

What Are the Gods Like?



After ten years of war, the Greeks finally captured the city of Troy. Odysseus, one of the Greek leaders, now has to get home to his kingdom of Ithaca, and to his wife Penelope and son Telemachus. But the journey does not go smoothly. Along the way, Odysseus and his men face monsters, temptation, and gods who intervene in their lives for their own reasons.



Poseidon and Polyphemus: Trapped in a cave by the giant cyclops Polyphemus, who begins eating his men one by one, Odysseus blinds the giant to escape. Polyphemus' father, the sea god Poseidon, is enraged, and sends storm after storm to punish Odysseus.



Circe: The goddess Circe, believing that Odysseus' men are no better than animals, uses food to turn them into pigs.



Calypso: Shipwrecked and half-drowned, Odysseus is found by the goddess Calypso, who lives alone on a remote island. She attaches herself to Odysseus and holds on to him, even though he has a wife and son at home.



For each word below, decide how far you think it describes **the gods** in this story. Tick your answer, then use the space alongside to explain your view with evidence from the story.

Word	Definitely true	Mostly true	Mostly false	Definitely false	Evidence from the story
Powerful	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Unpredictable	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Vindictive	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Caring	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Trustworthy	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____



"Then I defy the gods."

Given everything you've understood about the gods in this story, do you think Odysseus' defiant response is understandable? Explain your answer.

