

# Skellig Chapter 11 Polyphemus

## The Story of Polyphemus

On his way home from fighting in the Trojan War, the Greek hero Ulysses visits the island of the Cyclopes – giants with one eye in the middle of their foreheads. Whilst there, Ulysses and his men discover a cave full of food, and one of the Cyclopes, Polyphemus, traps them in it, picking off the men one by one and eating them.

Ulysses formulates a plan to escape. He talks to Polyphemus, and introducing himself as 'Nobody', he offers him some wine. The Cyclops accepts and falls asleep. Helped by his men, Ulysses blinds him by driving a stake into his single eye.

Enraged, Polyphemus calls for help and the other Cyclopes come running. But when Polyphemus tells them 'Nobody has blinded me!' they presume he is mad.

Meanwhile, Ulysses and his men tie themselves to the bottom of Polyphemus' sheep. The following morning, when the Cyclops lets his sheep out of the cave to graze, he can no longer see them, so has to feel their backs instead. Feeling wool beneath his hands, he does not realise the men are escaping.

Ulysses and his men run to their ship and set sail from the island, leaving the furious Cyclops behind them.