

Extract 3: *Circe*, Madeleine Miller

This extract describes Circe turning Odysseus' sailors to pigs. At this point in the book Circe has been living on the deserted island and has been practicing magic for a long time.

The painted ship of theirs was the finest thing about them. Their faces had lines like grandfathers. Their eyes were bloodshot and dead. They flinched from my animals.

'Let me guess,' I said. 'You are lost? You are hungry and tired and sad?'

They ate well. They drank more. Their bodies were lumpish here and there with fat, though the muscles beneath were hard as trees. Their scars were long, ridged and slashing. They had a good season, then met someone who did not like their thieving. They were plunderers of that I had no doubt. Their eyes never stopped counting up my treasures, and they grinned at the tally they came to.

I did not wait any more for them to stand and come at me. I raised my staff, I spoke the word. They went crying to their pen like all the rest.