The Odyssey

As you read, consider and take notes on the following:

What traits of Odysseus are revealed (good AND bad) and where?

What obstacles are coming between Odysseus and his goal?

How does he deal with these obstacles and what do his reactions say about him?

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Sailing from Troy

In Media Res: In the middle

After losing crew and ship, he washes up on the island of The Phaeacians - he tells them his story & they lend him a ship home - this is where the poem begins - Part 1 of his journey is told as flashback

Part 1: His long journey full of peril/trials

Part 2: His return to Ithaca and Redemption (takes back kingdom)
IN MEDIA RES (in the middle): Odysseus has already gone through many trials.

- is telling the story as a flashback to Phaeacians who lend him ship to go home.

- O. recalls obstacles on way home:
  - Calypso held captive - he "resisted" (in his heart?) and left her
  - Father is Laertes, home is on Ithaca

- MOTIVATION: to return home to wife and family (son: Telemachus)

1st Stop: Troy --> Island of Ismarus (coast of Cicones)

- men are foolish

- get drunk & continue to kill livestock after defeating them

- meanwhile, enemy gets reinforcements and defeat O's men

- O. loses several men as they escape
Characters:

Homer - blind poet

Muses - goddesses of arts/literature; inspire poets

Odysseus - king of Ithaca/protagonist

Calypso - sea goddess in love with Odysseus

Circe - enchantress who helps Odysseus

Alcinous - ruler of Phaeacia; gives Odysseus a ship & asks to hear his story

Odysseus' crew

Places:

Ithaca - Odysseus' home

Calypso's Island - where Odysseus is most recently held captive

Phaeacia - where Odysseus escapes to and begins to tell his story

Ismarus on the coast of Cicones
Section's purpose:

To introduce the story, characters and motivation to the readers.

Summary:

Homer asks the Muses for help as he begins to tell his epic poem about Odysseus' return to Ithaca after the Trojan War.

He says that Odysseus endures many hardships; however, he is motivated by his strong will to return home, especially since he is away for so long.

Homer also mentions that although Odysseus has a strong will to achieve his goal, he loses his men because they are weak and unable to foresee consequences of their rash behavior, specifically when they steal the sun god's cattle.
Summary: "Sailing from Troy"

Homer tells the story from Odysseus' perspective.

Odysseus tells his recent adventure to Alcinous, a man who helps Odysseus by providing him with ship to continue his journey home.

Odysseus says that he recently escapes Calypso's island.

Calypso loves Odysseus, but Odysseus does not give in to her because he wants to return home.

"Where shall a man find sweetness to surpass his own home and his parents? In far lands he shall not, though he find a house of gold."(lines 35-37)

Odysseus and his men also spend time on Ismarus, on the coast of Cicones.

They take what they want without consequence: food, wine, women, supplies.

Odysseus decides it is time to leave, but the men do not want to because they're having a great time.

Eventually the army from Cicones attacks and kills many of Odysseus' men.

"Six benches were left empty in every ship"(line 63)

Odysseus is smart and can foresee problems whereas his men are arrogant and live for the moment (which leads to disaster for them)

"No ship made sail next day until some shipmate had raised a cry, three times, for each poor ghost unfleshed by the Cicones on that field."(lines 66-69)
Literary Elements:

**conflict:**
- Odysseus vs self
- Odysseus vs crew

**characterization:**
- Odysseus - smart, strong leader
- crew - arrogant, fun-loving

**motivation:**
- Odysseus - to return home to Ithaca
- crew - to win battles & to enjoy victory

Discussion Questions:

How can the Odysseus vs crew conflict have negative impacts later on?

Why is the final action in the section (respecting the fallen) significant?

What does Odysseus' interactions with his crew reveal about his character?
Part 1:
- The Lotus-Eaters
- The Cyclops
- The Land of the Dead
- The Sirens and Scylla and Charybdis
- The Cattle of the Sun God

Part 2:
- Twenty Years Gone
- Argus and The Suitors
- Penelope
- The Challenge
- Odysseus’ Revenge
- Penelope’s Test

2 Students  3 Students

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