were fixed upon that yawning mouth in fear of being devoured.

Then Scylla made her strike,

whisking six of my best men from the ship.
I happened to glance aft at ship and oarsmen and caught sight of their arms and legs, dangling high overhead. Voices came down to me in anguish, calling my name for the last time.

A man surfcasting on a point of rock for bass or mackerel, whipping his long rod to drop the sinker and the bait far out, will hook a fish and rip it from the surface to dangle wriggling through the air:

so these were borne aloft in spasms toward the cliff.

She ate them as they shrieked there, in her den, in the dire grapple, reaching still for me—and deathly pity ran me through at that sight—far the worst I ever suffered, questing the passes of the strange sea.

We rowed on.

The Rocks were now behind; Charybdis, too, and Scylla dropped astern.

The Cattle of the Sun God

In the small hours of the third watch, when stars that shone out in the first dusk of evening had gone down to their setting, a giant wind blew from heaven, and clouds driven by Zeus shrouded land and sea in a night of storm; so, just as Dawn with fingertips of rose touched the windy world, we dragged our ship to cover in a grotto, a sea cave where nymphs had chairs of rock and sanded floors. I mustered all the crew and said:
our stores are in the ship's hold, food and drink;
the cattle here are not for our provision,
or we pay dearly for it.

'Old shipmates, who cherishes these heifers and these sheep:
Helios; and no man avoids his eye.'

To this my fighters nodded. Yes. But now
we had a month of onshore gales, blowing
day in, day out—south winds, or south by east.
As long as bread and good red wine remained
to keep the men up, and appease their craving,
they would not touch the cattle. But in the end,
when all the barley in the ship was gone,
hunger drove them to scour the wild shore
with angling hooks, for fishes and seafowl,
whatever fell into their hands; and lean days
wore their bellies thin.

So one day I withdrew to the interior
to pray the gods in solitude, for hope
that one might show me some way of salvation.
Slipping away, I struck across the island
to a sheltered spot, out of the driving gale.
I washed my hands there, and made supplication

to the gods who own Olympus,71 all the gods—but they, for answer, only closed my eyes
under slow drops of sleep.

Now on the shore Eurylochus
made his insidious plea:

'Comrades,' he said,

'You've gone through everything; listen to what I say.

All deaths are hateful to us, mortal wretches,
but famine is the most pitiful, the worst
end that a man can come to.

Will you fight it?

Come, we'll cut out the noblest of these cattle
for sacrifice to the gods who own the sky:
and once at home, in the old country of Ithaca.
if ever that day comes—
we’ll build a costly temple and adorn it
with every beauty for the Lord of Noon.72
But if he flares up over his heifers lost,
wishing our ship destroyed, and if the gods
make cause with him, why, then I say: Better
open your lungs to a big sea once for all
than waste to skin and bones on a lonely island!

Thus Eurylochus; and they murmered ‘Aye!’
trooping away at once to round up heifers.
Now, that day tranquil cattle with broad brows
were gazing near, and soon the men drew up
around their chosen beasts in ceremony.
They plucked the leaves that shone on a tall oak—
having no barley meal—to strew the victims,
performed the prayers and ritual, knifed the kine
and flayed each carcass, cutting thighbones free
to wrap in double folds of fat. These offerings,
with strips of meat, were laid upon the fire.

Then, as they had no wine, they made libation
with clear spring water, broiling the entrails first;
and when the bones were burnt and tripes shared,
they spitted the carved meat.

Just then my slumber
left me in a rush, my eyes opened,
and I went down the seaward path. No sooner
had I caught sight of our black hull, than savory
odors of burnt fat eddied around me;
grief took hold of me, and I cried aloud:

‘O Father Zeus and gods in bliss forever,
you made me sleep away this day of mischief!
O cruel drowsing, in the evil hour!
Here they sat, and a great work they contrived.’73

Lampetia74 in her long gown meanwhile
had borne swift word to the Overlord of Noon:

‘They have killed your kine.’

And the Lord Helios
burst into angry speech amid the immortals:

‘O Father Zeus and gods in bliss forever.

72. Lord of Noon
Helios.

Literary Analysis
The Epic Hero and Conflict Do you think
Eurylochus’ beliefs are in conflict with Odysseus’
beliefs?

Reading Strategy
Reading in Sentences
Read in complete
sentences to rephrase
lines 894–900.

73. contrived (kan triv’d) v. thought up; devised.

74. Lampetia (lam pé’ sha) a nymph.

Literary Analysis
The Epic Hero: Which
important ancient Greek
value does Odysseus
reveal about in his actions
centred on the sacrifice?
punish Odysseus' men! So overweening, now they have killed my peaceful kine, my joy at morning when I climbed the sky of stars, and evening, when I bore westward from heaven. Restitution or penalty they shall pay—and pay in full—or I go down forever to light the dead men in the underworld.'

Then Zeus who drives the stormcloud made reply:

'Peace, Helios: shine on among the gods, shine over mortals in the fields of grain. Let me throw down one white-hot bolt, and make splinters of their ship in the wineddark sea.'
—Calypso later told me of this exchange, as she declared that Hermes had told her. Well, when I reached the sea cave and the ship, I faced each man, and had it out; but where could any remedy be found? There was none.

The silken beeves of Helios were dead. The gods, moreover, made queer signs appear: cowhides began to crawl, and beef, both raw and roasted, lowed like kine upon the spits.

Now six full days my gallant crew could feast upon the prime beef they had marked for slaughter from Helios' herd; and Zeus, the son of Cronus, added one fine morning.

All the gales had ceased, blown out, and with an offshore breeze we launched again, stepping the mast and sail, to make for the open sea. Astern of us the island coastline faded, and no land showed anywhere, but only sea and heaven, when Zeus Cronion piled a thunderhead above the ship, while gloom spread on the ocean.

We held our course, but briefly. Then the squall struck whining from the west, with gale force, breaking both forestays, and the mast came toppling aft along the ship's length, so the running rigging showered into the bilge.

On the afterdeck the mast had hit the steersman a slant blow bashing the skull in, knocking him overside, as the brave soul fled the body, like a diver. With crack on crack of thunder, Zeus let fly a bolt against the ship, a direct hit, so that she bucked, in reeking fumes of sulphur, and all the men were flung into the sea. They came up 'round the wreck, bobbing awhile like petrels on the waves.

No more seafaring homeward for these, no sweet day of return; the god had turned his face from them.

I clambered
fore and aft my hulk until a comber
split her, keel from ribs, and the big timber
floated free; the mast, too, broke away.
A backstay floated dangling from it, stout
rawhide rope, and I used this for lashing
mast and keel together. These I straddled,
riding the frightful storm.

seen the worst of it: for now the west wind
dropped, and a southeast gale came on—one more
twist of the knife—taking me north again,
straight for Charybdis. All that night I drifted,
and in the sunrise, sure enough, I lay
off Scylla mountain and Charybdis deep.
There, as the whirlpool drank the tide, a billow
tossed me, and I sprang for the great fig tree,
catching on like a bat under a bough.
Nowhere had I to stand, no way of climbing,
the root and bole\(^78\) being far below, and far
above my head the branches and their leaves,
massed, overshadowing Charybdis pool.
But I clung grimly, thinking my mast and keel
would come back to the surface when she spouted.
And ah! how long, with what desire, I waited!
till, at the twilight hour, when one who hears
and judges pleas in the marketplace all day
between contentious men, goes home to supper,
the long poles at last reared from the sea.

Now I let go with hands and feet, plunging
straight into the foam beside the timbers,
pulled astride, and rowed hard with my hands
to pass by Scylla. Never could I have passed her
had not the Father of gods and men,\(^79\) this time,
kept me from her eyes. Once through the strait,
nine days I drifted in the open sea
before I made shore, buoyed up by the gods,
upon Ogygia\(^80\) Isle. The dangerous nymph
Calypso lives and sings there, in her beauty,
and she received me, loved me.
the same tale that I told last night in hall to you and to your lady? Those adventures made a long evening, and I do not hold with tiresome repetition of a story."

Review and Assess

Thinking About the Selection

1. **Respond:** In which adventure in this section does Odysseus act most heroically? Explain.

2. **Recall:** How do the Sirens lure travelers to their destruction? **Compare and Contrast:** How does the danger posed by the Sirens compare to that posed by the Lotus-Eaters?

3. **Recall:** What are Scylla and Charybdis, and why do they pose dangers for travelers? **Analyze:** Why does Odysseus choose to sail toward Scylla rather than Charybdis?

4. **Make a Judgment:** Was Odysseus right not to tell his men about his decision to sail toward Scylla? **Hypothesize:** What would have happened if Odysseus had told them everything?

5. **Recall:** What does Eurylochus say to persuade Odysseus' men to slaughter and eat the cattle of Helios, the sun god? **Analyze:** Why is Odysseus unable to keep his men from killing the cattle? **Apply:** If you had been in their situation, do you think you would have eaten the cattle? Why or why not?

6. **Make a Judgment:** Do the members of the crew deserve the punishment they receive for killing the cattle?