

The sirens episode in the odyssey

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



It is hard to imagine what it would feel like when one is unexpectedly enchanted and persuaded to commit suicide. This is what would exactly happen when one met the Sirens, Greek fairy-tale beings believed to have the power to hypnotize and fascinate those who listened to their songs. The Sirens greatly influenced the life of Odysseus in Homer's *The Odyssey*.

On his return to Circe's island, Odysseus is cautioned of these beings and advised to avoid them since they are dangerous (*Odyssey* 12. 53-58). The main lesson learnt from the recount is the importance of heeding to advice so as to avoid temptations in life. Odysseus learns of the impending danger posed by the Sirens and listens to the instructions given by Circe by explaining to his men (12. 170-79).

The goddess tells Odysseus that he alone should listen to the voices of the Sirens, despite the fact that this could result to him losing his life. This presents a dilemma in that he either disobeys the goddess to avoid risking his life or follow Circe's instructions and be lured to his death with the Sirens' beautiful voices. Another obstacle evident from the recount is how Odysseus will handle the weight of responsibility bestowed unto him to ensure that his men reach their destination safely. He handles this by putting beeswax in each man's ears to block out the charming songs of the Greek mythical beings (12. 189-93). Because Odysseus is the only one meant to listen to the Sirens' beautiful voices, he faces the danger of being enticed to his death. However, he and his men overcome this by adhering to the advice issued by the goddess. Odysseus' men tie him up along a mast to prevent him from going towards the Sirens' voices.

When he listens to their voices, desire creeps in him and he asks to be untied. He faces the obstacle to give in to his desires and temptations. However, his men remember the instructions given to them and Perimedes and Eurylochus tighten the lines that tied Odysseus to the mast (12. 216). Their loyalty and obedience prove vital as they play an integral role in preventing their friend from succumbing to the enchanting but dangerous voices.

The episode on Odysseus' encounter with the Sirens shows the valiant characteristics in this episode. Obedience is the first virtue that proved important in this encounter. Odysseus obeys the instructions given to him by Circe. He puts his trust in those instructions and doesn't question them. His men are also obedient because they adhere to those guidelines by ignoring the Sirens' attractive singings and tying Odysseus up to a mast. Courage is another virtue appreciated in this episode. Odysseus is courageous enough to put his life on the line by agreeing to listen to the Sirens' voices despite being aware of the risk posed by doing so. The Sirens' voices entrance him but his friends tighten the ropes so that he doesn't get loose.

Loyalty is another heroic characteristic evident from this episode. Odysseus' companions show their devotion and trust by following his instructions. They also trust that Odysseus' tactic of covering their ears with wax will block out the Sirens' singings. Most importantly, they ignore Odysseus' plea to be untied so as to follow the charming voices but instead tighten and pass more lines so as to keep him safe. Springing up at once to bind me faster with rope on chafing rope. (12. 215-216) There are various important lessons learnt

from the Sirens' episode. The first one is the significance of having loyal and caring friends in life. This is evident from the episode as Odysseus' friends make sure that he doesn't give in to the charm in the Sirens' beautiful voices. Furthermore, being courageous is also significant since Odysseus agrees to listen to the singings in spite of being aware of the consequence of paying attention to them.

Linguistic styles have been employed in this episode. Firstly, Homer's use of the idiomatic phrase sore at heart illustrates the feeling of despair Odysseus experiences when sharing the given directives with his men. Furthermore, Homer metaphorically refers to the Siren's voices to being honeyed. This shows that their voices are lovely and appealing to listen to that no one can resist them. The phrase the heart inside me throbbed me to listen longer depicts the desire Odysseus had to continue listening to the Sirens' voices since they were praising him and this pleased him for he was being recognized and acknowledged.

The episode on the Sirens heighten the importance of the other Odyssey episodes since it illustrates man's desires that cannot be gotten. The Sirens are a sign of man's enlightenment. They are the desires that man should avoid so as to stay safe during their endeavors.

From the episode, it is right to conclude that Odysseus was courageous enough to protect his men from the Sirens by putting himself at risk. Furthermore, the loyalty showed by his companions was crucial in keeping him away from the Sirens' enchanting voices. The episode gives an example

of the many challenges that Odysseus and his men must overcome in order to reach home safely.