

Chapter 8: Lestrygonians

The action: This a perambulation chapter: Bloom walks across O'Connell Bridge to the southside of Dublin, up Westmoreland St. past Trinity College, then up Grafton till he turns left on Duke Street, where he has his now-famous lunch of gorgonzola cheese sandwich and a glass of burgundy wine. Not much happens in the chapter, but it is crucial to getting to the bottom of the Bloom's relationship. There's an interesting set piece in which Leopold meets Mrs. Breen, an old friend who was once a sort of rival for Molly. She's now married to a older man who's not all there: he's scurrying around town looking for a lawyer to help him sue whoever sent him a postcard that reads: "U.P.:up", whatever that means. (Everyone in the novel seems to understand that's quite an insult, but no one has adequately explained the bizarre letters.) During his lunch, Bloom reminisces about his early days and years with Molly: pay careful attention to that. Also, at one point he goes off-stage and the others at the pub talk about him: pay careful attention to what they say. Look for references to the horse race. After lunch he continues on towards the National Library in Kildare St. (he's looking up an ad to copy for Alexander Keyes); on the way, he sees Blazes Boylan: watch what happens in the last pages.



Davy Byrne's Pub on Duke Street

On p. 176, look at the ¶ beginning with the words, "His downcast eyes". Bloom begins to ruminate the digestion of the gods here, and he resolves to check out their anatomy next time he happens to be in the National Museum, which houses statues like the Venus Praxitales at the right, to examine their anatomy. The museum is attached to National Library, where he's headed in the next chapter.

Odyssean Parallel

The Lestrygonians were giant cannibals who end up eating the crews of eleven of Odysseus' twelve ships. Eating is the central theme of the episode, like flowers in "The Lotus Eaters." Bloom's route, plotted on a map, looks very vaguely like a diagram of food traveling through the human digestive tract.



