The Journey Home

Odysseus and around 200 of his men begin their travels home from the Trojan War. These are the stops on his journey back to Ithaca:

1. Island of the Cicones: Odysseus’s men killed the Cicones on the shoreline who fought back. They enslaved the women, butchered the sheep, and plundered the local homes. The Cicones army shows up and kills 24 of Odysseus’s men before they escape on their ships.

2. The Lotus Eaters: Odysseus sends two men out to scout the land of the Lotus Eaters. When they do not return for 2 days, Odysseus goes out to find them. The two men were found intoxicated by the drug of the lotus flower. They had to be hog-tied and left to detox under the benches on the ship.

3. Polyphemus’ Island: Odysseus’s crew is trapped in Polyphemus’ cave. 6 of his men are eaten. In order to escape, the men stab Polyphemus in the eye and escape on the bellies of the sheep after Polyphemus removes the boulder from the cave door to call for help.

4. Aeolus: Aeolus, god of the wind, offers to help Odysseus reach home by putting all winds except the West wind into a sack so that he may sail directly home. The greed and suspicion of Odysseus’ men lead them to opening the bag and sailing all the way back to Aeolus’ island.

5. Circe: Odysseus and his men arrive at Circe’s island. Several of the men go off to find food and are transformed into animals by the goddess Circe. Odysseus, with the aid of Hermes, must eat an antidote to avoid Circe’s magic. Odysseus must then sleep with her in order to have his men turned back to their human forms. Circe tells Odysseus he must visit the Underworld to get advice from Tiresias – a dead profit.

6. Scylla and Charybdis: On their way home, Odysseus and his men must face the Scylla (a six headed monster) and the Charybdis (a giant whirlpool). Scylla eats 6 men and the men barely avoid Charybdis.

7. Island of the Sun God: Odysseus and his men arrive on Helios’ island. Helios is the god of the sun. Odysseus was warned by Circe that he and his men were not to eat the cattle. Odysseus’ men feel that they’d rather die by any other means than hunger and eat the cattle. All men are struck down by Zeus’ wrath and revenge for Helios.