

## ODYSSEUS AND THE CYCLOPES

### A hero tricks a hungry Cyclops.

Continuing their journey home, Odysseus and his crew landed on an island. Searching for food and shelter, the men entered a cave. Little did they suspect that the cozy cavern was the home of the Cyclops Polyphemus, a huge shepherd who happened to be a son of the sea god Poseidon. In fact, the entire island was inhabited by one-eyed, man-eating Cyclopes!

That evening, when Polyphemus returned to the cave with his flock of sheep and found a bunch of sailors eating his food and making themselves at home, he rolled a boulder across the entrance, trapping the men

inside. Then he set about making a feast of the crew. That night, he ate two men for dinner. The next morning, he ate two more for breakfast. And guess what the Cyclops had for lunch? Two more men!

With time and men running out, Odysseus came up with a plan. He offered Polyphemus some wine and struck up a conversation. When the Cyclops asked his name, Odysseus answered, "No Man." As Odysseus continued to talk, Polyphemus fell sound asleep.

While the monster snored, Odysseus and his remaining men sharpened an olive branch

into a spear and stuck it into the giant's one eye. Polyphemus screamed, and the other Cyclopes on the island came running to the entrance of the cave. When they asked Polyphemus who was hurting him, he replied, "No Man!" "What?" they shouted. "No Man is hurting me," answered Polyphemus. Certain that Polyphemus was losing his mind, the other Cyclopes went away.

The next morning, when Polyphemus let his sheep out of the cave, Odysseus and his men held onto the undersides of the sheep and escaped to their ship. Polyphemus angrily hurled boulders at the ship, but missed because he couldn't see. The frustrated Cyclops begged his father, Poseidon, to prevent Odysseus from getting home to Ithaca, or at least to make sure that Odysseus's men died first. That way, the hero would have to get home aboard a stranger's ship. Poseidon vowed to fulfill part of his son's wish.

