



Bardo National Museum, Roman mosaic, Odysseus and the Sirens

Summarized excerpt from the twelfth book of the Odyssey: Odysseus (Ulysses) and the Sirens

In the twelfth book of the Odyssey, as Odysseus (Ulysses) is leaving Kirkê's island, Kirkê informs Odysseus of the dangers of the sea that he will encounter on his way home, specifically warning him of the Sirens. Sirens are beautiful women of the sea, who sing songs that hypnotize or lure and trick men into shipwrecking their boats on rocky shores because they follow the irresistible songs. Odysseus instructs his crew to tie him to the mast, telling them to ignore whatever he may say while under the sway of the Siren's song. The sailors stuff their ears with beeswax and then tie Odysseus tightly to the mast. Odysseus is the only one who hears the siren song, while the others ears are covered and they prevent Odysseus from following the song.

Resource: http://modernism.research.yale.edu/wiki/index.php/%22The_Sirens%22