

The Cave of the Cyclops

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Of all the adventures of Odysseus, this one is surely the scariest. To be trapped in a cave is bad enough, without this grotesque one-eyed monster, determined to kill us.. Will it be possible to escape? Yes: with the help of some extra-intoxicating wine, conveniently provided in advance by the narrator, and the carelessness of the monster, who has left just the right-size stick lying around; and the strength of our companions, who at the right moment help to drive the sharpened stick into the ogre's eye.

But this only deepens our danger: how are we going to get out? Here is where the wiles of the wily Odysseus come into play. He ties his remaining companions under the ogre's sheep, and himself clutches the hair of the largest ram, and so all go out, next morning, undetected by the ogre. Freed from the sheep, the men reach their ship, push off, and hurl defiance at the ogre, resulting in their being washed back to him. This last, where escape is only seeming, and must be earned again by prudence, is a master stroke of the writer; one more of her delaying tricks. You think to visit the ogre; you are trapped. You think you have escaped, but then your folly takes you back again. The story keeps *not being over*. This is how the Odyssey is constructed.

What about the fine grain? The narrative segments we will notice in detail are:

Works Cited

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