Epic Similes in *The Odyssey*  

**Name:** ______________________________

A *simile* is an expression that uses *like* or *as* to compare two seemingly unlike items. An *epic simile* extends a comparison with elaborate, descriptive details that can fill several lines of verse.

Directions: There are five epic similes printed below. Select ONE. Turn to the back of this sheet and complete all the steps about that ONE epic simile. You may ignore all the other epic similes besides the ONE you have selected.

1. 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! —

2. Just as an angler poised on a jutting rock flings his treacherous bait in the offshore swell, whips his long rod— hook sheathed in an oxhorn lure— and whisks up little fish he flips on the beach-break, writhing, gasping out their lives... so now they writhed, gasping as Scylla swung them up her cliff and there at her cavern’s mouth she bolted them down raw.

3. As a father, brimming with love, welcomes home his darling only son in a warm embrace— what pain he’s borne for him and him alone! home now, in the tenth year from far abroad so the loyal swineherd hugged the beaming price.

4. Then, like an expert singer skilled at lyre and song— who strains a string to a new peg with ease, making the pliant sheep-gut fast at either end— so with his virtuosos ease Odysseus strung his mighty bow.
Level 1: Identify the context for the epic simile.
(In other words, what is happening in the story when this epic simile appears?)

Level 2: Paraphrase the epic simile.
(In other words, re-state the comparison made in the epic simile; what are the lines saying?)

Level 3: Write a thematic statement for the epic simile.
(In other words, what is a message or “lesson for life” that the epic simile is sending? Remember that theme statements are complete sentences and should not mention specific characters or plot events.)

Level 5: Re-write your thematic statement from level 4, this time using imagery that is inspired by the comparison in the epic simile.
(In other words, if the epic simile uses a musical comparison, re-write your theme statement so that it also makes use of a musical comparison. If the epic simile uses a fishing comparison, re-write your theme statement so that it also makes use of a fishing comparison, etc.)
Standard: Epic Similes in *The Odyssey*

**simile:** uses *like* or *as* to compare two items

**epic simile:** a really long simile that uses *like, as, so, or just so* to compare two items

Directions: Read the epic simile. Fill in all the boxes.

**1.** 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!—

**Box 1:** Which adventure is this epic simile from?

__________________________

**Box 2:** What is the comparison in this epic simile?

_________________________ is like ____________________.

**Box 3:** What is the epic simile is REALLY about? Come up with one theme subject word.

__________________________

**2.** Just as an angler poised on a jutting rock flings his treacherous bait in the offshore swell, whips his long rod—hook sheathed in an oxhorn lure—and whisks up little fish he flips on the beach-break, writhing, gasping out their lives... **so** now they writhed, gasping as Scylla swung them up her cliff and there at her cavern's mouth she bolted them down raw.

**Box 1:** Which adventure is this epic simile from?

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**Box 2:** What is the comparison in this epic simile?

_________________________ is like ____________________. 
Box 3: *What is the epic simile is REALLY about? Come up with one theme subject word.*

______________________ is like ___________________.