

from The Home of the Winds

retold from
Homer's *The Odyssey* by Alfred J. Church

1 The next day Ulysses and his companions set sail. After a while they came to the floating island where the King of the Winds had his home. For a whole month the king made him welcome.

2 When Ulysses wished to go home, the king did what he could to help him. He took the hide of an ox, very thick and strong. He put in it all the winds that would keep Ulysses from getting to his home, and he fastened it to the deck of his ship. Then he made a gentle wind blow from the west. For nine days it blew, till the ships were very near to the island of Ithaca.

3 But just before dawn on the tenth day, Ulysses, who had stayed awake all the time, fell asleep. The crew of his ship said to each other: "See that great bag of ox hide. It must have something very precious inside it—silver and gold and jewels. Why should the chief have all these good things to himself?"

4 So they cut the bag open, and all the winds rushed out and blew the ship away from Ithaca. Ulysses woke up at the noise, and at first thought that he would throw himself into the sea and die. Then he said to himself, "No! It is better to live," and he covered his face and lay still, without saying a word to his men. And the ships were driven back to the island of the King of the Winds.

Close Reader Habits

What are the key elements, or parts, of this story? **Circle** the main characters. **Underline** the two settings where the story takes place.

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FROM ULYSSES AND THE SIRENS

RETOLD FROM HOMER'S *THE ODYSSEY* BY ALFRED J. CHURCH

1 The first place they came to was the Island of the Sirens. The Sirens were mermaids who sang so sweetly that no sailor who heard them could pass on his way, but was forced to go to them. But when he came near, the Sirens flew upon him and tore him to pieces.

2 Now Circe had warned Ulysses about these dreadful creatures, and told him what he ought to do. So he closed the ears of his companions with wax so tightly that they could hear nothing. As for himself, he made his men tie him with ropes to the mast of the ship. "And see," he said, "that you don't loose me, however much I may beg and pray."

3 As soon as the ship came near to the island, the wind ceased to blow. The men took down the sails and began to row.

4 Then the Sirens saw the ship and began to sing. Ulysses, where he stood bound to the mast, heard them. And when he understood what they said, he forgot all his caution. They promised just the thing that he wanted. For he was a man who thought he could never know enough about other countries and the people who dwelt in them. And the Sirens said that they could tell him all this.

5 Then he made signs with his head to his men that they should loose him. But they remembered what he had told them and rowed on. So they got safely past the Island of the Sirens.

Close Reader Habits

How is this story similar to and different from the one you just read? **Circle** the main characters. **Underline** the two places that are mentioned.

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4 This question has two parts. Answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

Based on the two stories, which sentence **best** describes the kind of man Ulysses is?

- **A** He is a poor leader but a good and thoughtful man.
- **B** He is a strong leader who watches out for his crew.
- **C** He is a weak man who depends on others to help him.
- **D** He is a good man who is learning how to be brave.

Part B

Choose **one** detail from **each** story that supports your answer to Part A.

- **A** "When Ulysses wished to go home, the king did what he could to help him." ("Winds")
- **B** "Ulysses woke up at the noise, and at first thought that he would throw himself into the sea and die." ("Winds")
- **C** "Then he said to himself, 'No! It is better to live,' and he covered his face and lay still, without saying a word to his men." ("Winds")
- **D** "So he closed the ears of his companions with wax so tightly that they could hear nothing." ("Sirens")
- **E** "And when he understood what they said, he forgot all his caution." ("Sirens")
- **F** "Then he made signs with his head to his men that they should loose him." ("Sirens")

Talk

5 What themes, or lessons, could you draw from each story? How similar or different are those themes?

Write

6 **Short Response** One theme from *The Odyssey* could be that a leader like Ulysses has to be able to depend on his men. Use details from **both** stories to compare and contrast how they teach that lesson. Use the space provided on page 375 to write your answer.

HINT Review the chart on page 372, especially the part that shows the crew's actions and the result of those actions.

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