

Homer's Odyssey
Passage Summaries & Identification of Literary Elements

Title of Section: THE CYCLOPS Page numbers: 660-670

What happened? Summarize the plot: THE CYCLOPS POLYPHEMUS IMPRISONED ODYSSEUS AND HIS MEN IN HIS CAVE, WHERE HE EATS 2 OF THEM AT EVERY MEAL. Odysseus plans THEIR ESCAPE. THEY ^{FIRST GET} SHARPEN POLYPHEMUS DRINK, SO HE GOES TO SLEEP. THEN THEY SHARPEN A WOODEN STAKE, HEAT IT IN THE FIRE, AND PLUNGE IT INTO THE CYCLOPS'S EYE. THEY ESCAPE THE CAVE BY CLINGING TO THE UNDERSIDE OF THE RAMS WHEN POLYPHEMUS PUTS THEM OUT TO PASTURE. Odysseus TAUNTS POLYPHEMUS AS THEY SAIL OFF, AND THE CYCLOPS PRAYS TO POSEIDON TO CURSE ODYSSEUS.

Identify the internal and external conflicts (see p. 649 for help):

EXTERNAL CONFLICTS IN THIS SECTION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: THE CYCLOPS KILLING AND EATING THE MEN, THE HUGE STONE COVERING THE OPENING OF THE CAVE, POSEIDON HIMSELF.

INTERNAL CONFLICTS INCLUDE ODYSSEUS'S SORROW OVER THE MEN HE LOST TO POLYPHEMUS AND HIS OWN INABILITY TO CONTROL HIS DESIRE TO TAUNT THE CYCLOPS AND GIVE AWAY HIS IDENTITY.

Homeric Similes (see p. 688): Identify and explain two of them.

Page # 665 Homeric Simile: "... I leaned on it turning it as a shipwright turns a drill in planking, having men below to swing the two-handled strap that spins it in the groove."

Who/What is being compared? THE SPIKE IN CYCLOPS'S EYE IS COMPARED TO A DRILL

Page # 666 Homeric Simile: "In a smithy one sees a white-hot axhead or an adze plunged and wrung in a cold tub, screeching steam... just so that eyeball hissed around the spike."

Who/What is being compared? THE SPIKE IN CYCLOPS'S EYE IS COMPARED TO A STEAMING AX THAT HAS JUST BEEN SHAPED DUNKED IN ICE WATER TO HARDEN.

Identify the following literary elements in the passage.

Epithets (see p. 715): Agamemnon, son of Atreus," "Poseidon Lord, who sets the earth a tremble," "Dawn, with fingertips of rose," "Odysseus, raider of cities," "Telemus, a son of Eurymus," "... lord, blue girdler of the islands," "Laertes' son..."

Irony: THE CYCLOPS SAYS HE'LL EAT NOBODY LAST, BUT HE DOESN'T REALIZE THAT THIS IS BECAUSE ODYSSEUS WILL SURVIVE TO TELL THE STORY; WHEN POLYPHEMUS TELLS HIS BROTHERS THAT "NOBODY" HAS RUINED HIM, THEY THINK HE'S OKAY AND LEAVE; "NOBODY WILL NOT GET OUT ALIVE," SAYS POLYPHEMUS - THE DOUBLE NEGATIVE MEANS EVERYONE WILL GET OUT ALIVE; ODYSSEUS ENCOURAGES HIS MEN TO "ROW OR PERISH" EVEN THOUGH IT WAS HIS SHOUTING THAT ALERTED POLYPHEMUS TO THEIR POSITION.