 wild alongside till the ship lost way,
 with no oar blades to drive her through the water.

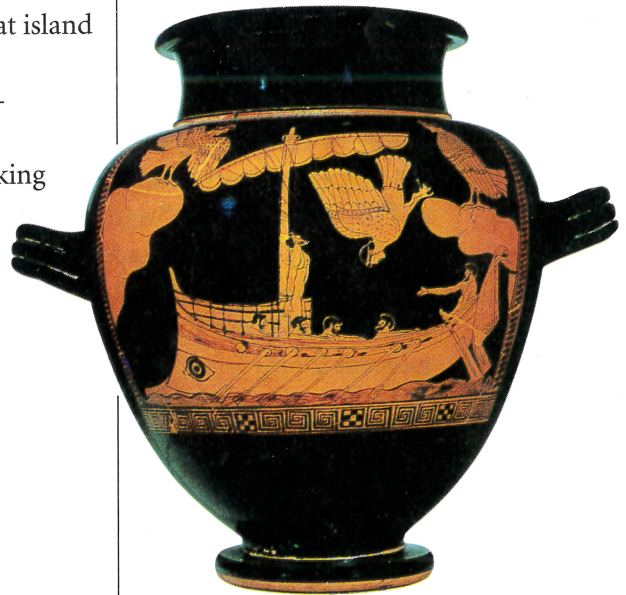
Vocabulary

ardor (är'där) *n.*: passion; enthusiasm.

tumult (tōō'mult) *n.*: commotion; uproar; confusion.

746. **plumb** (plum) *adv.*: vertically.

755. **Perimedes** (per·i·mē'dēz').



Odysseus and the Sirens, Athenian red-figure stamnos vase by the Siren Painter, late Archaic, c. 490 B.C. (earthenware).
 British Museum, London, UK.

770 Well, I walked up and down from bow to stern,
trying to put heart into them, standing over
every oarsman, saying gently,

‘Friends,

have we never been in danger before this?
More fearsome, is it now, than when the Cyclops

775 penned us in his cave? What power he had!
Did I not keep my nerve, and use my wits
to find a way out for us?

Now I say

by hook or crook this peril too shall be
something that we remember.

Heads up, lads!

780 We must obey the orders as I give them.
Get the oar shafts in your hands, and lie back
hard on your benches; hit these breaking seas.
Zeus help us pull away before we founder.^o

You at the tiller, listen, and take in

785 all that I say—the rudders are your duty;
keep her out of the combers^o and the smoke;
steer for that headland; watch the drift, or we
fetch up in the smother,^o and you drown us.’

That was all, and it brought them round to action.

790 But as I sent them on toward Scylla, I
told them nothing, as they could do nothing.
They would have dropped their oars again, in panic,
to roll for cover under the decking. Circe’s
bidding against arms had slipped my mind,

795 so I tied on my cuirass^o and took up
two heavy spears, then made my way along
to the foredeck—thinking to see her first from there,
the monster of the gray rock, harboring
torment for my friends. I strained my eyes

800 upon that cliffside veiled in cloud, but nowhere
could I catch sight of her.

And all this time,

in travail,^o sobbing, gaining on the current,
we rowed into the strait—Scylla to port
and on our starboard beam Charybdis, dire

805 gorge^o of the salt sea tide. By heaven! when she
vomited, all the sea was like a caldron
seething over intense fire, when the mixture
suddenly heaves and rises.



Scylla. Greek bronze.
National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

783. **founder** (foun'dər) *v.*: sink.

786. **combers** (kōm'ərz) *n.*: large waves.

788. **smother** (smuth'ər) *n.*: commotion; violent action or disorder.

 **770–793.** *Think about what kind of leader Odysseus is. What does he tell his men, to reassure them? What does he decide not to tell them? Why?*

795. **cuirass** (kwi·ras') *n.*: armor for the breast and back.

802. **travail** (trə·vāl') *n.*: hard, exhausting work or effort; tiring labor.

805. **gorge** (gôrj) *n.*: throat and jaws of a greedy, all-devouring being.

The shot spume
soared to the landside heights, and fell like rain.

810 But when she swallowed the sea water down
we saw the funnel of the maelstrom, heard
the rock bellowing all around, and dark
sand raged on the bottom far below.
My men all blanched^o against the gloom, our eyes
815 were fixed upon that yawning mouth in fear
of being devoured.

Then Scylla made her strike,
whisking six of my best men from the ship.

I happened to glance aft at ship and oarsmen
and caught sight of their arms and legs, dangling
820 high overhead. Voices came down to me
in anguish, calling my name for the last time.

A man surf-casting on a point of rock
for bass or mackerel, whipping his long rod
to drop the sinker and the bait far out,
825 will hook a fish and rip it from the surface
to dangle wriggling through the air;

so these

were borne aloft in spasms toward the cliff.

She ate them as they shrieked there, in her den,
in the dire grapple,^o reaching still for me—
830 and deathly pity ran me through
at that sight—far the worst I ever suffered
questing the passes of the strange sea.

We rowed on.

The Rocks were now behind; Charybdis, too,
and Scylla dropped astern.

Then we were coasting
835 the noble island of the god, where grazed
those cattle with wide brows, and bounteous flocks
of Helios, lord of noon, who rides high heaven.
From the black ship, far still at sea, I heard
the lowing of the cattle winding home
840 and sheep bleating; and heard, too, in my heart
the words of blind Teiresias of Thebes
and Circe of Aeaea: both forbade me
the island of the world's delight, the Sun. . . .”

(from Book 12)

814. **blanched** (blancht) v.: grew pale.

829. **dire grapple**: terrible struggle.

 843. Suppose you wanted to write a **screenplay** dramatizing this famous part of the *Odyssey*—the crew's struggle against the Sirens and against Scylla and Charybdis. Who would be your main characters? How would you use music and visuals—especially in the Sirens scene? Write down your ideas about filming the epic.

THE CATTLE OF THE SUN GOD

Odysseus urges his exhausted crew to bypass Thrinakia, the island of the sun god, Helios. When the men insist on landing, Odysseus makes them swear not to touch the god's cattle. Odysseus is still speaking to Alcinous's court.

845 “In the small hours of the third watch, when stars
that shone out in the first dusk of evening
had gone down to their setting, a giant wind
blew from heaven, and clouds driven by Zeus
shrouded land and sea in a night of storm;
so, just as Dawn with fingertips of rose
850 touched the windy world, we dragged our ship
to cover in a grotto, a sea cave
where nymphs had chairs of rock and sanded floors.
I mustered all the crew and said:
‘Old shipmates,
our stores are in the ship’s hold, food and drink;
855 the cattle here are not for our provision,
or we pay dearly for it.
Fierce the god is
who cherishes these heifers and these sheep:
Helios; and no man avoids his eye.’
To this my fighters nodded. Yes. But now
860 we had a month of onshore gales, blowing
day in, day out—south winds, or south by east.
As long as bread and good red wine remained
to keep the men up, and appease their craving,
they would not touch the cattle. But in the end,
865 when all the barley in the ship was gone,
hunger drove them to scour the wild shore
with angling hooks, for fishes and sea fowl,



*The Companions of Ulysses
Slaying the Cattle of the Sun
God Helios (16th century)
by Pellegrino Tibaldi.
Palazzo Poggi, Bologna, Italy.*

whatever fell into their hands; and lean days
wore their bellies thin.

The storms continued.

870 So one day I withdrew to the interior
to pray the gods in solitude, for hope
that one might show me some way of salvation.
Slipping away, I struck across the island
to a sheltered spot, out of the driving gale.
875 I washed my hands there, and made supplication^o
to the gods who own Olympus, all the gods—
but they, for answer, only closed my eyes
under slow drops of sleep.

Now on the shore Eurylochus
made his insidious^o plea:

‘Comrades,’ he said,

880 ‘You’ve gone through everything; listen to what I say.
All deaths are hateful to us, mortal wretches,
but famine is the most pitiful, the worst
end that a man can come to.

Will you fight it?

Come, we’ll cut out the noblest of these cattle
885 for sacrifice to the gods who own the sky;
and once at home, in the old country of Ithaca,
if ever that day comes—
we’ll build a costly temple and adorn it
with every beauty for the Lord of Noon.
890 But if he flares up over his heifers lost,
wishing our ship destroyed, and if the gods
make cause with him, why, then I say: Better
open your lungs to a big sea once for all
than waste to skin and bones on a lonely island!’

895 Thus Eurylochus; and they murmured ‘Aye!’
trooping away at once to round up heifers.
Now, that day tranquil cattle with broad brows
were grazing near, and soon the men drew up
around their chosen beasts in ceremony.
900 They plucked the leaves that shone on a tall oak—
having no barley meal—to strew^o the victims,
performed the prayers and ritual, knifed the kine
and flayed each carcass, cutting thighbones free
to wrap in double folds of fat. These offerings,
905 with strips of meat, were laid upon the fire.
Then, as they had no wine, they made libation^o

875. supplication (sup’lā·kā’shən) *n.*: humble requests; prayers.

879. insidious (in·sid’ē·əs) *adj.*: treacherous; more dangerous than is apparent.

 **878–894.** What is Eurylochus’s “insidious plea”? If you were a member of the crew, would you be swayed by this argument, or would you heed Odysseus’s warning? Do you think murdering the cattle is justified, or is it an offense against the god Helios?

901. strew (strōō) *v.*: scatter about.

906. libation (lī·bā’shən) *n.*: offering of wine or oil to the gods.

with clear spring water, broiling the entrails^o first;
and when the bones were burnt and tripes^o shared,
they spitted the carved meat.

Just then my slumber

910 left me in a rush, my eyes opened,
and I went down the seaward path. No sooner
had I caught sight of our black hull, than savory
odors of burnt fat eddied around me;
grief took hold of me, and I cried aloud:

915 ‘O Father Zeus and gods in bliss forever,
you made me sleep away this day of mischief!
O cruel drowsing, in the evil hour!
Here they sat, and a great work they contrived.’

Lampetia^o in her long gown meanwhile
920 had borne swift word to the Overlord of Noon:
‘They have killed your kine.’

And the Lord Helios

burst into angry speech amid the immortals:

‘O Father Zeus and gods in bliss forever,
punish Odysseus’ men! So overweening,^o
925 now they have killed my peaceful kine, my joy
at morning when I climbed the sky of stars,
and evening, when I bore westward from heaven.
Restitution or penalty they shall pay—
and pay in full—or I go down forever
930 to light the dead men in the underworld.’ . . .”

(from Book 12)

When Odysseus and his men set sail again, they are punished with death—a thunderbolt from Zeus destroys their boat, and all the men drown. Only Odysseus survives. Exhausted and nearly drowned, he makes his way to Calypso’s island, where we met him originally, in Book 5.

Odysseus has brought us up to date. He can now rest and enjoy the comforts of Alcinous’s court—but not for long. Ahead lies his most difficult task—reclaiming his own kingdom.

At this moment of suspense, Homer might have put aside his harp until the next night.

Vocabulary

restitution (res’tə·tōō’shən) *n.*: compensation; repayment.

907. entrails (en’tṛālz) *n.*: intestines; guts.

908. tripes (trīps) *n.*: stomach parts.

919. Lampetia (lam·pē’shē·ə): daughter of Helios. Lampetia guarded her father’s herds of cattle.

924. overweening (o’vər·wēn’īŋ) *adj.*: excessively proud.

 **921–930.** What exactly has happened to cause the god’s fury?



National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

Zeus seated on his throne, holding thunderbolts. Bronze statuette found on Mount Lyceum (6th century B.C.).

Response and Analysis

from the *Odyssey*, Part One

Reading Check

1. In a chart like the one below, **summarize** the **external conflict** and its **resolution** in each episode. 

Adventure	Summary
Calypso	
Lotus Eaters	
Cyclops	
Circe	
Sirens; Scylla and Charybdis	
Cattle of the Sun God	

2. What does Odysseus learn about his future from blind Teiresias in the Land of the Dead?

Thinking Critically

3. “Nobody” in Greek is *outis*, which sounds like *Odysseus*. In his **conflict** with the Cyclops, how does Odysseus overcome the monster through a clever use of language? What curse at the end of this adventure **foreshadows** trouble?
4. What conclusions about the deceptive nature of beauty can you draw from the Circe episode?
5. Book 5 of the *Odyssey* focuses on Odysseus’s captivity on Calypso’s island. Suzanne Vega (see the **Connection** on page 655) expresses Calypso’s view of the affair. How does her song compare with Homer’s story? Whom do you sympathize with—Odysseus or Calypso?

6. From what you’ve observed of Odysseus, how would you describe what the Greeks valued in a hero? Do we value these same traits today? Check your Quickwrite notes for page 649. 

Extending and Evaluating

7. How many of the monsters or threats to Odysseus in this part of the epic are female? What do you think of the way women are portrayed so far?

WRITING

It’s Alive!

In “The Cyclops in the Ocean” (see the **Connection** on page 672), the modern poet Nikki Giovanni **personifies** a tropical storm—that is, she describes the storm as if it were a living creature. Write a paragraph personifying some other violent force of nature. Describe how it looks and sounds and what it does with its victims.

Cause and Effect

Characters in the *Odyssey* often use cause-and-effect arguments when they try to **persuade**. For example, when Odysseus asks the Cyclops for help, he warns the Cyclops of the effects of offending the gods by harming a guest. Calypso tries to persuade Odysseus to remain with her by mentioning the effects he will suffer if he leaves her. Choose one argument from the epic, and describe why it is persuasive or how you think it could be strengthened.

► Use “Persuading with Cause and Effect,” pages 734–741, for help with this assignment.



INTERNET

Projects and Activities

Keyword: LE5 9-10



Literary Skills

Analyze characteristics of epic poetry, including heroes and their external conflicts.

Reading Skills

Monitor your comprehension.

Writing Skills

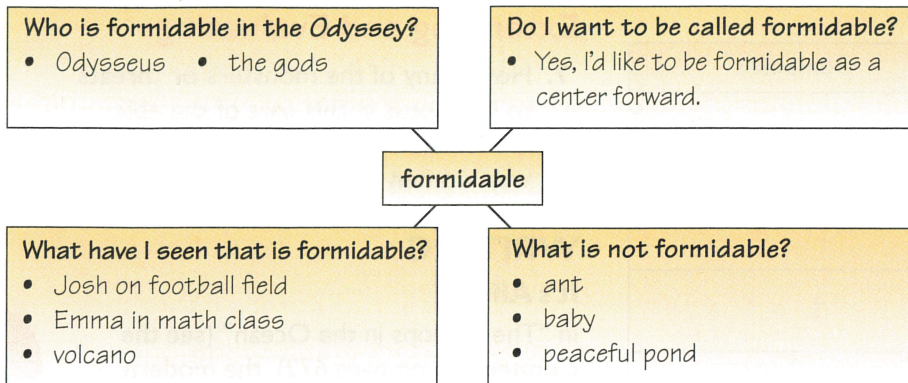
Write a paragraph with personification. Analyze a persuasive argument.

Vocabulary Development

Semantic Mapping

PRACTICE 1

With a partner, create a semantic map for each Word Bank word. Make up questions about each word, and provide your own answers. A sample map is done for *formidable*. Compare your maps in class.



Word Bank

adversity
formidable
ravage
profusion
adversary
rancor
abominably
ardor
tumult
restitution

Figures of Speech—Homeric Similes

In a **figure of speech**, a writer compares one thing to something else, something quite different from it in all but a few important ways. For example, Homer compares the army of the Cicones to “the leaves and blades of spring” (lines 163–164). He is saying that enemy soldiers suddenly appeared everywhere, as green grass and leaves do in spring. The comparison is surprising because a fierce army seems very different from the tender leaves and grass of spring.

The **Homeric simile** (also called **epic simile**) is an extended comparison between something that the audience cannot have seen (such as Odysseus boring out the Cyclops’s eye) and something ordinary that they would know (such as a ship-builder drilling a plank; see lines 379–381 on page 665).

PRACTICE 2

1. Re-read lines 822–827 on page 683. Explain how this Homeric simile brings the audience into the story by comparing a strange, unfamiliar occurrence to something familiar.
2. Make up three Homeric similes of your own, in which you compare something strange or unfamiliar to something ordinary and familiar. (Remember that a simile makes a comparison using a word such as *like*, *as*, or *resembles*.) You might consider describing one of the following things:
 - a space launch
 - the surface of the moon
 - something you see through a microscope

SKILLS FOCUS

Vocabulary Skills

Create semantic maps. Analyze Homeric (epic) similes.