

First Last Name

Teacher

Ancient Literature

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Narrative of the *Odyssey*

Book One

This is the tale of Odysseus who battles the raging seas to return to Ithaca where his family, Penelope and Telémakhos, wait patiently for him. The vengeful god Poseidon wishes to destroy him, and on an island in the sea, the nymph Kalypso wishes him for her own and will not let him go. It seems that he will never reach his home, and his family begins to despair of ever seeing him again. Athena wishes to bring them hope, for all the gods, except Poseidon, love Odysseus, so she comes to his house to speak with Telémakhos. There she sees many lords sitting and eating food they had taken from Odysseus' fields. They are the unwelcome suitors of Penelope who often feast at her house squandering Odysseus' wealth. Athena introduces herself to Telémakhos as his father's friend. Telémakhos pours out his frustration with the suitors to her, saying he wishes Odysseus will return and make all right again. Athena urges him to rid the house of the suitors and seek news of Odysseus, for he is not dead, only detained. Telémakhos follows her advice in amazement, for he realizes that his guest is immortal. Meanwhile, Hermes, the swiftest of messengers, is sent by Zeus to free Odysseus from the nymph Kalypso's clutches.

Book Two

The next day, Telémakhos, like a true son of Odysseus, goes boldly before the people. He lays before them all the crimes the suitors had committed and how they had squandered his father's wealth. The assembly is touched, but Antínoös, one of the suitors, answers him

scornfully and accuses Penelope of trickery in refusing to marry one of them. In anger, Zeus sends two fierce eagles upon them. They swoop over the crowd wreaking havoc—a sign of the death Odysseus will bring to all the suitors for their crimes. Halithersês, a wise old lord, explains this to the suitors, but they tell him to keep his omens to himself. Mentor, an old friend of Odysseus, continues to warn the suitors of Odysseus' wrath, but they only laugh and return to Odysseus' house. Seeing there is no hope to persuade the suitors to leave, Telémakhos prepares for his journey to find news of his father. Athena, in disguise, gathers a crew and ship for him and they secretly set out on their voyage.

Book Three

On the following morning Telémakhos and Athena land in Pylos, a city ruled by Nestor. Telémakhos asks for news of his father who had fought with Nestor during the Trojan War. Nestor explains that after the war ended, half of their army wished to stay in Troy for a while longer under lord Agamemnon. The other half wished to return home immediately. Nestor, Odysseus, and others departed, but they had not traveled far when Odysseus decided to turn back. He had not been seen since, and Nestor and others had returned home safely. Agamemnon returned only to be slain by an evil suitor of his wife Klytaimnéstra, but the suitor was later slain by his son Orestês. Nestor tells Telémakhos not to stay away from home too long, and leave his possessions with the suitors, instead he should first visit the red haired king Menelâos in the south. Athena reveals her identity when she departs in a thunderclap. Nestor realizes his immortal guest and prepares a sacrificial feast in Athena's honor, praying for her goodwill. Nestor generously gives Telémakhos horses for the journey, and his son Peisístratos as a guide, then Telémakhos departs.

Book Four

Telémakhos and Peisístaros ride until they reach the magnificent home of Meneláos. He invites them both to dine with him. They marvel at his riches, but Meneláos replies that despite his wealth, he grieves for his good friend Odysseus who is lost on the sea, and he does not know if he is still alive. Noting the sadness of Telémakhos in hearing this and recognizing the similarities between the two, Meneláos realizes that Telémakhos is Odysseus' son. Helen, Meneláos' wife, for whom the entire war was fought, enters and, wishing to cheer them, adds a mixture to the wine, so they will be incapable of tears for the rest of the day. Helen and Meneláos tell stories of Odysseus and the Trojan War into the night. The next morning Telémakhos asks Meneláos for news of his father. Meneláos tells of his travels in returning. On the way back from Troy, he relates that his ship was stranded on an island by Egypt. His crew began to starve, but the nymph Eidothea came to their rescue telling them that if they could capture her father, the immortal Proteus, he would tell them what to do. Meneláos and three of his most trustworthy men seized Proteus as he slept in a cave. He turned into many terrifying forms, but they would not let him go. Finally Proteus gave up, and told them that the gods were offended because Meneláos had not offered them a sacrifice before they had departed, so Meneláos must go to Egypt and appease them. Proteus also told Meneláos that Odysseus still lived, but he was trapped on an island by the nymph Kalypso. Thanking him, Telémakhos leaves with a golden bowl which Meneláos gives to him. Meanwhile, the suitors hearing of Telémakhos' journey, board a ship together determined to intercept and slay Telémakhos. Penelope discovers the plan, and prays to Athena in distress. Athena sends Penelope a dream assuring her that she will protect Telémakhos. **Book Five**

To please his daughter Athena, Zeus sends Hermês to set Odysseus free from Kalypso. Kalypso accuses Zeus for never letting gods love mortals as she loves Odysseus, but Kalypso

knows she cannot go against Zeus' will and begrudgingly agrees. Kalypso comes to Odysseus who sits by the sea yearning for home and pleads with him to stay, but Odysseus replies that he only wants his family. The next morning Odysseus builds a raft out of wood. Kalypso promises not to harm him on his journey and Odysseus sets out. The god of earthquakes spies him drifting to land and decides to give him a rough ride into shore. A storm blows in and Odysseus is flung into the raging sea. The nereid, Ino, sees him and feeling pity for Odysseus helps him onto his boat. She gives him her veil which will protect him and tells him to abandon the raft and swim for shore. Odysseus' boat splinters, and he swims for two days towards the faraway island. When Odysseus finally reaches the shore the rocks are too treacherous to land, but he finds a stream and swims ashore. Completely exhausted, Odysseus lays in a leaf pile and falls asleep.

Book Six

As Odysseus sleeps Athena comes down to the king of the island's palace. Athena appears to the princess Nausikaa in a dream. She advises Nausikaa to take her linens to the washing pools and clean them in preparation for her future wedding. The next day Nausikaa and her maids take a cart to the washing pools. After they lay out the clothes to dry, they feast and play with a ball. Nausikaa throws the ball off course, and it falls into the whirling stream; they cry out in dismay. The noise wakes Odysseus and he comes out to meet Nausikaa. Odysseus compliments Nausikaa to gain her favor, for all her maids have run at the sight of him, and begs her to help him. Nausikaa feels sorry for him, so she feeds and clothes him and guides him to the city. To avoid the remarks of the sailors Odysseus waits in the garden of Athena while Nausikaa continues to the palace. Later Odysseus will beg her parents for help and protection.

Book Seven

After waiting in the garden Odysseus continues into the city. Athena brings a sea fog around Odysseus to hide him from the unfriendly eyes of the villagers. She then disguises herself as a young girl. Spying Athena, Odysseus asks her for directions to the palace. Athena warns him not to stare at the people in the village or be too inquisitive, for foreigners are not welcomed. Athena leads him to the palace telling him to enter even though the royal family is feasting, for he will be welcomed. She goes on to tell him of the wise and beautiful queen of the island, Arêêtê. Odysseus enters and marvels at the king's wealth, then kneeling before the queen he begs for help. Odysseus tells of his pain, and he seats himself in the ashes of the fireplace as a sign of his distress. The old oracle Ekhenês asks the king to be more courteous to his strange guest by seating him and bringing him food and drink. The king, Alkínoös, begins to wonder if Odysseus is a god in disguise, but Odysseus quickly explains that he is a mortal; then he begs for a ship to return. At his speech the people of the town cheer and cry that he will be given a safe passage home. Arêêtê questions Odysseus on where he received his cloak, for she sees it was woven by the palace maidens. Odysseus tells her his story and how he received the garment from Nausikaa. Hearing this Alkínoös tells Odysseus that he wishes he would stay and marry Nausikaa, but since Odysseus wants to return, Alkínoös will help him on the journey. Odysseus goes to bed with joy.

Book Eight

The next morning king Alkínoös takes Odysseus to the shipyard, meanwhile Athena disguises herself as the king's crier and gathers a crowd. Alkínoös tells the people of Odysseus explaining that he does not know Odysseus' name, but he will gather a ship and crew for him. The people applaud, and a minstrel is summoned. He sings of the Trojan War. Odysseus begins to weep quietly into his cloak, but Alkínoös notices and proposes that Odysseus watch the trials of field and track. Laódamas, Alkínoös' son, approaches Odysseus and asks him why he will not

take part in the games. Odysseus replies that he has too much on his mind for competing. Seareach, a friend of Laódamas, answers that he believes that Odysseus will not compete because he has not learned the sport and does not have the skill. He goes on to say that Odysseus must work for a tramp and not be an athlete at all. Odysseus is hurt by Seareach's words and reprimands Seareach, then he seizes a discus and flings it farther than anyone else. Having proven himself Odysseus challenges anyone to compete against him. Alkínoös tries to make peace and invites Odysseus to watch the skilled dancers. Afterwards Alkínoös' lords bring Odysseus gifts, and Seareach gives Odysseus a magnificent sword and apologizes. At Nausikaa's request Odysseus promises never to forget her for saving his life. Later as they feast Alkínoös asks Odysseus his name.

Book Nine

Odysseus reveals his identity to Alkínoös, and then he begins to relate his story. After Odysseus and his men had set out from Troy they landed upon Ísmaros, the land of the Kikonês, where they plundered a town. Odysseus' men loitered too long feasting on the plunder, and the rest of the Kikonês force came upon them. Many of Odysseus' men were slain. The rest fled to the ships and set sail sad at heart. A strong gale blew them off course to the land of the Lotos Eaters. Three men were sent inland to discover who the inhabitants of the island were. They met the Lotos Eaters who offered them Lotos flowers which they ate. The flowers made them wish to never leave the island, and in desperation Odysseus forced them back onto the ships. He commanded the rest of his men to not eat the flowers and again they set sail. Next they stopped on the land across the bay from the country of the Kyklopês, a wild race of giants. Odysseus rowed across the bay with some of his men leaving the rest behind. They came to one of the giant Kyklopês' homes. Odysseus left the sailors with the ship. The rest entered and found that

the Kyklops was gone tending his large flocks of sheep. When the Kyklops returned Odysseus asked him to be kind and hospitable to them, but instead, to their horror, he seized some of the men and ate them. Then he rolled a great stone across the door so that the rest could not escape. The next morning Odysseus found a pole and sharpened it, then he gave the Kyklops strong wine; he drank it and quickly became drunk. Odysseus and his men seized the pole and poked it into the flaming fireplace, then they blinded an eye of the Kyklops with it. The enraged Kyklops tried to kill them, but they tied themselves underneath his sheep and escaped unnoticed when the sheep were let out to graze. As they sailed away Odysseus shouted angrily back to the Kyklops who flung great stones after them. The Kyklops prayed to his father Poseidon asking that he would pour out revenge on Odysseus. Odysseus returned to his force across the bay.

Book Ten

Odysseus and his men continued until they reached Aiolia Island where they were treated kindly by the king, Aiolos. When they departed Aiolos gave Odysseus a bag which contained three of the winds, only the west wind was let free and it blew them to the coast of Ithaca. The sailors, however, were jealous that Odysseus had been given the bag, for they supposed it was filled with treasure. They opened it letting out the winds, and the ships were blown back to Aiolia. Aiolos was surprised and displeased, and he refused to help Odysseus. Odysseus' company sailed on wearily until they reached the Laistrygonian height. They discovered a village there, and they were invited into the home of the queen. She gathered the fierce giant men of the land, and they slew many of Odysseus' men. The rest were forced to flee to the ships. The next island they came to was Aiaia. Odysseus sent a group of his men, led by Eurýlokhos, to discover who lived upon the island. They came upon the home of the goddess Kirkê; she welcomed them and gave them wine which took all thought of their homes away from them. She then changed

them into pigs. Eurýlokhos had stayed outside Kirkê's home expecting evil, and when he saw his men did not return, he hurried back to Odysseus. As Odysseus sped to his men's rescue the god Hermês appeared to him. Hermês told Odysseus of what had befallen his men and gave him a magic plant that would protect Odysseus from Kirkê's wine. Odysseus continued, and he was greeted and given wine by Kirkê. When Kirkê tried to send him to the pig pen he leapt up and threatened her with his sword until she begged for mercy. She turned the pigs into men again. At Kirkê's request Odysseus brought up all his men to eat with her, and she no longer did them harm. They stayed with her for a year in comfort, but at last they wished again to continue home. Before they left Kirkê told Odysseus that they must first go to the house of Death and offer sacrifices there, then they would be able to continue their journey.

Book Eleven

When Odysseus and his men reached the house of Death they offered an ewe and ram with milk, honey, wine, and water as a sacrifice to the dead. Then, as Kirkê had commanded, Odysseus ward off the spirits of the dead with his sword until the spirit of Teirêsius entered. Teirêsius tasted the sacrifice and then warned Odysseus not to raid any of the herds of Hêlios or evil would befall all Odysseus' men, and when, through long wandering, Odysseus alone returned, he must be wary of the suitors of Penelope. Odysseus had spied his mother among the dead, but she neither saw nor recognized her son, and Teirêsius explained to Odysseus that the dead must first taste of the sacrifice to speak. Then he departed as Odysseus' mother drew near. She recognized her son and asked him why he had journeyed to the realm of Death and if he had not yet returned to Ithaca. Odysseus replied that he had not yet returned; then he asked what had befallen her and what had become of his wife and son. She replied that all was well with them though they sorrowed for him, but she and her husband Laërtês had pined for Odysseus' return,

and she had died of grief. Then other great and famous ladies came and spoke with Odysseus.

When they passed Agamemnon entered and told Odysseus his sad story. Agamemnon's evil wife and her suitor had murdered him and his men upon their return from the Trojan War.

Agamemnon then warns Odysseus to arrive secretly to Ithaca to avoid such a fate. Odysseus also met many more of his old comrades, and he spoke with Akhilleus who asked for news of his family. Odysseus told him of the brave actions of his son Neoptólemos in battle. Aias only did not approach, for even in death he remembered his quarrel with Odysseus, and he held onto his anger. When they had passed Odysseus saw many other great men. Some had never ending tortures and toils for past crimes against Zeus. Odysseus wished to see more, but he saw a great host of the dead approaching, and fearing the tricks of Perséphone he left with great haste.

Book Twelve

Odysseus returned to Aiaia and received a warning from Kirkê about the many perils which he would face. Odysseus' ships set sail, and soon they came to the Seirênês who, with their beautiful songs, had previously lured away many sailors. Odysseus tied himself to the mast, for he wished to hear the songs without being lured overboard, but, as Kirkê had instructed, he plugged his men's ears with beeswax. In this way, they passed the Seirênês safely. To escape other sea perils, Odysseus was forced to send his ship past the monster Skylla to whom he lost six men. Sadly, the rest continued on to the island of Thrinákia. Odysseus begged his men not to land lest they should eat the cattle there, for Kirkê and Teirêsiás had warned him against it, but the sailors were weary and landed anyway. The men promised not to touch any of Helios' cattle, but they were prevented from leaving for a month due to gales, and their provisions dwindled. In desperation Odysseus went out to beg the gods to let them leave the island, but the gods did not listen, and Odysseus fell asleep. As Odysseus slept Eurýlokhos rallied the men saying it was

better to die in the god's wrath than to starve, so they killed and ate some of Helios' cattle. When Odysseus woke he was distressed, but he could do nothing. A week later, the gale ceased and they sailed away. Soon after, however, Zeus sent down a thunderbolt which destroyed the ships. Odysseus alone was saved upon a few planks which he lashed together. Odysseus was pushed back towards Skylla in the storm. His craft was swallowed down with the tide by Kharybdis, and Odysseus was left clinging to a tree. Odysseus waited until she spewed the water and his craft up again. He scrambled onto the planks, and with the protection of the gods he sailed safely past Skylla and on towards Kalypso's island.

Book Thirteen

Odysseus finishes his tale. All the court of Alkínoös give Odysseus gifts, for they are moved by his story. The next day a ship is prepared, and Odysseus sets sail for Ithaca. As Odysseus sleeps the ship reaches a cove along the shores of Ithaca. The sailors place Odysseus, still sleeping, and his treasure on the shore. Then they sail for home. Poseidon begs Zeus to let him punish Alkínoös' people, the Phaiákians, for aiding Odysseus. Zeus, however, only allows Poseidon to turn the ship into stone as it nears Phaiákia. The amazed Phaiákians offer sacrifices to Poseidon hoping to appease his wrath. When Odysseus wakes he does not realize that he is in Ithaca, for Athena disguises the land with a mist, and finding himself alone, he concludes that the sailors betrayed him. Athena then appears to him in the form of a young boy. Odysseus speaks with her, and he learns that he is indeed in Ithaca. Then he tells Athena a false story about himself. Amused at Odysseus' tricks, Athena reveals herself to him and removes the mist. Odysseus recognizes the land with joy. After hiding the treasure, Athena tells Odysseus of the suitors and Telémakhos' adventures. Athena disguises Odysseus as a beggar and advises him to first seek his faithful swineherd before ridding his house of the suitors. She then departs to join

Telémakhos.

Book Fourteen

Odysseus arrives at the house of his swineherd, Eumaios. Eumaios hospitably welcomes Odysseus into his home. He tells Odysseus of how his master went to Troy never to return, and with his master gone Penelope's suitors come daily to steal and feast upon his swine. Odysseus asks Eumaios who his master is, though he knows that he is none other than himself, hinting that he might still be alive. Eumaios replies that wanderers are always willing to tell false tales for a night's lodging, for he is sure that Odysseus is long dead. Odysseus was a good master, Eumaios says, and he misses him more than his own parents. Odysseus replies that he is sure Odysseus will return, but the swineherd remains unconvinced and changes the subject. He tells of Telémakhos and asks Odysseus to tell his story. To this Odysseus answers with a false story about himself. He was from Krete, Odysseus begins, and he went off to the Trojan War where he gained fame for his deeds. After the war he returned home for a month, but soon he wished to be sailing again and left. When he reached Egypt, his men against his wish, plundered the area causing a battle. They were overpowered, and he alone escaped by begging for mercy. Afterwards, he lived in Egypt for many years. Odysseus continues by saying that a Phoinikian adventurer tricked him into a ship, meaning to sell him as a slave, but the ship was wrecked by a storm, and he, the sole survivor, was stranded in Thesprotia. He was treated kindly by the king there who sent him on a ship bound for Krete. The sailors, however, treacherously made him prisoner, but he was able to escape, and he made his way to the swineherd's home. Odysseus finishes his tale. Despite Odysseus' claims that Odysseus still lives, Eumaios refuses to believe him. Eumaios' four men enter and they all feast. Then, Odysseus, wishing for a blanket, tells a story about Odysseus lending him his coat. Eumaios gives Odysseus his coat and Odysseus falls

asleep.

Book Fifteen

Athena hurries to Meneláos' realm where she appears to Telémakhos. She urges him to return without delay and warns him to sail home by a different route to avoid the suitor's ambush. Meneláos gives a goblet to Telémakhos as a parting gift, and his son gives him a golden bowl. Helen, however, gives Telémakhos an ornate dress for his future wife. As Telémakhos prepares to depart with Peisístratos, an eagle clutching a goose in its talons sweeps over them. Helen explains that it is a sign meaning Odysseus will return and conquer the suitors. Telémakhos rides away, and the next day he arrives at Pylos. He bids farewell to his friend Peisístratos and hurriedly prepares to sail, for he fears he will be detained by King Nestor. Before Telémakhos leaves, however, he takes aboard a man named Theoklýmenos, who is fleeing because he killed his cousin. Meanwhile, Odysseus and Eumaios talk together. Eumaios says he grieves over the death of Odysseus' mother for she raised him. To this, Odysseus questions Eumaios about his story, and how he came to Ithaka. Eumaios begins by saying he was born as a prince on the island of Syriê but by treachery he was carried off as a prisoner by Phoenician tradesmen to Ithaka. Laërtês purchased him and raised him as his own. In this way, Eumaios and Odysseus talk to each other long into the night. Meanwhile, Telémakhos reaches Ithaka safely. He prepares to walk inland to the swineherd's house as Athena bade him do, and the rest of his men sail to the city with Theoklýmenos who will stay with the wealthy suitor Eurýmakhos.

Book Sixteen

When Telémakhos enters the swineherd's cottage, Eumaios is overjoyed to see him safely home, and after a meal he hurries to the city to tell Penelope that her son has returned safely. Telémakhos does not recognize Odysseus at first, but Athena appears to Odysseus and removes

his disguise. Telémakhos hardly believes his eyes when he sees the humble beggar turn into his long-lost father. The two weep together and then begin to talk. Soon, they devise a scheme for the destruction of the suitors. Telémakhos will hide the suitor's weapons as they feast, and Odysseus will enter in disguise. Then they will draw their weapons and bring down vengeance upon the suitors. Meanwhile, Eumaios and Telémakhos' ship arrives in the city bringing the news to Penelope that Telémakhos is safely home. Penelope is overjoyed, but the suitors are frustrated and angry. They call a council and make plans to kill Telémakhos before he can harm them for their previous plot. One of the suitors, named Amphinomos, has a better heart, and he convinces his friends to first consult the gods before harming Telémakhos. Later Penelope, who has been warned of the plot by a faithful servant, comes before the suitors calling out their wrong doings and begging them not to harm her son. The suitors readily agree, but all the while they plot evil in their hearts. Eumaios returns through the dusk and tells Telémakhos that the suitors lying in an ambush have returned. Night comes on and they prepare to sleep.

Book Seventeen

The next morning, Telémakhos departs to see Penelope and bids Eumaios to follow with Odysseus so that he can beg. Penelope and the servants rejoice to see Telémakhos safely home. Soon after, Telémakhos departs in search of Theoklymenos, and calling a faithful crewman, Telémakhos entrusts Menelaos' gifts to him to keep safe from the suitors. Then he returns home with Theoklymenos where he tells Penelope his tale. Meanwhile, Odysseus and Eumaios set out. On the way, a man named Melanthios encounters them. He brings goats to the suitors, and he speaks scornfully to Odysseus and rudely kicks him. Odysseus holds his temper, but Eumaios is furious and calls down vengeance upon Melanthios from the nymphs of a nearby spring. They continue to Odysseus' hall. There, a hunting dog Odysseus trained, now forsaken and half dead,

recognizes Odysseus and attempts to wag its tail; then it dies. This moves Odysseus, but he hides it from Eumaios, and he only comments asking why such fine dogs were left out uncared for. In the hall the suitors feast, and Odysseus, following Athena's prompting, goes about begging for bread. This way he can see who are the worst and best of the suitors. Antinoös refuses to give Odysseus anything, and even after Odysseus tells him most of his false tale, he continues to scorn him. At this, Odysseus cries that it is a pity that Antinoös looks more kingly than he acts. Enraged, Antinoös throws a stool at Odysseus hitting him hard on the shoulder. In her chamber Penelope hears the commotion, so she calls Eumaios in and questions him about the strange beggar. To the queen's great delight, Eumaios explains that Odysseus claims to have once known Odysseus. Penelope commands Eumaios to summon Odysseus, but Odysseus refuses to come saying that he must be careful not to arouse the suitors' wrath again. After a whispered conference with Telémakhos, Eumaios returns home.

Book Eighteen

As Odysseus sits on the doorstep, a tramp nicknamed Iros, enters and scornfully commands Odysseus to leave the step or fight with him. Odysseus calmly replies that there is plenty of room for two on the doorstep, but he can hurt Iros if he wishes. Iros grows angry and boasts that he can easily beat Odysseus. Overhearing this, Antinoös calls his friends to watch the combat, and as they form a ring around the opponents, he promises the victor a portion of the goat cooking on the fire. Fearing treachery, Odysseus makes the suitors promise not to interfere. Athena gives Odysseus greater strength and power until Iros begins to tremble at the sight of him. Iros' terror increases when Antinoös threatens to ship him to the cruel king Ékhetos if he loses. Then the two begin to fight, and even though Odysseus does not wish to display all his strength, he easily throws Iros to the ground. The suitors cheer and wish Odysseus well. Then

Odysseus is given the promised meat, and another suitor, Amphinomos, gives him bread, wine, and a fine gold cup. Seeing Amphinomos' kind heart, Odysseus warns him to beware of the return of Odysseus, but Athena keeps Amphinomos in the hall destined to die. Then Athena gives Penelope the desire to enter the hall where the suitors feast, so that she will fill her son and husband with admiration. Athena causes Penelope to fall asleep and become even more beautiful than before. When Penelope awakens and enters the hall, she reproaches Telemakhos for remaining with the suitors. He calms her fears, explaining that he wishes for the destruction of the suitors as well. Eurymakhos interrupts, complimenting the queen for her beauty. Penelope replies that she was once fair before Odysseus left for Troy, but now she is only filled with sorrow as an unhappy marriage draws near. Then she scolds the suitors for feasting on her property and never giving her gifts. To soothe her, all the suitors give her costly presents. Satisfied, Penelope returns to her room. The suitors continue to mock Odysseus by calling him lazy. When Odysseus defends himself, Eurymakhos throws a stool at him. Odysseus, however, ducks out of the way. At Telemakhos' suggestion, the suitors return home to bed.

Book Nineteen

Telemakhos and Odysseus are left in the hall, and they begin to scheme. Telemakhos removes the weapons while Odysseus creates excuses to explain their actions to the suitors. Athena stands nearby shining light over them, and though Telemakhos cannot see her he sees her light and realizes that a god is present. After they finish, Penelope enters and begins to speak with Odysseus. She explains that she has tried to avoid a marriage with a suitor for many years. She told the suitors that once she finished sewing a shroud for Laërtes she would marry, and for many years she sewed it by day and unraveled it by night. Eventually, however, the maids discovered her plot, and now she has no choice; she must choose to marry one of them. Then,

Penelope questions Odysseus about his story. He begins by saying his name is Aithôn, and he was born in Krete. Aithôn was the son of a king, and he had entertained Odysseus, who was on his way to Troy for twelve days. Penelope eagerly asks Odysseus about the garments and men of Odysseus, so she may know if he is speaking the truth. Odysseus answers Penelope's questions with detail, and she begins to weep at her memories. Thus, Odysseus explains that after many adventures Odysseus is returning. Penelope replies that she wishes that the tale is true, and she calls servants to bathe Odysseus. As Eurýkleia begins to wash Odysseus, she notices a scar on Odysseus' leg which she recognizes, and she immediately realizes who Odysseus is. Odysseus warns her not to tell anyone, or he will kill her with the other evil servants. Eurýkleia faithfully promises to be silent. Afterward, Penelope asks Odysseus to interpret her dream. She saw twenty geese feeding on grain, but suddenly an eagle swooped down and killed them. She was filled with sorrow, but the eagle told her that he was Odysseus returning bringing death to the suitors. Odysseus answers that the dream must be true, but Penelope shakes her head and says she doubts its truth. She says that she will have a tournament to see which suitor can shoot an arrow through a row of spears, and she will marry the victor. Odysseus advises her not to delay the match and both depart to bed.

Book Twenty

Odysseus lays down on the doorstep and wraps himself in sheep fleece, but he cannot sleep, for he wonders how he can face the suitors in combat and be victorious. Athena appears to Odysseus, reminding him that she will guard him, and silently she causes him to sleep. Penelope, however, remains awake in her room and grieves for Odysseus. She asks Artemis to blow her away like Pandareos' daughters or pierce her with her arrow, for in death she would see the shade of Odysseus again. At dawn, Odysseus awakes to hear Penelope's cry, and after laying

aside his bedding he rises and begs Zeus for a sign. Immediately, a thunderbolt rips the sky, and a nearby maid grinding grain looks up in astonishment, for there are no clouds to be seen. She realizes it is a sign from Zeus and prays for Odysseus' return and a release from her toil for the suitors. Meanwhile, the maids prepare for the suitors to feast. Eumaios, Melánthios, and another man named Philoítios enter bringing pigs, goats, and an ox for the feast. Philoítios turns to Odysseus, for he sees that Odysseus is a captain. He pities Odysseus and tells him that the suitors constantly take his herds, so he longs for Odysseus' return. Odysseus promises that Odysseus will return, and Philoítios and Eumaios heartily agree. Meanwhile, the suitors enter from the field where they plot Telémakhos' destruction and begin to feast. One suitor, Etésippos, scoffs at Odysseus for being fed and kindly treated by Telémakhos. Quickly, Odysseus ducks as Philoítios flings a cow's hoof toward him. Telémakhos rises in anger and accuses the suitors for their wrongdoings. Another suitor, Ageláos, tries to appease Telémakhos; he asks that Penelope choose a suitor to marry. Telémakhos replies that he is perfectly willing for Penelope to marry, but he will not force her to. Athena causes the suitors to laugh uncontrollably, but in the midst of the merriment, Theoklýmenos rises and foretells the death of the suitors. However, the suitors remain undaunted and, indeed, they laugh even harder and scorn Telémakhos about his friends

Book Twenty-One

As Penelope watches the feast, she decides to begin the contest. Penelope enters the storeroom where Odysseus' bow is kept and weeps as she lifts it down. Penelope's maids gather axes, and the group proceeds to the hall. Eumaios and the cowherd weep as they set the blades in place, but Antínoös impatiently commands them to stop crying or leave the house. First, Telémakhos asks to try, for he wishes to accomplish his father's shot. Telémakhos begins to string the bow, but just as he is about to succeed, he notices Odysseus stiffen. Telémakhos lowers

the bow and bemoans his failure. A suitor named Leódês tries next, but he has little strength and quickly gives up. To this, Antinoös tells Melánthios to bring forth lard with which to bend the bow. However, their attempts are in vain, and none of the suitors has the strength to even string the bow. Downcast, Eumaios and the cowherd leave the hall and Odysseus follows them. He reveals his identity because they promise to help him in the fight. Odysseus instructs them to lock the maids in their quarters until the battle is over, and he returns to the hall. Meanwhile, Eurýmakhos tries to string the bow but he too fails. Antinoös rouses them by reminding them that it is a holiday and so not fit for their competition. The suitors decide to postpone the contest until the following day, and the group resumes their feasting. Odysseus asks the suitors to let him try the bow to see if he still has his former strength. However, they refuse, for they are afraid of being beaten by the beggar. Penelope intervenes and tells the suitors to allow the beggar to attempt the feat, for even if he succeeds, he cannot marry her, yet she will give him gifts and a safe passage to wherever he wishes. Telémakhos addresses Penelope sharply saying she must not interfere and return to her room. Eumaios lifts the bow and approaches Odysseus. The suitors call him back but Telémakhos urges him on. The suitors begin to laugh at Telémakhos' outburst, and Eumaios hands Odysseus the bow. The suitors jeer as Odysseus inspects the bow. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning spirals down, a sign from Zeus; Odysseus smiles and easily strings the bow. Then, pulling back the string, he lets the arrow fly. The suitors stare in shock as the arrow flies straight through the row of axes.

Book Twenty-Two

Odysseus and Telémakhos rise, and after praying to Apollo, Odysseus lets his arrow fly toward Antinoös. Antinoös falls, and the suitors rise in anger threatening Odysseus with revenge, for they believe the shot was accidental. Odysseus proclaims that he is Odysseus returned, and

the suitors turn pale with fear and shock, for they have no weapons with which to defend themselves. However, Eurýmakhos pleads for mercy accusing Antínoös as the only criminal. Odysseus does not listen to their false claims of innocence, and he begins to shoot into the crowd. Eurýmakhos rallies the suitors and charges Odysseus, his sword upheld, but he too falls to an arrow sent from Odysseus. Telémakhos hurries to collect weapons for Odysseus, Eumaios, the cowherd, and himself. Meanwhile, the suitors guess where the weapons are hidden, so they send Melánthios through a high window to gather them. Odysseus becomes afraid when he perceives that his enemies are arming themselves, so he sends the swineherd and the goatherd to find the culprit and punish him. Odysseus is becoming desperate when Athena enters in the form of Mentor. The suitors threaten to harm her if she does not aid them, but this arouses her anger. She urges Odysseus on and flies to perch on a rafter in the form of a swallow. The fight continues to rage and the suitors' numbers dwindle. A suitor named Ageláos gathers his friends around him, and together they throw their weapons toward Odysseus, but Athena causes them all to miss. The suitors try a second time and give Eumaios and Telémakhos minor injuries but Athena protects Odysseus. Odysseus and his companions charge the suitors, and Athena sends a thundercloud, the aegis, upon the terrified remnant of the suitors destroying many of them. Odysseus pardons a minstrel and a herald, but he slays the rest. After the battle ends, Odysseus summons Eurykleia and the maids and commands them to cleanse the hall. Odysseus kills those of the maids who are evil, and he bids Eurykleia to bring the good news to Penelope.

Book Twenty-Three

Eagerly, Eurýkleia hurries upstairs to Penelope's chamber where she rouses her mistress. Penelope scolds Eurýkleia for waking her, but the nurse explains that Odysseus has returned. Penelope does not believe Eurýkleia, but she agrees to follow the nurse downstairs so she may

see the suitor's slayer. Penelope enters the hall and silently studies Odysseus trying to perceive if he is truly Odysseus returned. Telémakhos questions his mother about her cold greeting, but Odysseus tells him to call the minstrel to play wedding music so the inhabitants of the town will not know of the suitor's death. To test Odysseus, Penelope orders the maids to prepare Odysseus' bed for him outside the chamber. Odysseus rises in anger stating that he carved the bed from a trunk of an olive tree which grew in the center of the bedroom—it is impossible to move. Penelope is finally convinced that he is Odysseus, and the two are joyfully reunited. However, Odysseus explains that his travels are not over, for as the shade of Teirêsiās foretold, he must travel the land with an oar until he meets a man who has no knowledge of the sea. There, he must plant the oar and make many sacrifices to Poseidon. Odysseus continues to tell Penelope of all of his adventures, and they talk into the night. The next morning, Odysseus sets out with his son and the herdsmen to visit Laërtēs, and Athena carefully hides the men from the townspeople's view.

Book Twenty-Four

The suitors' shades flit away to the Underworld following Hermēs' call. The shades of the warriors, Agamémnon and Akhilleus, converse with each other over the things of the past. They recall Akhilleus' death and the battle that ensued for him. After, a great funeral was held for him, and his mother and her sisters, the nymphs, mourned him. Akhilleus' death was glorious, and his fame will never die; unlike Agamémnon, who after returning victorious, had been cruelly slain. The two remember these things together until the shades of the suitors draw near. Agamémnon recognizes a suitor, Amphiédon, and questions him about his fate. Amphiédon relates his story, and Agamémnon exclaims about the faithfulness of Penelope in comparison to his wife. Meanwhile, Odysseus and his friends reach his father's cottage.

Odysseus goes in search of Laërtês while his companions enter the house. Odysseus discovers his bent and bedraggled father tending to a fruit tree. Odysseus decides to withhold his identity and test Laërtês. Odysseus tells a tale about himself and his encounter with Odysseus. Laërtês grieves, but Odysseus reveals who he is to his father's joy. Back in the town, a crowd gathers around Odysseus' gate. The people debate with one another as they decide how to avenge the suitors' deaths. A band of men rally together and march on Odysseus. Odysseus and his companions arm themselves and charge into the fray. Athena begs Zeus to allow her to bring victory and peace to Odysseus, and in the form of Mentor, she rushes to Odysseus' aid. With Athena's help, Laërtês flings a spear slaying the band's leader. Athena commands them to end the battle and to make peace. However, Odysseus does not listen and charges after his fleeing foes. Zeus sends a thunderbolt to Athena, and she cautions Odysseus to end the fray lest he arouse Zeus' anger. Odysseus agrees, and Athena arranges the terms to end the conflict. Ruling over his kingdom, Odysseus lives out his days in peace. Thus ends the tale of Odysseus, who prevailed over trials and temptations as he journeyed home. From across the sea, he returned fulfilling his quest.

Works Cited

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