

Please answer **TWO** of the following questions in English. (100%)

**Question 1 (50%)**

The following excerpt is taken from Homer's *Odyssey*. Please read Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus (the one-eyed Cyclops) in Book IX carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.

Nightfall brought him back, herding his woolly sheep and he quickly drove the sleek flock into the vaulted cavern, rams and all—none left outside in the walled yard—his own idea, perhaps, or a god led him on. Then he hoisted the huge slab to block the door and squatted to milk his sheep and bleating goats, each in order, putting a suckling underneath each dam, and as soon as he'd briskly finished all his chores he snatched up two more men and fixed his meal. But this time I lifted a carved wooden bowl, brimful of my ruddy wine, and went right up to the Cyclops, enticing, 'Here, Cyclops, try this wine—to top off the banquet of human flesh you've bolted down! Judge for yourself what stock our ship had stored. I brought it here to make you a fine libation, hoping you would pity me, Cyclops, send me home, but your rages are insufferable. You barbarian—how can any man on earth come visit you after *this*? What you've done outrages all that's right!'

At that he seized the bowl and tossed it off and the heady wine pleased him immensely—'More'—he demanded a second bowl—a hearty helping! And tell me your name now, quickly, so I can hand my guest a gift to warm *his* heart. Our soil yields the Cyclops powerful, full-bodied wine and the rains from Zeus build its strength. But this, this is nectar, ambrosia—this flows from heaven!'

So he declared. I poured him another fiery bowl—three bowls I brimmed and three he drank to the last drop, the fool, and then, when the wine was swirling round his brain, I approached my host with a cordial, winning word: 'So, you ask me the name I'm known by, Cyclops? I will tell you. But you must give me a guest-gift as you've promised. Nobody—that's my name. Nobody—so my mother and father call me, all my friends.'

But he boomed back at me from his ruthless heart, 'Nobody? I'll eat Nobody last of all his friends—I'll eat the others first! That's my gift to *you*!'

With that he toppled over, sprawled full-length, flat on his back and lay there, his massive neck slumping to one side, and sleep that conquers all overwhelmed him now as wine came spurting, flooding up from his gullet with chunks of human flesh—he vomited, blind drunk. Now, at last, I thrust our stake in a bed of embers to get it red-hot and rallied all my comrades: 'Courage—no panic, no one hang back now!' And green as it was, just as the olive stake was about to catch fire—the glow terrific, yes—

I dragged it from the flames, my men clustering round as some god breathed enormous courage through us all. Hoisting high that olive stake with its stabbing point, straight into the monster's eye they rammed it hard—I drove my weight on it from above and bored it home as a shipwright bores his beam with a shipwright's drill that men below, whipping the strap back and forth, whirl and the drill keeps twisting faster, never stopping—So we seized our stake with its fiery tip and bored it round and round in the giant's eye till blood came boiling up around that smoking shaft and the hot blast singed his brow and eyelids round the core and the broiling eyeball burst—

its crackling roots blazed and hissed—

as a blacksmith plunges a glowing ax or adze in an ice-cold bath and the metal screeches steam and its temper hardens—that's the iron's strength—so the eye of the Cyclops sizzled round that stake! He loosed a hideous roar, the rock walls echoed round and we scuttled back in terror. The monster wrenched the spike from his eye and out it came with a red geyser of blood—he flung it aside with frantic hands, and mad with pain he bellowed out for help from his neighbor Cyclops living round about in caves on windswept crags. Hearing his cries, they lumbered up from every side and hulking round his cavern, asked what ailed him: 'What, Polyphemus, what in the world's the trouble? Roaring out in the godsent night to rob us of our sleep. Surely no one's rustling your flocks against your will—surely no one's trying to kill you now by fraud or force!'

'Nobody, friends'—Polyphemus bellowed back from his cave—'Nobody's killing me now by fraud and not by force!'

'If you're alone,' his friends boomed back at once, 'and nobody's trying to overpower you now—look, it must be a plague sent here by mighty Zeus and there's no escape from *that*. You'd better pray to your father, Lord Poseidon.'

They lumbered off, but laughter filled my heart to think how nobody's name—my great cunning stroke—had duped them one and all.

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## Question 2 (50%)

The following excerpt is taken from Euripides' *Medea*. Please read the monologue of Medea just before she slays her children carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.

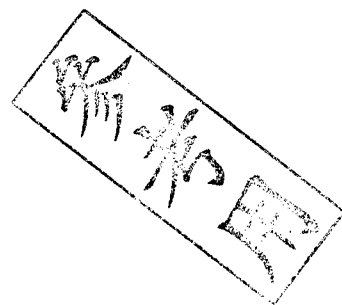
O children, O my children, you have a city,  
You have a home, and you can leave me behind you,  
And without your mother you may live there for ever.  
But I am going in exile to another land  
Before I have seen you happy and taken pleasure in you,  
Before I have dressed your brides and made your marriage beds  
And held up the torch at the ceremony of wedding.  
Oh, what a wretch I am in this my self-willed thought!  
What was the purpose, children, for which I reared you?  
For all my travail and wearing myself away?  
They were sterile, those pains I had in the bearing of you.  
O surely once the hopes in you I had, poor me,  
Were high ones: you would look after me in old age,  
And when I died would deck me well with your own hands;  
A thing which all would have done. O but now it is gone,  
That lovely thought. For, once I am left without you,  
Sad will be the life I'll lead and sorrowful for me.  
And you will never see your mother again with  
Your dear eyes, gone to another mode of living.  
Why, children, do you look upon me with your eyes?  
Why do you smile so sweetly that last smile of all?  
Oh, Oh, what can I do? My spirit has gone from me,  
Friends, when I saw that bright look in the children's eyes.  
I cannot bear to do it. I renounce my plans  
I had before. I'll take my children away from  
This land. Why should I hurt their father with the pain  
They feel, and suffer twice as much of pain myself?  
No, no, I will not do it. I renounce my plans.  
Ah, what is wrong with me? Do I want to let go  
My enemies unhurt and be laughed at for it?  
I must face this thing. Oh, but what a weak woman  
Even to admit to my mind these soft arguments.  
Children, go into the house. And he whom law forbids  
To stand in attendance at my sacrifices,  
Let him see to it. I shall not mar my handiwork.  
Oh! Oh!  
Do not, O my heart, you must not do these things!  
Poor heart, let them go, have pity upon the children.  
If they live with you in Athens they will cheer you.  
No! By Hell's avenging furies it shall not be,—  
This shall never be, that I should suffer my children  
To be the prey of my enemies' insolence.  
Every way is it fixed. The bride will not escape.  
No, the diadem is now upon her head, and she,  
The royal princess, is dying in the dress, I know it.  
But,—for it is the most dreadful of roads for me  
To tread, and them I shall send on a more dreadful still—  
I wish to speak to the children.

[She calls the CHILDREN to her.]

Come, children, give  
Me your hands, give your mother your hands to kiss them.  
O the dear hands, and O how dear are these lips to me,  
And the generous eyes and the bearing of my children!  
I wish you happiness, but not here in this world.  
What is here your father took. O how good to hold you!  
How delicate the skin, how sweet the breath of children!  
Go, go! I am no longer able, no longer  
To look upon you. I am overcome by sorrow.

[The CHILDREN go into the house.]

I know indeed what evil I intend to do,  
But stronger than all my afterthoughts is my fury,  
Fury that brings upon mortals the greatest evils.



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