The Monster in the Cave

In this famous story from Ancient Greece, a brave hero gets trapped with this guy!  

ADAPTED BY MACK LEWIS
Character Traits

In this play, Odysseus, a famous Greek warrior, faces a terrifying monster. What character traits help Odysseus battle the monster?

Characters

Circle the character you will play.

*Indicates large speaking role

All Chorus: Greek Chorus 1, 2, 3 together
*Homer: author of The Odyssey
*Greek Chorus 1, 2, 3 (GC1, GC2, GC3)

Thales, Eos, Linus, Bendus, Telamon, Sippas, Abus, Mikon & Carpus: members of Odysseus’ crew
*Odysseus [oh-DISS-ee-uhs]:
hero of the Trojan War
Sheep (a small group)
*Polyphemus [pol-uh-FEE-muhs]:
a Cyclops
Cyclops 1, 2, 3

Prologue

All Chorus: Welcome, Homer, famous poet of ancient Greece.
Homer: Today we present a tale from The Odyssey.
All Chorus: The Odyssey:
GC1: . . . a famous poem written thousands of years ago . . .
GC2: . . . about the great hero Odysseus . . .
GC3: . . . on his long journey home from the great Trojan War.
Homer: Odysseus had helped lead the Greeks to victory. But the war had been long and bloody. Odysseus and his men were praying for a swift and safe journey home to Ithaca. However . . .
All Chorus: . . . this was not to be.

**Scene 1**

Homer: Odysseus is leading his fleet of 12 ships across the Aegean Sea. The men rowing the boat grow weary in the hot sun.

Thales: Odysseus, for you the men will row until they drop, but they are weak from hunger.

Eos: We are out of food.

Linus: And we are nearly out of water.

Odysseus: There are some islands ahead. Look at the small one—it appears nobody is there.

Eos: Isn’t that too close to the island of the Cyclopes [sye-KLOH-peez]?  

Linus: They say the Cyclopes are giants that enjoy the taste of human flesh—that they’re more powerful than the gods!

Odysseus: More powerful than Zeus, the king of the gods? I think not. But we will keep to the smaller island.

Thales: I suppose it’s either that or starve to death.

Homer: Odysseus leads his men to the beach. The island is green and hilly.

GC1: There are wild grapes and many goats—

GC2: Goats everywhere!

Homer: The men prepare a great feast on the beach. As they eat, they look toward the island of the Cyclopes with curiosity . . .

All Chorus: . . . and fear.

**Scene 2**

Homer: The next morning, Odysseus calls a meeting.

Odysseus: I want to visit the Cyclopes.

Bendus: But they are said to be monsters!

Odysseus: I shall see for myself. Let the bravest among you join me in exploring their land.

Homer: Odysseus anchors one ship close to the island. He and 12 volunteers row ashore in a small boat.

Odysseus: Let’s see who lives in that cave up the hill.

Homer: When the men get to the cave, no one is there. Inside are many treasures . . .

GC3: Cheese!

GC1: Lambs!

GC2: Wheat and milk!

Telamon: We should take this food to our ships.

Sippas: Think how much better our trip home will be!

Odysseus: No. I want to meet the Cyclops who lives here. Maybe he will give us these things as gifts.

Homer: Grumbling, the men help themselves to the cheese while waiting for the Cyclops to return. After a bit, the ground begins to shake.

Abus: What is happening?

Mikon: Zeus, have mercy on us!

All Chorus: The men are right to be afraid.

**Scene 3**

Homer: The men hide in the shadows as the Cyclops drives his sheep into the cave.

Sheep: Baaa! Baaa!

GC3: The Cyclops is huge. His face is covered with sores.

GC1: He has but one enormous eye . . .

GC2: . . . right in the center of his forehead.

Carpus (whispering): What a monster!

Abus (whispering): What’s he doing with that rock?

Mikon: He’s sealing off the cave opening! It’ll take a legion of men to move that boulder.

Bendus: How will we get out?

Homer: The monster’s eye blinks with surprise.

Polyphemus: Hello? Hello? Who is there?

Homer: Odysseus steps forward.

Odysseus: Hello, we are weary travelers on our way home. We humbly ask for your hospitality—and may you fear the fury of Zeus should you treat us unkindly.

Polyphemus: Fool, you know nothing of this
island. I am Polyphemus, son of Poseidon, god of the sea! I do not care about Zeus. We Cyclopes are much stronger than he.

**GC3:** The monster stares at Odysseus with his one . . .

**GC1:** . . . hideous . . .

**GC2:** . . . eye.

**Polyphemus:** Where is your ship?

**Odysseus** *(lying)*: It . . . was destroyed. We barely escaped the jaws of death.

**Homer:** Suddenly, the Cyclops grabs two men and tosses them into his mouth.

**Odysseus:** Nooooo!

**Telamon:** Draw your swords! Attack him!

**Odysseus:** Wait! He’s the only one who can move that stone. If we kill him, we’ll be trapped!

**Homer:** The Cyclops slurps down some milk, stretches out, and falls asleep. The men weep . . .

**All Chorus:** . . . but not Odysseus. He makes a plan.

### Scene 4

**Homer:** After a restless night, Odysseus and his men are jolted awake.

**Polyphemus:** Wake up, strangers! It’s breakfast time!

**Homer:** The Cyclops snatches two men and gobbles them up. Then he shoves aside the stone.

**Polyphemus:** Shoo, sheep. Time to go to pasture.

**Sheep:** Baaa! Baaa!

**Sippas:** Maybe we can make a run for it.

**GC3:** Umm . . . not really.

**GC1:** Polyphemus quickly replaces the stone—

**GC2:** —the giant stone.

**Bendus:** What now?

**Odysseus:** I have a plan.

**All Chorus:** Odysseus has a plan.

### Scene 5

**Homer:** Later, Polyphemus returns with his flock.

**Sheep:** Baaa! Baaa!

**Homer:** He seals the cave and eats two more men.

**Polyphemus:** You see, humans, Zeus led you to me that I may pick my teeth with your bones!

**Odysseus:** Enough, Cyclops! That’s six of my men you’ve devoured! How can you treat your visitors this way? And to think that I brought you a drink offering!

**Polyphemus:** A drink offering?

**Odysseus:** Here, I give it to you that you might have mercy on us and let us go.

**Homer:** Polyphemus takes the cup of wine and drinks.

**Polyphemus:** That’s delicious. I like you, Small
hidden it in the shadows.

Odysseus (whispering): Retrieve the log and heat the point in the fire!

Homer: When the timber is glowing, the men hoist it onto their shoulders.

Odysseus: We must jam it into his eye with all our might! On my count: One . . . two . . . three!

GC3: The ugly eye sputters and hisses.
GC1: The boiling blood bubbles.
GC2: The hair singes and crackles!

Polyphemus: Ahh! My eye! What have you done?! I'm blind! I’m blind!

Homer: Hearing his yells, a few Cyclopes gather outside the cave.

Cyclops 1: What’s wrong, Polyphemus?
Cyclops 2: Why are you making such a racket?
Cyclops 3: Is somebody doing you harm?
Polyphemus: Ahh! Nobody has blinded me!

One. Tell me your name, and I will give you a present. But first, give me more of this drink!

GC3: Three times Odysseus fills the cup.
GC1: Three times the Cyclops drinks.
GC2: Three times . . . uh . . . yes, three times!

Odysseus: Cyclops, you asked my name. My name is Nobody. Now give me the present you promised.

Polyphemus: Ha! This is the present I have for you, Nobody: I will eat your men first. I will save you for last.

Homer: The Cyclops falls over and begins to snore.

All Chorus: His peaceful slumber will not last.

Scene 6

Homer: Earlier, Odysseus and his men had carved the tip of a log into a point and
Nobody is trying to kill me!

**Cyclops 1:** If nobody is hurting you, then be quiet so we can get some sleep!

**Homer:** The other Cyclopes leave. In the morning, Polyphemus gropes about until he finds the stone. He pushes it away and sits in the doorway.

**Sheep:** Baaa! Baaa!

**Carpus:** Now what?

**Abus:** How will we get past him?

**Odysseus:** I have a plan . . .

**All Chorus:** Odysseus has another plan.

**Homer:** As the sheep pass, Polyphemus feels their backs to make sure that none of the men are escaping.

**GC3:** What he doesn’t know . . .

**GC1:** What he couldn’t guess . . .

**GC2:** . . . is that the men are clinging to the sheep’s bellies.

**Homer:** Odysseus rides out last, under the largest ram. Polyphemus stops it and strokes its back.

**Polyphemus:** My good ram, why are you the last to leave my cave today? Is it because you know your master has lost his eye? I will get Nobody! I will bash his brains in!

**All Chorus:** The Cyclops plots his revenge.

**Scene 7**

**Homer:** The men take the sheep to their ship.

**Thales:** Odysseus, you’re alive! We thought you’d perished!

**Eos:** But where are the others?

**Odysseus:** A terrible monster ate them. Now quick, get these sheep on board. And hush! The monster no longer has his eye, but he still has his ears.

**Homer:** The Cyclops rushes to the edge of the sea.

**Odysseus (jeering):** You should have taken better measure of me before swallowing my men. I warned you that Zeus would punish you for your treachery!

**Polyphemus:** Ahh! I shall have my revenge on Nobody!

**Homer:** The Cyclops hurls a boulder at the ship. It lands in the water, creating a wave that sends the ship back toward shore.

**Odysseus:** Row for your lives, men!

**Mikon:** Please, Odysseus, do not provoke the monster!

**Odysseus:** Cyclops, if anyone asks you who it was who put your eye out, you can tell them it was the valiant warrior of Ithaca, hero of the Trojan War, Odysseus!

**GC3:** Modesty . . .

**GC1:** . . . as you can see . . .

**GC2:** . . . is not Odysseus’ thing.

**Homer:** The Cyclops throws another boulder at them. It splashes behind the ship, creating a wave that pushes them further out to sea.

**Polyphemus:** Avenge me, great Poseidon! Grant that Odysseus never reaches his home alive!

**Homer:** Odysseus sails into the setting sun, celebrating his victory. He has no idea that Poseidon is furious . . . and things are about to get much, much worse.

**All Chorus:** But that is a story for another day.

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**WRITE TO WIN**