

A Rock and a Hard Place Hints + Solution

The title hints that something is stuck *between* a rock and a hard place, so let's join our words (thus forming a *dilemma*) and check what's there. Those looking for hidden rock-related words might quickly recognize *TOPAZ*, *DIAMOND*, or *FELDSPAR*, leading to perhaps lesser-known minerals like *TALC*, *CALCITE*, and *APATITE*.

Although there's no specified order to these phrases, those well-versed in geology (or Google) might recognize that these minerals are all on the Mohs scale of mineral hardness, which suggests a natural way to order them.

STREE | *TALC* | HEMY (Hardness = 1)

TECHNI | *CALCITE* | S (Hardness = 3)

CH | *APATITE* | DDY (Hardness = 5)

SEIN | *FELDSPAR* | KLER (Hardness = 6)

SHORTS | *TOPAZ* | ALEA (Hardness = 8)

ENCYCLOPE | *DIAMOND* | AYS (Hardness = 10)

Finally, if we take the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 8th, and 10th letters respectively (being careful to skip or throw away the italicized "*stones*"), we can extract our final answer: **SCYLLA**, the literary "*rock*" from Homer's *Odyssey*.

Hints:

- 1) As per the idiom, there may be items of interest *between* each rock and its associated hard place.
- 2) Each dilemma is difficult, some more so than others. Perhaps a relative of Ohm's Law will help you rank them.
- 3) Looking for the solution? Perhaps the final answer is just a stone's throw away.