

Poseidon Readers' Theater

This Reader's Theater has been taken from pages fourteen through twenty-seven of *Poseidon: Earth Shaker*. It tells the story of Odysseus' cunning escape from Poseidon's son, Polyphemos.

Read the original scene as it is portrayed in *Poseidon: Earth Shaker*. Then assign roles from the cast list. Act out the scene with each character speaking and acting his or her part.

A Cyclops's Hospitality

Cast list:

- Narrator 1
- Narrator 2
- Polyphemos
- Odysseus
- Brother Cyclopes

Narrator 1: After some adventures, the ships of Odysseus came into sight of a wooded island. Along with twelve of his best men, Odysseus took a goatskin of wine and set forth into the interior of this island, to see what sort of men might live there.

Narrator 2: They soon came upon a great cave with pens full of sheep in front of it. Its owner was not home. Upon entering the cave, they discovered it to be stocked with vats of milk and cheeses. Odysseus' men wanted to loot the cave, to steal the cheeses and the lambs, and to make a hasty getaway across the sea. Odysseus decreed that it was bad form to be so inhospitable. It would have been better if Odysseus had listened to his men. For at that moment, the owner of the cave came home. Polyphemos, son of Poseidon.

Narrator 1: Odysseus and his men retreated to the shadows. Unaware of their presence, Polyphemos rolled the boulder that served as the door over the entrance of the cave. They were trapped.

Narrator 2: Polyphemos started his evening fire. It was then that he noticed he had guests.

Polyphemos: Strangers, who are you?

Odysseus: We are Achaeans, coming from Troy. Trying to get home, but blown off course. It was the will of Zeus...

Polyphemos: We Cyclopes do not concern ourselves with Zeus...Where is your ship? Is it nearby or far off?

Odysseus: Uh, Poseidon, Shaker of the Earth has shattered our vessel. He drove it against the rocks of your island. My men and I are all who survived.

Narrator 1: Odysseus' Lie was meant to protect the men still at the ship in the harbor, in case Polyphemous meant them harm.

Narrator 2: Polyphemous sprang up and grabbed the two men closest—

Narrators 1 and 2: AND DEVoured THEM WHOLE!

Narrator 1: In the morning Polyphemos took two more men as his breakfast, rolled back the great stone to let out his flocks, and sealed Odysseus and his men in the cave.

Narrator 2: Odysseus and his men leapt to action. They seized a loose log of olive wood, honed it to a point with their swords...and waited.

Narrator 1: At nightfall, Polyphemos returned...

Narrator 2: ...and ate two more men. So Odysseus set his plan into motion.

Odysseus: Here, Cyclops, have a drink. The finest wine. It was meant to be a gift for you but...

Polyphemos: Give me more. (Polyphemous drinks the wine in one gulp.)

More! (gulp!)

Tell me your name, stranger, so that I may give you a gift.

Odysseus: No-man. My name is no-man.

Polyphemos: Then I will eat you last, no-man...that is my gift to you.

Narrator 1: Drunk with wine, Polyphemous fell asleep. And Odysseus and his men took action!

Narrator 2: They held the olive log in the fire until it was red hot...

Narrators 1 and 2: And drove it into Polyphemous' eye!

Polyphemos: MY EYE!!! I'm blind!! No-man has blinded me!! Brother Cyclopes! Come to me! No-man has blinded me!

Brother Cyclopes: Polyphemous, what's all this yelling? Are you okay?

Polyphemos: No-man is attacking me! No-man has blinded me!

Brother Cyclopes: Well, as long as No-man is attacking you, I'll be on my way.

Polyphemos: You tricked me, No-man... You may have taken my sight but there is still only one way out of this cave and that's through me!

Narrator 1: So Polyphemos knelt down and felt the backs of each of his sheep as they left the cave.

Narrator 2: But Odysseus' cunning took this into account. He tied each of his surviving men underneath the largest rams in Polyphemos' flock.

Narrator 1: All Polyphemos felt as he leaned down were the fleecy backs of the sheep.

Narrator 2: Free at last, Odysseus and his men went back to their waiting ship.

Odysseus: Hey Cyclops! You should have treated your guests better!

Polyphemos: No-man!!

Odysseus: If anyone ever asks you who it was who blinded you, tell them it was Odysseus! Sacker of Troy and King of Ithaka!

Polyphemos: Odysseus?! Then let me place the last part of my gift on you! For my father Poseidon is the Earth Shaker himself! Hear me, O Father! I know not if you can heal my eye—but I ask you, make it that this Odysseus shall never return to his home in Ithaka! And if he must, let it be late, after the loss of his companions, and may he find troubles at home!

Narrator 1: And so Odysseus' long journey home got a lot more complicated...

THE END