IN THE ONE-EYED GIANT'S CAVE

SCENE: In the palace of Alcinous in the land of the Phaeacians where Odysseus tells of the Lands of the Cocones and the Lotus Eaters as well as of the Island of the Cyclops.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS: Odysseus and Polyphemus: a son of Poseidon and a Cyclops.

Odysseus identifies himself to his hosts and agrees to tell the take of his adventures. He describes his pillage of the Cicones where his men become greedy, and the "honey sweet fruit" of the Lotus Eaters that entrances his men. He then tells the story of his experience with Polyphemus, the Cyclops who traps him and his men and whom he escapes through guile. The exhilaration of his triumph leads him to commiting the biggest error of his life – boasting who he is to his victim – a creature who just happens to be a son of Poseidon.

PAY ATTENTION TO:

* Odysseus' failure to control his men in the land of the Cicones.
* His rescuing them in the land of the Lotus-eaters, and saving them in the land of the Cyclops.
* Odysseus' adventurous attitude as he lands on the Cyclops' land.
* The reverse of the hospitality found in Phaeacia.
* The "farm" culture of the Cyclops.
* Odysseus' cleverness in calling himself "Nobody."
* Odysseus' flattery of the Cyclops.
* The vividness of Odysseus' "attack." The similes used to describe this.
* The cleverness of his escape.
* The curse of Polyphemus.
* Odysseus' leadership qualities; his adventurous spirit; his courage and cleverness; his lapse into pride (hubris).

EPITHETS: Who is...

* "teller of tales?"
* "god of the sea blue mane who rocks the earth?"

QUESTIONS:

1. Where do Odysseus and his men go first after they leave Troy?
2. Who are the Cicones?
3. Who are the lotus eaters?
4. How does Polyphemus prevent Odysseus and his men from leaving his cave?
5. What does Polyphemus' diet consist of?
6. Are the Cyclopes in any way civilized?
7. What mistake does Odysseus makes as he sails away?

THE BEWITCHING QUEEN OF AEAEA

SCENE: In the palace of Alcinous in the land of the Phaeacians where Odysseus tells of the Aeolia land of the Laestrygonians, and of Aeaea, the island of Circe

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS: Odysseus, Aeolus, King of Aeolia and master of the winds, Antiphates, King of the Laestrygonians, Eurylochus, Circe, Hermes, and Elpenor.

PAY ATTENTION TO:

* King Aeolus' gift to Odysseus
* Odysseus's letting his guard down
* Aeolus' belief that Odysseus is not favored by the Gods,
* Aeolus' attitude toward second chances
* Odysseus' caution when he reaches the land of the Laestrygonians,
* Odysseus' caution when he reaches Aeaea,
* Circe's initial reception of Odysseus' men, her witchcraft.
* The role of Hermes
* Odysseus as seducer and seduced.
* The importance of Circe's “word”,
* the luxury of the palace, good times,
* Circe's ultimate support and hospitality,
* the need to visit Hades and hear from Tiresias.

EPITHETS: Who is...the nymph with the lovely braids

QUESTIONS:

1. After the attack from the Laestrygonians, how many ships are left out of the original twelve?
2. What sort of character is Circe? What craft does she practice that Penelope also practices?
3. Why (aside from her magic) is she able to turn Odysseus' men into swine? How do they offend her?
4. Into what does Circe transform Odysseus' crew?
5. What does Hermes give to Odysseus?
6. What makes Odysseus give in to Circe's enticements? Is this typical of him?
7. How long does Odysseus stay in Circe's palace?
8. Why does he want to leave?
9. Where must Odysseus go to learn his way home?