

EME Revisited – The Story of Odysseus
Script by Olivia Armstrong – April 8th 2020

Introduction

Hello. I am Olivia – I tell stories, Stories that are big and stories that are small. You can listen quietly or you can join in. If you are going to join in, there are some things you will need! Ordinary household things that should be easy to find. I am going to tell you what you need and then why don't you pause the story while you and your grown-ups go and find them? Don't worry if you don't have everything on the list. Whatever you have, there will still be plenty for you to join in with.

Are you ready to write these down? Okay – number one – a handful of uncooked rice emptied onto a baking tray. Two – a sheet, or a piece of cloth. Three – some torn up paper or newspaper in a plastic bag. Three – a piece of tin foil. Four – a small piece of fruit or your favourite snack. Five – a cushion or pillow. Six – a couple of sticks of raw celery and a few strands of uncooked spaghetti. Seven – a small handful of cooked pasta in a bowl. And eight – any shakers or drums or bells you might have. Go and gather those things now. Don't forget to pause the story!

[Pause here while you collect props]

Story begins

Hello! Are you back? Lay all the things out in front of you, within easy reach. Your grown can help you keep everything tidy!

One of my favourite places to tell stories is the magical British Museum. There are stories everywhere you look and the story I am telling you today would fit in the Greek galleries because it is a tale of a Greek hero...Odysseus!

Let's begin our story adrift upon the sea. You can make the sound of the sea with the rice on the baking tray. Move the tray back and forward, side to side, nice and slow. Can you hear the sea? Be careful not to spill any rice!

Once there was a sailor who sailed the seven salty seas and needed to find his way home. Let's make the rolling sea as it ripples and rises and falls. Use your piece of cloth. Lift it up and ripple it like it's the sea. You can choose how rough you want the sea to be.

The sailor was called captain Odysseus. His crew was far from home and had been sailing for days, months, years on a ship with a worn-out sail. Now you can make that cloth into the sail on the ship. Just hold it high above your head and let it fill with air and billow...

The sailors longed for home. But home was so far away, the sea was rough and the sky looked full of thunder. Zeus was angry again. Zeus, I like saying his name. Will you say it with me? After 3? 1,2,3 Zeus! Zeus was the King of the Gods, and the god of the sky, the god of thunder bolts and lighting, very, very frightening. His messenger was Iris, goddess of the rainbow, who passed on messages or orders to the other gods. Some called Zeus 'thunderer' and when he shook his shield, thunder rolled and clouds covered the mountains. I have my thunder-maker but you can make some home-made thunder. Take that piece of tinfoil and give it a wobble - careful of any sharp edges...

A storm! That was the last thing Captain Odysseus needed. The sailors were tired and so hungry because they had no food left. Just then they heard birds and saw them flying to an island. They decided to stop, and explore and hopefully find something to eat. Let's bring some of our golden treasures and some of that strong wine said one sailor. We might be able to exchange them for food!

The sailors walked through the long grass. You can make the sound of the sailors walking through the grass by putting your hand in that bag of paper and rustle it with your fingers. You can always move your feet at the same time and swish, swish, swish.

The goddess in charge of the long grass and the corn was Demeter Zeus's sister. Sometimes called Mother Earth with hair that rippled like golden corn. She was quiet and made the long grasses and poppies wave and whisper as the sailors passed through. The sailors found their way to a cave. Inside, there were buckets filled with cheese and buckets filled with milk. The sailors began to feast. Do you have your piece of fruit or favourite snack? Tuck in now. I wonder if it is a slice of apple or a grape or even a biscuit.

But suddenly, as they eating, they heard a distant rumbling - a giant's feet stamping, and they were getting closer. So, get a cushion and put it on your lap and make fists and hit it...Here Goes!

They saw a giant. Can you make yourself big and wide? Tall as you can! A giant with one single glaring eye in middle of its forehead! A Cyclops called Polly – short for Polyphemus. It began to roar. The sailors were afraid. They began to Shiver & shake, quiver & quake.

They hid further back in the cave. The roaring grew louder as the Cyclops came stamping down the mountain. Ready with your cushion again?

Suddenly, the cave went dark. Polyphemus had come in with a herd of giant sheep. I need you to be a giant flock of sheep – BAA! Polyphemus shut the cave entrance

with a huge rock, so big even a whole crew of sailors couldn't move it! They were trapped!

The cave brightened as Polyphemus lit a fire and scanned the cave with his single, frightening eye. Oh no! He saw the sailors. Yum, yum! He picked up one, and swallowed him, crunching all the while. This is a really fun sound to make. I've got some celery to snap and some spaghetti strands to break in two and it will sound like the giant crunching and munching. If you have some ready too, get ready to join in!

Odysseus jumped forward. He had a plan. "We are peaceful visitors. We bring gifts. Father Zeus will reward those who are kind to wandering travellers." Odysseus offered Polyphemus some wine. "You must be thirsty after all that crunching!"

Polyphemus said "I am a Cyclops; we don't care for care for Zeus. Poseidon is my father." But he still took the wine and drank it down and wanted more! "What is your name captain," he asked? Who me? Said Odysseus "I'm nobody!"

"Well Nobody, I will eat you last!" But the wine made Polyphemus sleepy. He fell asleep and quietly. Odysseus told the sailors his plan and the sailors heated a big stick and poked out the monster's big eye! Ready for a yucky sound? Get some of the sticky cooked pasta in your hand and squeeze it and squelch it!

Polyphemus roared! All the other giants heard and shouted from their caves. "What is wrong?" Polyphemus shouted back "Nobody's hurting me!" "Who is hurting you?" shouted the giants. "Nobody! Nobody is hurting me." "If nobody is hurting you, then just be quiet!"

Oh dear. This made Polyphemus mad! He reached out his huge arm and felt around the cave to find the rest of those sailors. But they were crouching behind the herd of sheep. I will move the sheep and make more room and find you. Polyphemus called the sheep together, rolled stone aside to let them out.

"Hide under the sheep!" whispered Odysseus. Each sailor held tight onto thick wool under a sheep's belly, as the herd started to stampede out cave. As the sheep ran

out of the cave, so all the sailors escaped too! Once they were out of the cave the sailors slipped out from under sheep, and ran fast as they could through the grasses, towards the sea, and jumped into the boat with the worn-out sail.

Polyphemus threw rocks at them but they missed. "I will get you one day," he shouted. "My father Poseidon is the god of the sea and it won't be easy for you!" And that was true. Poseidon the god of the sea was now furious that Odysseus had hurt his son. Poseidon could make sea voyages easy and smooth, or rough and wild. He could make the land shake and the storms come! He raised his trident - a three-pronged fisherman's spear - and struck the sea to make it rise and roll! He sent howling winds to blow Odysseus off his course, and fierce storms to buffet his ships. Shall we make the storm sound together? If you have any instruments, shakers, drums or bells, shake and bang them now! Or why not click your fingers, clap your hands and stamp your feet?

And then the wind was calm. Ssh. The sea was still. Ssh. And the ship drifted. On to the next adventures of witches and whirlpools. Lift your sail, your piece of fabric, once again and let it billow gently all around you.

It would be many years before Odysseus arrived home, but he would one day, as Apollo the sun god shone by day and Artemus by night. The sirens would sing the song of the sea upon the shore, the song of the stars singing in the skies. And Odysseus would arrive home. Where his family was waiting, where he would be safe and loved once more...

End of story