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Bloom'sday

an
interpretation
of
James Joyce's
Ulysses

TO MARK THE ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF LEOPOLD BLOOM'S DAY

Bloomsday is the only international holiday that recognizes a specific work of art, James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*. It is observed annually on June 16 throughout the world with public readings of the novel and celebrations of the author's life. The novel *Ulysses* takes place on June 16, 1904, in the city of Dublin. Joyce chose the date in commemoration of his first outing with his wife-to-be, Nora Barnacle. Bloomsday is derived from the name of the Ulyssean protagonist Leopold Bloom.

"Ulysses"

Adapted from an irreverent, simple, chapter-by-chapter guide to the key events, characters, and Homeric parallels in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, created by Neil Smith for BBC News Online.

Chapters 1-3

The first three chapters introduce would-be writer Stephen Dedalus, familiar to Joyce readers from his earlier novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. On the morning of 16 June 1904, Stephen leaves the disused watchtower he shares with "stately, plump Buck Mulligan," vowing never to return. After teaching at a nearby school he talks to an ageing master who gives him a letter to deliver to the offices of a Dublin newspaper. He then goes for a long walk on the beach that gives him plenty of time to ponder his literary aspirations and dead mother fixation.

Chapters 4-5

Jewish advertising salesman Leopold Bloom buys a kidney, then returns home to 7 Eccles Street and has it for breakfast. He then defecates. Upstairs Molly, his unfaithful opera singer wife, waits for him to leave so she can entertain her lover.

Chapter 6

Bloom attends a funeral at Glasnevin Cemetery, his symbolic encounter with death mirroring Odysseus's descent into Hades. It's a real barrel of laughs.

Chapter 7

NEAR MISS AT NEWSPAPER OFFICE

Bloom and Stephen almost meet in a chapter peppered with tabloid-style headlines.

Chapters 8-9

It's lunchtime, so Bloom stops at Davy Byrne's "moral pub" for a gorgonzola sandwich and a glass of burgundy. He then pays a call to the National Library where he overhears Stephen sounding off about Shakespeare.

Chapter 10

Lots of short episodes. Lots of different characters. All connected by a Vice-Regal parade from one side of town to the other.

Chapter 11

In a chapter full of song—Joyce's allusion to Homer's deadly Sirens—Bloom narrowly avoids meeting Molly's lover, concert promoter Blazes Boylan.

Chapter 12

Bloom has an argument with a pub bore whose blinkered anti-Semitism mirrors Homer's one-eyed Cyclops. He exits, closely followed by a cake tin.

Chapter 13

As evening falls, Bloom sees two young girls on the beach and masturbates in a chapter written in the florid style of a romantic penny-dreadful.

Chapter 14

Stephen and Bloom meet at last in a maternity hospital in a chapter whose structure is meant to represent both the nine months of pregnancy and the birth of the English language. And they say this book is hard.

Chapter 15

READER

(horrorstruck) Blimey, this looks like heavy going.

STEPHEN'S DEAD MOTHER

No kidding! There's over 100 pages of this stuff, all written in the style of a play script. But all you need to know is that Bloom follows Stephen to a brothel where they have lots of freaky hallucinations.

Chapter 16

A weary Bloom takes Stephen to a cabman's shelter where they listen to the ramblings of a tattooed sailor who makes little or no senzzzzzzz

Chapter 17

Q. What happens next?

A. Bloom and Stephen walk back to Eccles Street. Bloom offers Stephen a bed for the night but Stephen refuses and leaves. Bloom goes to bed. The section is written in a question-and-answer format like a religious catechism.

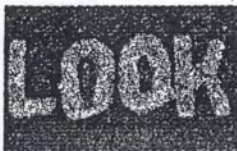
Chapter 18

yes Molly Bloom sits awake in bed yes and remembers her youth in Gibraltar yes and her many sexual partners yes in one unbroken stream of consciousness yes and recalls the day she yes gave herself to Bloom while munching some heavily symbolic seed cake yes (The 35-page chapter consists of just seven sentences. The final words are. "...and yes I said yes I will Yes.")

The 18 Episodes of "Ulysses"

CHAPTER 1

Telemachus. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus' son Telemachus sets out from Ithaca to find his father. In Joyce's *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus, estranged from his father, will discover in Leopold Bloom — whose son has died — a spiritual father.



CHAPTER 2

Nestor. Telemachus first visits Nestor, one of Odysseus' comrades-in-arms. Stephen's Nestor is Mr. Deasy, headmaster of the school where Stephen teaches.

CHAPTER 3

Proteus. Telemachus learns of Odysseus' whereabouts from Menelaus, who has learned it from Proteus, who can change shape at will. Stephen, strolling Sandymount Strand, conjures an ever-mutating world.

CHAPTER 4

Calypso. Odysseus, imprisoned by the nymph Calypso, is ordered freed by Zeus. Leopold Bloom, whose wife reminds him of the nymph in a painting above their bed, sets forth from his house on his Dublin odyssey.



CHAPTER 5

Lotus Eaters. Eating the lotus destroys desire. Mr. Bloom ponders things that lull the mind and heart into deadening complacency.

CHAPTER 6

Hades. Odysseus visits the land of the dead. Mr. Bloom attends Paddy Dignam's funeral.



CHAPTER 7

Aeolus. Odysseus visits Aeolus, given control of the winds by Zeus. Stephen and Mr. Bloom visit the windy regions of a newspaper office.

CHAPTER 8

Lestrygonians. The Lestrygonians were cannibals. At Burton's restaurant Bloom is repelled by the customers stuffing their faces. He leaves, stops to feed some gulls at the O'Connell Street bridge, then goes to Davy Byrne's pub for a Gorgonzola sandwich and a glass of burgundy.

CHAPTER 9

Scylla & Charybdis. Odysseus successfully navigates his way between the she-monster Scylla and the whirlpool of Charybdis. Stephen, at the National Library, steers his way in debate between the idealism of the poet George Russell and the materialism of Mulligan. Bloom appears briefly, also steering a middle way, between Stephen and Mulligan.

CHAPTER 10

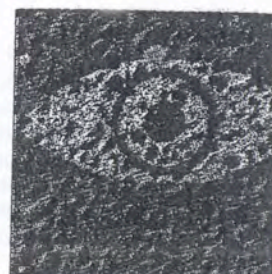
Wandering Rocks. We leave Homer's *Odyssey* for an episode taken from Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece. Various Dubliners are depicted on their travels through the city. Composed of 18 fragments (with a 19th as a coda), the chapter is both a panorama of Dublin and a mirror of the book's 18 chapters.

CHAPTER 11

Sirens. The Sirens' singing drives men mad. Mr. Bloom, hearing Stephen's father and others singing in the Ormond Hotel bar, is reminded, maddeningly, that his rival Blazes Boylan is just now visiting — and making love to — his wife, Molly.

CHAPTER 12

Cyclops. The Cyclopes were cannibalistic one-eyed giants. Odysseus puts out the eye of one of them, who hurls a great rock at him — and misses. Bloom will confront the bigoted "citizen" in Barney Kiernan's pub. The citizen will hurl a tin box at Bloom.



CHAPTER 13

Nausicaä. Washed up on a beach, Odysseus is awakened by the Princess Nausicaä chatting with her maids nearby. Mr. Bloom, resting on Sandymount Strand, is charmed by young Gerty MacDowell, who shows him a bit of leg and arouses his passions. Fireworks explode as a church service concludes.

CHAPTER 14

Oxen of the Sun. A treacherous member of Odysseus' crew goads his men into killing the sun god's sacred oxen. Zeus kills the men with a thunderbolt. Only Odysseus escapes, but lands on Calypso's island, where seven years of sexual bondage await him. Mr. Bloom visits a maternity hospital, where the wife of a friend is having a difficult labor.

CHAPTER 15

Circe. Circe turned men into swine. Stephen and Mr. Bloom, visiting Dublin's red-light district, are possessed by hallucinations born of guilt and fear.

CHAPTER 16

Eumaeus. Reaching Ithaca, Odysseus seeks shelter at the hut of his faithful swineherd, Eumaeus. Mr. Bloom and Stephen relax at a cabman's shelter.



CHAPTER 17

Ithaca. Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, arrives at his palace. Stephen and Mr. Bloom return to Bloom's house. Bloom offers Stephen a room, but Stephen declines.



CHAPTER 18

Penelope. Mr. Bloom retires to his bed. Molly lies awake, letting her mind drift, thinking of her lovers, including Blazes Boylan, remembering when Bloom proposed to her on Howth Head. The book ends with her famous "yes I will Yes" — yes to her husband, yes to her marriage, yes to the glory that is life.



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