

The Odyssey Book Notes

The Odyssey by Homer

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Author/Context

Most scholars agree that the time period in which the events in the *Odyssey* took place was about 1200 B.C.E. Similarly, most scholars believe that the *Odyssey* was not written down until somewhere between 800 and 600 B.C.E. During and prior to this time period, there was a strong oral poetic tradition which involved traveling poets called *rhapsodoi*. These poets performed to audiences all over Greece. They sang the lines of epic poems while playing the lyre. Homer is believed to have been one of these poets. The modern understanding is that the story of the siege of Troy, an integral part of Greek mythology, was not created by a single man. The tale of Odysseus' journey home is a common theme of this tradition, called the *nostos*--homecoming. The epic form of this tale as we know it is most likely the synthesis of several oral traditions. The twenty four books of dactylic hexameter we now know as the *Odyssey* have been transmitted with various textual variation since about 300 B.C.E.

The two Homeric epic poems (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*) have very different stories each focused on its own hero. One is of war and honor (*Iliad*) and the other is of a long journey home and revenge (*Odyssey*). Both stories, however, share common themes that make them unmistakably part of the same culture and tradition.

The oral poetic tradition thrived before the advent of writing. The people who lived in and around Greece at this time lived primarily in rather isolated city-states. Frequent festivals were held where singers and poets would compete for prizes. Out of this tradition comes the poet Homer whom tradition maintains was born on an island bordering the Ionian Sea. Homer not only composed the two epics that now bear his name, but he also composed numerous hymns. He is often coupled with the archaic poet Hesiod who wrote the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. While his works are on a different subject matter than Homer's, the two authors share many similarities. Both authors are said to have sung their works throughout the Greek mainland. The recitation of the *Iliad* was recorded as one of the early events at the Olympic games.

A critical debate exists about who is the true author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or if a single author can even be credited for these works. The debate is not entirely based on the institution of writing, but it is also based on historical and linguistic analysis of the text. Homeric Greek is, in fact, a dialect unto itself. The Greek texts possesses many dialectical variants. The subject matter of the texts, specifically the understanding of warfare and description of *phalanxes*, calls into question the historical authenticity of its authorship. These works bear such a myriad of different traits that it is almost impossible to conceive of it as the work of a single individual. The subject matter of *Odyssey*, while vastly different from the *Iliad*, not only maintains the same characters and relationships, but it uses many of the same expressions as those found in the *Iliad*.

The classical belief, however, is that there was a man named Homer who codified the oral tradition of the siege of Troy. [This oral tradition was recorded by others and became the more standard text which we possess today. I would suggest deleting this line; its meaning is unclear] Although there are still many manuscript variants, the format



and the story have remained the same. Through the centuries the Homeric epics have influenced writers and philosophers from many different countries. Every generation, poets and scholars try their hands at translating Homer from ancient Greek into modern languages. Solon is said to have used a portion of *Iliad* to assert that Athens had an ancient right to the island of Salamis. In Plato's apology, Socrates compares himself to Achilles and his paradox of living a short glorious life or a long life of anonymity, choosing to die a noble death rather than live in ignominy. According to Oskar Seyffert:

"[T]he Homeric poems remain unsurpassed as works of art, which have had an incalculable influence not only on the development of literature and art, but also upon the whole life of the Greeks, who from the earliest times regarded them as the common property of the nation, and employed them as the foundation of all teaching and culture."

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Plot Summary

The tale begins on Mt. Olympus where Athena draws Zeus' attention to Odysseus whose journey has been halted on the island of Calypso. Zeus sends Hermes to have Odysseus released and Athena goes to Ithaca. In Ithaca she assumes a disguise and convinces Telemachus to go on a journey seeking news of his father. Telemachus calls an assembly announcing that the suitors who have besieged his house and have eaten his food for years are in the wrong. He goes to see Nestor at Pylos and Nestor does not know anything recent about his father. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta to see Menelaus. When he gets to Sparta, Menelaus tells him that the last thing he heard about Odysseus was that he was trapped on the island of Calypso. They feast together and talk into the night.

Athena reminds Zeus to send Hermes to Calypso and he tells her that Odysseus may leave but under strict conditions: he has to build his own raft. Calypso isn't happy about the command and Odysseus has problems believing her. Once he has built his raft, she gives him food and sends him off. He sails for seventeen days and then his raft is destroyed by Poseidon. He is aided by a nymph and floats for two days to land. He is found by Nausikaa and told to go to the house of her father Alcinous. Alcinous hears part of his tale and secures passage for him back to Ithaca. There are athletic games and feasts at which a minstrel sings. The minstrel's songs make Odysseus cry and this makes Alcinous even more curious about his situation. Alcinous asks Odysseus if any of his relatives died at Troy and Odysseus begins his tale.

He tells them how he left Troy and lost some men in a botched raiding party. Soon after this they came near the land of the Lotus eaters where some of his men were almost lost to the enchanting flower. Then came the island of the cyclops. Odysseus led his men in to investigate and were trapped by Polyphemus, one of the cyclops. They had to blind him and sneak out in order to get away from him. They came to the island of the King of the winds, but when they approached Ithaca with his gift of the storm winds restrained, Odysseus men opened the bag of the winds thinking it was treasure sending them all the way back to the same island. The king refused to help them again. They ended up at Circe's island where the witch turns some of his men into pigs. With the help of Hermes, Odysseus resisted her magic and impressed her. His men were restored and they remained on her island for a year. When they left, Circe told them they had to go to the land of the dead first. At the land of the dead they spoke with Tiresias who told them how to get home. They also spoke with many relatives and dead heroes. After they left the land of the dead, they returned to Circe's island and then made their way home. Even though they made it through Scylla and Charybdis, the men insisted on stopping at the island where the cattle of the sun were kept. Here they eventually disobeyed Odysseus and killed the cattle. This resulted in the destruction of their ship. Odysseus, the sole survivor, floated back through the dangers of the sea and ended up on Calypso's island.

Alcinous is moved by Odysseus story and he gives him more gifts. His men take Odysseus to Ithaca and he sleeps the entire way. Because of Poseidon's wrath, their



ship is turned into stone when it nears their home harbor. Athena comes to Odysseus and tells him he is home. She instructs him to spend a night or two at the hut of the swineherd disguised as a beggar. She tells him that while he waits she will get Telemachus to return. Odysseus goes to the house of the swineherd and tells a long lie about his fall from riches to rags. The swineherd takes him in and gives him hospitality but refuses to believe any news about Odysseus. Telemachus leaves the house of Menelaus with gifts and avoids Pylos so that he will get home faster. He makes room for a seer in his ship and departs from his men near the house of the swineherd as Athena instructed. When they first meet, Odysseus is still a beggar, but after the swineherd leaves, Athena has Odysseus reveal himself. They plan out how they are going to get rid of the suitors. Odysseus is changed back into a beggar when the swineherd returns.

The next day Telemachus returns to his house first and the swineherd follows with the beggar. On their way they are mocked by the goatherd. When they get to the house Odysseus is given food as a beggar but must withstand the taunts of the suitors. When he implies that they are generous because they are giving away somebody else's food, Antinous throws a stool at him. Odysseus continues to test the loyalty of people around him. He tells his story to Penelope and when his old nurse gives him a bath she recognizes his scar. Penelope tells him that she will challenge the suitors to string Odysseus' bow and shoot it through twelve axeheads. Whoever does this may marry her. Odysseus is forced to box another beggar and is rewarded with blood pudding and wine when he wins. They sleep one night and the suitors return the next day.

When Penelope rises she retrieves the bow and the axeheads and announces the contest. Telemachus tries to bend the bow and almost can, but his father has him stop. None of the suitors can bend it and Antinous proposes they carry on with the contest tomorrow. Odysseus asks for a try and the suitors would have denied him but Telemachus demanded that he be allowed. Odysseus strings it and shoots through the axeheads easily then he begins to kill suitors. Telemachus joins him with the cowherd and the swineherd. The goatherd helps the suitors get weapons, but the other herders stop him. Athena joins the battle and they slaughter everyone but the minstrel and the herald. Odysseus has the bodies piled up and he hangs the disloyal serving girls. He bathes and approaches Penelope who does not believe it is him until they speak of secret proof. They sleep together and tell each other their stories. In the morning, Odysseus instructs everyone to pretend there is a wedding feast so that no one will come looking for the suitors. He goes and finds his father and lies to him at first but then reveals his identity. Meanwhile, the town assembles, enraged at Odysseus' deeds. When the herald tells them that a god helped him, half of the townspeople calm down. The others go in search of Odysseus. There is a brief battle, but Athena stops it and persuades them to sign a pact which declares Odysseus the king.



Major Characters

Odysseus: Odysseus is the main character of the *Odyssey*, a tale which chronicles his homecoming and his journeys since his departure from Troy. Odysseus was present in the *Iliad* but not with the same focus as this poem. The story focus on his trials at sea and on land and how, once he gets home, he must avenge his family's honor from the suitors who have been besieging his house waiting for his wife to choose a new husband. He is aided by Athena in his journeys but thwarted by Poseidon.

Telemachus (Telemakhos): Son of Odysseus and Penelope, this poem is nearly as much about him as it is about his father. The story begins with his anger at the suitors who are wasting away his estate. At the encouragement of Athena, he begins a journey to search for news of his father. When he returns to Ithaca, he helps his father overcome the suitors and regain his power.

Zeus: Father of Athena and King of the gods, Zeus appears frequently in this poem but mostly to give assent to another god who either wants to help Odysseus or hinder him. He gives Athena license to help Odysseus but also strikes Odysseus' ship with lightning after he has committed wrongs against the gods. He gives frequent signs to Odysseus and others in the forms of lightning or storms throughout the poem.

Poseidon: Zeus' brother and the god of the sea, he is upset with Odysseus first for not offering sufficient sacrifices to him. He is even more unhappy after Odysseus blinds his son Polyphemus. It is Poseidon that Odysseus still must appease at the end of the poem. Poseidon keeps Odysseus from making it home on multiple occasions.

Athena: Daughter of Zeus and the goddess of Wisdom. She guides Odysseus and Telemachus throughout the poem helping them find their way from place to place and defeat their adversaries. On several occasions she directly intervenes and enters battle or conflict in the form of a human.

Penelope: Odysseus' wife and mother of Telemachus. She remains loyal to Odysseus even after he is gone for twenty years. She constructs elaborate ruses such as weaving and unweaving at a loom. She has trouble believing that her husband has returned when she first sees him and is very cold until she gets undeniable proof of his identity.

Minor Characters

Aegisthus (Aigisthos): The lover of Clytemnestra who kills Agamemnon and who is killed by Agamemnon's son, Orestes, in revenge. This plot line serves as an example of appropriate revenge throughout the poem.

Orestes: Son of Agamemnon who takes revenge for his father's death by killing his adulterous mother and her lover.



Agamemnon: King of Argos who led the Greeks to Troy to retrieve his brother Menelaus' wife Helen. Upon returning to Argos, he was killed by Aegisthus who plotted with his wife Clytemnestra. His death is avenged by his son Orestes.

Clytemnestra (Klytaimestra): Adulterous wife of Agamemnon who plots to have him killed.

Calypso (Kalypso): Nymph who kept Odysseus on her island for many years by means of enchantment. Hermes orders her to release him by the authority of Zeus at the request of Athena. She has him make a raft to journey on.

Polyphemus (Polyphemos): Cyclops son of Poseidon who is blinded by Odysseus. Polyphemus is a shepherd who refuses to be a host to Odysseus and eats some of his men. He curses Odysseus and asks his father for revenge.

Nestor: Old king of Pylos who entertains Telemachus and advises him to go seek news for his father from Menelaus.

Menelaus (Menelaos): King of Sparta and husband of Helen for whom the Trojan war was fought. In this tale, Menelaus entertains Telemachus and gives him news of his father. He also tells the tale of his own journey back from Troy.

Antinous: The head suitor, son of a man Odysseus saved from death. He is the first of the suitors to speak at all times and plans to kill Telemachus. He is also the first of the suitors to be killed by Odysseus.

Eurymachus (Eurymakhos): The second suitor, Eurymachus always speaks after Antinous or in place of him. He is the second suitor to die.

Lord Aigyptios: The old man who is the first to speak at an assembly of Ithacans.

Halitherses: A prophet and seer of the Ithacans who speaks at the assembly before Telemachus leaves for Sparta and Pylos. He reads the bird omen of Book 2 as meaning that Odysseus will not be gone for long.

Mentor: An older man of Ithaca whose form Athena takes first to help Telemachus travel to Pylos and then to help Telemachus and Odysseus fight the suitors.

Eurykleia (Euryklea): Odysseus nurse as a child and a servant in his house. She hides Telemachus' journey to Pylos and is the first woman to recognize Odysseus. She helps Odysseus sort out the good hand-maidens from the bad ones.

Peisistratos: Nestor's son who accompanies Telemachus to Sparta.

Thrasymedes: A son of Nestor.

Idomeneus: King of Crete who was pictured as a great warrior in the Iliad.



Eidothea: Nymph who instructs Menelaus how to trap Proteus and force him to reveal which of the gods to appease in order to get home.

Proteus: Sea god who Menelaus captures in a cave of seals, from whom he learns how to get home.

Ajax (Aias): The greater Ajax of the Iliad. He dies an early death after the war and is mentioned when Menelaus asks Proteus about his companions and when Odysseus goes to the land of the dead.

Hephaestus (Hephaistos): The god of fire and iron-working. Hephaestus crafts divine goods for gods and men.

Noemen: A suitor.

Medon: The messenger of Odysseus' house. At the end of the poem he tells the assembly that a god slaughtered all of the suitors, not Odysseus.

Laertes: Odysseus' father. He appears only at the end of the poem and prepares to stand with his son against the Ithacan mob.

Hermes: messenger of the gods, he delivers the edicts of Zeus to gods and mortals. He instructs Calypso to release Odysseus. He also accompanies souls to the land of the dead.

Ino: Nymph who lends Odysseus her scarf so that he may float in the water for two days to make land after his raft is destroyed .

Alcinous (Alkinoos): King of the Phaiakians who welcomes Odysseus and hears his long tale. He presents Odysseus with great treasure and gives him secure passage to Ithaca.

Nausicaa (Nausikaa): Daughter of Alcinous who finds Odysseus in the thicket near the river where he washed up on the island. She was prompted to go to the river by Athena.

Arete: Wife of Alcinous who was approached by Odysseus for her help.

Demodocus (Demodokos): Minstrel who sings at the palace of Alcinous.

Laodamas: One of Alcinous' sons. One of his companions offends Odysseus during the athletic contests.

Ares: God of war who had an affair with Aphrodite and was caught by her husband Hephaestus.

Aphrodite: Goddess of love and lust whose affair with Ares is discovered and revealed by her husband Hephaestus.



Circe (Kirke): Witch-like woman who at first turns Odysseus' men into pigs but is impressed when she cannot affect Odysseus. She lusts after him and he stays with her for a year. She tells him to go to the land of the dead and advises him to avoid the cattle of the sun.

Polyphemus (Polyphemos): Cyclops son of Poseidon who is blinded by Odysseus because he eats some of his men and won't release them. Polyphemus' plea to his father sidetracks Odysseus for many years.

Aeolus (Aiolos): King of the winds who entertained Odysseus at an early part of his journey. He presents Odysseus with a bag of the winds so that he may get home safely. When Odysseus' men release the winds and the ship is blown back, Aeolus has no pity.

Eurylochus (Eurylokhos): One of Odysseus men. He is the man who does not drink from Circe's cup and warns Odysseus. He is also the one who convinces the Odysseus' men to stop at the Island of the cattle of the sun and is also the man who convinces them to eat the cattle.

Tiresias (Eurylokhos): Blind prophet who Odysseus goes to find in the land of the dead. He tells Odysseus how to get home and that he must appease Poseidon once he gets there.

Elpenor: Young sailor who dies on the island of Circe from falling from her roof. He appears to Odysseus in the land of the dead and asks him to come bury him.

Helen: Wife of Menelaus and reason the Trojan war was fought. In this tale, she drugs the wine of Menelaus and Telemachus so that they will forget their sorrow.

Achilles (Akhilleus): Hero of the Iliad. He dies before the end of the Trojan war and is shown in the land of the dead regretting his fate.

Heracles or Hercules (Herakles): Legendary hero who compares his labors to those of Odysseus in the land of the dead.

Eumaius (Eumaios): Swineherd who takes in the disguised Odysseus and gives him shelter and food. He helps Odysseus and Telemachus defeat the suitors.

Theoklymenus (Theoklymenos): Seer who Telemachus brings with him from mainland Greece.

Amphinomus (Amphinomos): One of the suitors who is opposed to killing Telemachus.

Melanthius (Melanthios): Goatherd who insults Odysseus and taunts the swineherd and the beggar.

Phemius (Phemios): Minstrel who sings at the house of Odysseus He begs for his life and Telemachus tells Odysseus that he doesn't deserve to die.



Irus (Iros): Younger beggar who comes in and challenges Odysseus to a boxing match. He is beaten with one punch.

Eurynome: One of Penelope's hand-maidens.

Melantho: Another hand-maiden, the sister of Melanthius. She taunts Odysseus when he is disguised as a beggar.

Philoitius (Philoitios): Cowherd who helps Odysseus and Telemachus defeat the suitors.

Ktessipus (Ktesippos): Suitor who throws a cow hoof at Odysseus and misses.

Agelaus (Agelaos): Suitor who tells the others not to assault the beggar.

Leodes: Suitor who clings to Odysseus' knees and asks for mercy.

Amphimedon: Suitor who appears in the underworld and relays Odysseus' homecoming to Agamemnon.

Dolios: Laertes' slave who joins Odysseus and his father and son for dinner.

Seareach: The Phaiakian who offends Odysseus and prompts him to join the athletic competition.



Objects/Places

Suitors: Princes and nobles from Ithaca and the surrounding islands who take up residence in the house of Odysseus waiting for Penelope to choose a new husband. This is so important to them because whoever marries her becomes king by transfer of her power.

Mt. Olympus (Mt. Olympos): Mythical home of the gods. A mountain in Greece where the Greeks believed the gods made their home.

Ithaca (Ithaka): Odysseus' home island over which he rules as king. It was located on the western side of mainland Greece.

Unwoven Loom: Penelope's main device of deceit for the suitors, she promised them she would choose a new husband after she was done weaving a death shroud for Odysseus. She would weave all day and then at night, after the suitors left, she would unweave her work. This lasted four years before the suitors figured it out.

Pylos: City on mainland Greece over which Nestor rules.

Sparta (Laikedaimon): City over which Menelaus rules. Telemachus goes here in search of his father.

Crete (Krete): Legendary home of King Minos, the labyrinth and the Minotaur. This is the island Odysseus keeps claiming he is from when he lies to his family and the swineherd.

Skheria: Island of the Phaiakians where Odysseus tells his long story and secures passage back to Ithaca after so many years.

Lamnos: Nightless island where some of Odysseus' men were eaten by giants.

Cattle of the Sun: Holy cattle of a special breed possessed by the lord of the sun. Odysseus is warned to make sure that his men do not steal these cattle but his efforts are futile.

Sirens (Seirenes): Singing women-like beasts who inhabit an island and guide sailors to their deaths with their beautiful songs. Odysseus has himself tied to the mast of the ship so he can listen to their song.

Scylla: Six-headed beast who inhabits the cave parallel to the whirlpool Charybdis. Scylla eats six of Odysseus' men.

Charybdis (Kharybdis): A whirlpool that erupts three times a day sucking anything near it down into its depths and then vomiting it back up.



Odysseus' bow: Odysseus' bow was given to him by a man named Iphitos to make up for sheep that were stolen from Ithaca. It is very large and difficult to handle and only Odysseus can string it. When Penelope wants to test the suitors and delay them further she tells them that whoever strings the bow and shoots it through twelve axeheads may marry her. Telemachus almost strings it but stops with a look from his disguised father. None of the suitors can string it.

Olive Bed: A beautiful bed made from the trunk of an olive tree by Odysseus before he went to Troy. He planed it, sanded it, adorned it, and made a pact with Penelope that no man would ever see that bed but he. This bed is how Penelope knows that Odysseus has really come home to her.

Aiaia: Circe's island.



Quotes

Quote 1: "My word, how mortals take the gods to task!
All their afflictions come from us, we hear.
And what of their own failings? Greed and folly
double the suffering in the lot of man.
See how Aigisthos, for his double portion,
stole Agamemnon's wife and killed the soldier on his homecoming day.
And yet Aigisthos knew what doom lay in this." Book 1, lines 48-55

Quote 2: "what if his great father
came from the unknown world and rove these men
like dead leaves through the place?" Book 1, lines 145-7

Quote 3: "Friend, let me put it in the plainest way.
My mother says I am his son; I know not
surely. Who has known his own engendering?
I wish at least I had some happy man
as father, going old in his house-
but unknown death and silence are the fate
of him that, since you ask, they call my father." Book 1, lines 258-64

Quote 4: "So said Telemakhos, though in his heart
he knew his visitor had been immortal.
But now the suitors turned to play again
with dance and haunting song. they played till nightfall
indeed black night came on them at their pleasure.
and half asleep they left, each for his home." Book 1, lines 472-7

Quote 5: "No need to wonder any more, Sir,
who called this session. the distress is mine." Book 2, lines 42-43

Quote 6: "she makes a name for herself..." Book 2, line 133

Quote 7: "Old man go tell the omens for your children
at home, and try to keep them out of trouble.
I am more fit to interpret this than you are.
Bird life aplenty is found in the sunny air,
not all of it is significant. As for Odysseus,
he perished far from home. You should have perished with him-" Book 2, lines 188-193

Quote 8: "it is so clear that no one here remembers
how like a gentle father Odysseus ruled you." Book 2, lines 244-5

Quote 9: "he will tell you history and no lies." Book 3, line 24



Quote 10: "Well I must say I marvel at the sight of you:
your manner of speech couldn't be more like his;
one could say No; no boy could speak so well.
And all that time at Ilion, he and I
were never at odds in council or assembly." Book 3, lines 131-5

Quote 11: "Mentor, grievously though we may miss my father
why go on as if that homecoming could happen?" Book 3, lines 258-9

Quote 12: "don't stay too long away from home, leaving
your treasure there, and brazen suitors near;
they'll squander all you have or take it from you..." Book 3, lines 340-6

Quote 13: "That day they made the grainlands of Laikedaimon,
where, as the horses held to a fast clip,
they kept on to their journey's end. Behind them
the sun went down and al the roads grew dark." Book 3, lines 539-42

Quote 14: "My dear friend, can you believe you eyes?-
The murmuring hall, how luminous it is
with bronze gold, amber, silver , and ivory!
This is the way the court of Zeus must be,
inside, upon Olympos. What wonder!" Book 4, lines 77-81

Quote 15: "His son, in my house! How I loved the man,
And how he fought through hardship for my sake!" Book 3, lines 181-2

Quote 16: "If only that Odysseus met the suitors,
they'd have their consummation, a cold bed!" Book 4, lines 371-72

Quote 17: "Which of the immortals chained me here?" Book 4, line 502

Quote 18: "Before the end my heart was broken down.
I slumped on the trampled sand and cried aloud,
caring no more for life or the light of day,
and rolled there weeping, till my tears were spent." Book 4, lines 574-77

Quote 19: "Why has my child left me?...
Why did he go? Must he, too, be forgotten?" Book 4, lines 758-61

Quote 20: "Sleepest thou sorrowing Penelope?
The gods whose life is ease no longer suffer thee
to pine and weep, then; he returns unharmed,
thy little one, no way hath he offended." Book 4, lines 857-60

Quote 21: "My child, what odd complaints you let escape you.
Have you not, you yourself, arranged this matter-



as we all know- so that Odysseus
will bring these men to book, on his return?" Book 5, lines 24-7

Quote 22: "Oh you vile gods, in jealousy supernal
you hate it when we choose to lie with men..." Book 5, 124-5

Quote 23: "I long for home, long for the sight of home.
If any god has marked me out again
for shipwreck, my tough heart can undergo it.
What hardship have I not long since endured
at sea, in battle! Let the trial come." Book 5, 229-33

Quote 24: "A cruel turn, this. Never had I thought
to see this land, but Zeus has let me see it..." Book 5, lines 426-7

Quote 25: "Go beg thy sovereign father, even at dan
to have the mule cart and mules brought round." Book 6, lines 41-2

Quote 26: "Stranger, there is no quirk or evil in you
that I can see. you know Zeus metes out fortune
to good and bad men as it pleases him.
Hardship he sent to you, and you must bear it.
But now that you have taken refuge here
you shall not lack for clothing, or any other
comfort due to a poor man in distress." Book 6, lines 201-207

Quote 27: "Little one, could you take me to the house
of that Alkinous, king among these people?
You see, I am a poor old stranger here;
my home is far away; here there is no one
known to me, in countryside or city." Book 7, lines 25-9

Quote 28: "Friend, my child's good judgment failed in this-
not to have brought you in her company home.
Once you approached her, you became her charge." Book 7, lines 321-3

Quote 29: "In time, when hunger and thirst were turned away,
the Muse brought to the minstrel's mind a song
of heroes whose great fame rang under heaven:
the clash between Odysseus and Akhilleus,
how one time they contended at the godfeast
raging, and the marshal, Agamemnon
felt inward joy over his captains' quarrel." Book 8, lines 78-84

Quote 30: "O Father Zeus, O gods in bliss forever,
here is indecorous entertainment for you..." Book 8, lines 323-4



Quote 31: "Now shift your theme and sing that wooden horse
Epeios built, inspired by Athena..." Book 8, lines 526-7

Quote 32: "The wind that carried west from Ilion
brought me to Ismaros, on the far shore,
a strongpoint on the coast of the Kikones.
I stormed that place and killed the men who fought.
Plunder we took, and we enslaved the women,
to make division, equal shares to all." Book 9, lines 43-8

Quote 33: "Strangers. . .who are you? and where from?
What brings you here by sea ways- a fair traffic?" Book 9, lines 274-5

Quote 34: "Kyklops,
you ask my honorable name? Remember
the gift you promised me, and I shall tell you.
my name is Nohbdy: mother father and friends,
everyone calls me Nohbdy." Book 9, lines 394 - 399

Quote 35: "Nohbdy, Nohbdy's tricked me, Nohbdy's ruined me." Book 9, line 443

Quote 36: "O Kyklops! Would you feast on my companions?
Puny, am I, in a Caveman's hands?
How do you like the beating that we gave you,
you damned cannibal? Eater of guests
under your roof! Zeus and the gods have paid you!" Book 9, lines 519-23

Quote 37: "Take yourself out of this island, creeping thing-
...Your voyage here was cursed by heaven!" Book 10, lines 82-5

Quote 38: "Odysseus then you are, o great contender,
of whom the glittering god with the golden wand
spoke to me ever, and foretold
the black swift ship would carry you from Troy.
Put up your weapon in the sheath. We two
shall mingle and make love upon our bed.
So mutual trust may come of play and love." Book 10, lines 371-77

Quote 39: "Captain, shake off this trance, and think of home-
if home indeed awaits us..." Book 10, lines 521-2

Quote 40: "Homeward you think we must be sailing
to our own land; no elsewhere is the voyage
Kirk has laid upon me. We must go
to the cold homes of death and pale Persephone
to hear Teiresias tell of time to come." Book 10, lines 621-5



Quote 41: "Stand clear, put up your sword;
let me but taste of blood. I shall speak true." Book 11, lines 106-7

Quote 42: "How does he stand now in your eyes, this captain,
the look and bulk of him, the inward poise?
He is my guest, but each one shares this honor.
Be in no haste to send him on his way
or scant your bounty in his need. Remember
how rich, by heaven's will, your possessions are." Book 11, lines 391-6

Quote 43: "Let me hear no smooth talk
of death from you, Odysseus, light of councils.
Better, I say, to break sod as a farm hand
for some poor country man, on iron rations,
than lord it over all the exhausted dead." Book 11, lines 578-81

Quote 44: "Hearts of oak, did you go down
Alive into the homes of death? One visit
Finishes all men but yourselves, twice mortal!" Book 12, lines 25-7

Quote 45: "Shipmates, grieving and weary though you are,
listen: I had forewarning from Teiresias
and Kirke, too; both told me I must shun
this island of the Sun, the world's delight.
Nothing but fatal trouble shall we find here,
Pull away, then, and put the land astern." Book 12, lines 350-5

Quote 46: "Live in felicity,
and make this palace lovely for your children,
your countrymen and your king." Book 13, lines 75-7

Quote 47: "The present doom upon the ship - on me-
my father prophesied in the olden time.
If we gave safe conveyance to all passengers
we should incur Poseidon's wrath, he said,
whereby one day a fair ship, manned by Phaiakians,
would come to grief at the god's hands;" Book 13, lines 215-220

Quote 48: "Son of Laertes and the gods of old,
Odysseus, master of land ways and sea ways,
put your mind on a way to reach and strike
a crowd of brazen upstarts. Three long years
they have played master in your house: three years
trying to win your lovely lady, making
gifts as though betrothed." Book 13, lines 468-73

Quote 49: "There is your dinner friend, the pork of the slaves.
Our fat shoats are eaten by the suitors,



cold-heated men, who never spare a thought for how they stand in the sight of Zeus. The gods living in bliss are fond of no wrongdoing, but honor discipline and right behavior." Book 14, lines 97-103

Quote 50: "[A Phoenician adventurer] took me in completely with his schemes, and led me with him to Phoinikia... he meant in fact, to trade me off, and get a high price for me." Book 14, lines 337-47

Quote 51: "It is still night, and no moon. Can we drive now? We can not, itch as we may for the road home. Dawn is near; allow the captain of the spearmen, Menelaos, time to pack our car with gifts and time to speak a gracious word, sending us off. A guest remembers all of his days that host who makes provisions for him kindly." Book 15, lines 68-75

Quote 52: "At daybreak I must go and try my luck around the port. I burden you too long. Direct me, put me on the road with someone. Nothing else for it but to play the beggar." Book 15, lines 381-4

Quote 53: "Go down at once and tell the lady Penelope that I am back from Pylos safe and sound." Book 16, lines 151-2

Quote 54: "Son of Laertes and the gods of old, Odysseus, master of land ways and sea ways, dissemble to your son no longer now. the time has come: tell him how you together will bring doom on the suitors in the town." Book 16, lines 195-9

Quote 55: "Friends, face up to it; that young pup Telemakhos, has done it; he made the round trip, though we said he could not. Well- now to get the best craft we can find afloat, with oarsmen who can drench her bows, and tell those on the island to come home." Book 16, lines 415-20

Quote 56: "Back with me! Telemakhos, more sweet to me than sunlight! I thought I should not see you again, ever, after you took the ship that night to Pylos- against my will, with not a word! You went for news of your dear father. Tell me now of everything you saw!" Book 17, lines 51-7



Quote 57: "Here comes one scurvy type leading another!
God pairs them off together, every time.
Swineherd, where are you taking your new pig,
that stinking beggar there, lick of pots?
How many doorposts has he rubbed his back on
whining for garbage, where a noble guest
would rate a cauldron or a sword." Book 17, lines 278-84

Quote 58: "here is the beautiful place- who could mistake it?
here is Odysseus' hall: no hall like this!" Book 17, lines 340-1

Quote 59: "A pity you have more looks than heart.
You'd grudge a pinch of salt from your own larder
to your own handy man. you sit here, fat
on others' meat, and cannot bring yourself
to rummage out a crust of bread for me!" Book 17, lines 594-9

Quote 60: "Listen to him! the swine can talk your arm off,
Like an old oven woman! With two punches
I'd knock him snoring..." Book 18, lines 30-2

Quote 61: "Friend, you have a mind to work,
do you? Could I hire you to clear stones
from wasteland for me- you'll be paid enough-
collecting boundary walls and planting trees?
I'll give you a bread ration every day,
a cloak to wrap in, sandals for your feet.
Oh no: you learned your dodges long ago-
no honest sweat. You'd rather tramp the country
begging, to keep your hoggish belly full.' Book 18, lines 443-51

Quote 62: "have no strength left to evade a marriage
cannot find any further way; my parents
urge it upon me, and my son
will not stand by while they eat up his property.
He comprehends it, being a man full grown,
able to oversee the kind of house
Zeus would endow with honor.' Book 19, lines 184-90

Quote 63: "Yes!
You are Odysseus! Ah, dear child! I could not
see you until now- not till I knew
my master's body with my hands!' Book 19, lines 549-52

Quote 64: "Herdsman, I make you out to be no coward
and no fool: I can see that for myself.
So let me tell you this. I swear by Zeus



al highest, by the table set for friends,
and by your king's hearthstone to which I've come,
Odysseus will return. You'll be on hand
to see, if you care to see it,
how those who lord it here will be cut down." Book 20, lines 250-7

Quote 65: "Here is my lord Odysseus' hunting bow.
Bend and string it if you can. Who sends an arrow
through iron axe-helve sockets twelve in line?
I join my life with his and leave this place, my home,
my rich and beautiful bridal house, forever
to be remembered, though I dream it only." Book 21, lines 78-83

Quote 66: "Mother as to the bow and who may handle it
or not handle it, no man here
has more authority than I do- not the lord
or our own stony Ithaka nor the islands lying
east towards Elis; no one stops me if I choose
to give these weapons outright to my guest." Book 21, lines 388-393

Quote 67: "Think of a catch that fishermen haul in to a halfmoon bay
in a fine-meshed net from the whit-caps of the sea:
how all are poured out on the sand, in throes for the salt- sea,
twitching their cold lives away in Helios' fiery air:
so lay the suitors heaped on one another." Book 22, lines 432-6

Quote 68: "I did not see it,
I knew nothing; only I heard the groans
of men dying. We sat still in the inner rooms
holding our breath, and marveling, shut in,
until Telemakhos came to the door and called me-
your own dear son, sent this time by his father!" Book 23, lines 41-6

Quote 69: "The royal pair mingled in love again
and afterward lay reveling in stories:
hers of the siege her beauty stood at home
from arrogant suitors, crowding on her sight,
and how they fed their courtships on his cattle
oxen and fat sheep, and drank up rivers
of wine out of the vats. Odysseus told
of what hard blows he had dealt to others
and of what blows he had taken-all that story." Book 23, lines 337-46

Quote 70: "So the great soldier
took his bow and bent it for the bowstring
effortlessly. He drilled the axeheads clean,
sprang, and decanted arrows on the door sill,



glared, and drew again. This time he killed Antinous." Book 24, lines 196-201

Quote 71: "Old man, the orchard keeper you work for is no townsman. A good eye for growing things he has: there's not a nurseling, fig tree, vine stock, olive tree, or pear tree or garden bed uncared for on this farm. But I might add- don't take offense- your on appearance could be tidier. Old age yes- but why the squalor, and rags to boot?" Book 24, lines 270-7

Quote 72: "Now hear me, men of Ithaka. When these hard deeds were done by Lord Odysseus the immortal gods were not far off. I saw with my own eyes someone divine who fought beside him, in the shape and dress of Mentor; it was a god who shone before Odysseus, a god who swept the suitors down the hall dying in droves." Book 24, lines 489-96

Quote 73: "Son of Laertes and the gods of old, Odysseus, master of land ways and sea ways, command yourself. Call off this battle now, or Zeus who views the wide world may be angry." Book 24, lines 605-609



Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit

Disguise and Deceit 1: Athena disguises herself as a man and enters the hall of Odysseus to encourage his son to leave. She lies about her name and where she is from and gives advice to Telemachus that he takes. After she leaves, the narrator reveals that he suspected that she was an immortal in disguise.

Disguise and Deceit 2: Athena dons a new disguise, that of fellow Ithacan Mentor. As Mentor she orchestrates every part of the upcoming journey while Telemachus deals with the affairs of his household. She secures a ship and crewmen.

Disguise and Deceit 3: Athena continues to manipulate and guide Telemachus in the form of Mentor. She makes a sacrifice as a human and grants a prayer as a god at the same time.

Disguise and Deceit 4: Athena disguises herself as a friend of Nausicaa and tells her to go to the river so that she may come upon Odysseus. When Odysseus prays to her that she will help him make it home, she makes a pledge that he will not see her real form until he gets to Ithaca.

Disguise and Deceit 5: Athena disguises Odysseus with a cloud so that no one will hinder his progress to the castle and then helps him herself disguised as a little girl.

Disguise and Deceit 6: Athena wakes Odysseus and at first assumes a disguise as she tries to convince him that he is home. Even when she reveals herself as an immortal, he thinks that she may be tricking him. She reveals her identity and assures him that she will help him. They plan for him to return home disguised as a beggar.

Disguise and Deceit 7: Odysseus goes to the house of the swineherd and accept his hospitality as a beggar. He concocts an elaborate story about his fall from rags to riches to entertain Eumaius. He also tries to introduce some relationship between the beggar and Odysseus.

Disguise and Deceit 8: Odysseus is still in disguise when Telemachus comes and he continues to act the part. When Athena tells him to reveal himself, he speaks to his son for the first time in many years and they develop a plan around him infiltrating the house as the beggar. When Eumaius returns, Athena turns Odysseus back into a beggar.

Disguise and Deceit 9: Odysseus' disguise is believed by everyone: His wife and the nurse who raised him. Because of this, however, he must endure taunting and blows from men such as the goatherd and Antinous. Athena has planned this so that Odysseus would be more enraged. He uses his identity as a beggar to discover the character of the suitors.

Disguise and Deceit 10: Odysseus continues to use his disguise to his advantage. He finds out what each of the suitors is like and even begins to discover the unpleasant



character of some of the serving girls. Athena prompts many people to continue to insult and annoy Odysseus.

Disguise and Deceit 11: Odysseus uses his disguise to speak to Penelope as a stranger and test her love for him. She passes the test and no one recognizes him until the nurse bathes him and sees his old scar. Athena makes sure that Penelope doesn't hear the nurse exclaim. Odysseus threatens her to keep her quiet and enlists her help in discovering who of the hand-maidens are loyal.

Disguise and Deceit 12: Odysseus continues to use his disguise to test people. He enrages more of the suitors and finds out who of them will defend a beggar. He also finds out that the swineherd and the cowherd are willing to fight with their master when he returns.

Disguise and Deceit 13: Odysseus uses his disguise to get into the bow contest where he easily outclasses everyone else. He accomplishes the task and addresses Telemachus before he sheds his disguise.

Disguise and Deceit 14: Athena enters the battle, once again dressed as Mentor, and fights alongside Odysseus, killing many men.

Disguise and Deceit 15: Odysseus pretends to be somebody else when he speaks to his father. He does this because he is testing his father's emotions. When his father gets emotional, he reveals his identity to him and proves it by showing him his scar.



Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts

Guests and Hosts 1: Telemachus calls the assembly because his house is plagued with guests who will not leave. They have overstayed their welcome by many years. They claim they have the right to stay because Penelope will not remarry. Telemachus is in a difficult position because he is not seen as an adult.

Guests and Hosts 2: Nestor does not think it proper for his guest Telemachus to sleep in his boat, so in accordance with custom he invites him into his house and offers him food and a bath. He makes the appropriate sacrifice in the morning, even though it is elaborate. He also lends Telemachus a team of horses and his son as a companion.

Guests and Hosts 3: Menelaus is rejoiced to have the son of one of his comrades in his house. He extends to Telemachus anything he would give to Odysseus and promises him fine gifts upon his departure. They exchange stories and speak as if they were old friends as they feast into the night.

Guests and Hosts 4: Nausicaa finds the beggar in the thicket and tells her handmaidens they should help him because of a divine imperative to help those in distress. She gives him food and clothing and tells him that he will be more adequately sheltered in her father's house.

Guests and Hosts 5: Alcinous and Arete welcome the stranger into their house when he clings to her knees and offer him food and shelter. When they find out that he is a traveler lost on his way, they offer him passage home. They are interested in hearing his story and sharing theirs. Odysseus is given a place of honor at their table and more food when he asks for it.

Guests and Hosts 6: The assembly of Phaiakians vote to give Odysseus passage home at the advice of their king. The king also offers Odysseus his daughter in marriage. There are athletic contests and when Odysseus is offended he challenges everyone except for the king's family, but Alcinous tells him not to worry. The first time Odysseus cries because of the songs of the minstrel, Alcinous changes the activity. The second time he asks him if anyone he knew died at Troy. The man who offended Odysseus gives him a broadsword and Alcinous tells all the wealthy men to give Odysseus a bar of gold and clothing.

Guests and Hosts 7: When they enter the cave of Polyphemos, Odysseus assumes that they will be treated as guests by its inhabitant. When Polyphemos returns and realizes that they are expecting some sort of guest relationship he tells them that he fears neither the gods nor Zeus. He refuses to give them hospitality and begins to eat them. Because of this, Odysseus ends up blinding the cyclops and stealing his flocks of sheep.

Guests and Hosts 8: Aeolus, the king of the winds, gives Odysseus a safe wind home in exchange for his story. When Odysseus' men, in their greed for treasure, open the gift of



safe winds prematurely and they are blown back to Aeolus' island, he is unwilling to help them anymore. Circe turns the men into animals because she feels threatened by them. When Odysseus is protected by her magic she is impressed and at his bidding she frees his men and provides all of them with food and shelter for a year.

Guests and Hosts 9: For Odysseus' lamentable tale, Alcinous grants him more gifts, making Odysseus far wealthier than he was when he arrived. He blesses the ship on which Odysseus is to travel. Odysseus sleeps during the journey and is left on the island before he wakes up. For their kindness as hosts, the Phaiakians are punished. The ship of men that carried Odysseus is turned to stone. Alcinous announces that his people will no longer offer safe passage to everyone.

Guests and Hosts 10: The swineherd has very little, but what he has he feels obligated to share evenly with the beggar. The beggar tries to tell him news of Odysseus and he hears the news but refuses to grant any gift of exchange for it because he doesn't believe it to be true.

Guests and Hosts 11: When Telemachus announces that he must depart, Menelaus demands that he have breakfast first. Helen and Menelaus present him with gifts. When he nears Pylos, Telemachus asks Nestor's son for forgiveness because he is going to avoid their hospitality so that he may get home faster. When Theoklymenos, the murderous seer asks him for a ride to Ithaca with him, Telemachus grants it rather than deny a seer. He is regretful that he must house Theoklymenos in the house of another when he gets to Ithaca. The swineherd continues to share everything with Odysseus and he tells him his own tale of his fall from riches.

Guests and Hosts 12: Odysseus, admitted as a beggar into his own house, becomes a lesser form of guest who is entitled to food but no gifts. The suitors point this out to him and they give freely of the food that is not even theirs to give. When Odysseus points this out, Antinous physically attacks him. The suitors yell at him for attacking a guest.

Guests and Hosts 13: When Odysseus beats the other beggar he is given the food of a more honored guest. Penelope invites him to her room to hear his story and in exchange for that she has him bathed and given new clothing.

Guests and Hosts 14: The suitors do not want the beggar to have a try at the bow, but Telemachus uses his clout as the real master of the house to demand that the beggar be allowed to try.

Guests and Hosts 15: Part of the reason the men of the assembly are so upset with Odysseus is that he killed men in his home. This could be interpreted as a violation of the guest relationship. When the herald announces that it was the work of a god, not Odysseus, many of the people understand this as a divine mandate that this certain guest relationship was null and void.



Topic Tracking: Journeys

Journeys 1: The tale begins not with Odysseus journeying, but with him trapped at a moment in his journey from Troy to Ithaca. Athena pleads with Zeus that he be allowed to continue his journey home. She goes to Ithaca and sends Telemachus on a journey of his own.

Journeys 2: After arriving in Pylos, Telemachus finds that there is very little to learn there and his journey is diverted over land to the city of Sparta where Menelaus rules. This journey is facilitated by the aid of Nestor and the advice of Athena. Nestor's son accompanies him on the trip.

Journeys 3: Telemachus has finally arrived at Sparta and his journey slows down for a moment. Menelaus recounts his journey home from Troy and how it was sidetracked and delayed. He had to appeal to the immortals to finally make it home. Menelaus gives Telemachus news of his father, stranded on Calypso's island. When Penelope learns of her son's journey, it causes her anguish because she doesn't want to lose him the way she lost her husband. The suitors take his journey as an opportunity to kill him.

Journeys 4: Odysseus' journey is begun again by Hermes from Zeus. He must first build his own raft, which takes a few days. Calypso sends him off with food and clothing. When he nears land, an angry Poseidon destroys the raft. With the help of a nymph, Odysseus floats for two days and crawls into the mouth of a river where he burrows into leaves in a thicket for warmth and sleep.

Journeys 5: Odysseus tells of his journeys home from Troy and his tale is filled with mysterious places. First, he loses many men in a raiding party. Then, he almost loses more men to the Lotus eaters in a magical place where a plant can make you forget your yearning to go home. Finally, they are near the land of the terrible cyclops where they eat men instead of offering hospitality.

Journeys 6: Odysseus continues the story of his fantastic voyage. They travel to the island of the king of the winds, but Odysseus did not tell his men that the storm winds were stored in the bag given as a gift from the king. In greed they opened it and were blown back to Aeolus who took no more pity on them because he thought they were cursed. They are becalmed and end up first at a nightless island where some men are eaten by giants and then at Circe's island. She turns some of them into pigs and then releases them. They remain here for a year and when they want to go, she tells them that they first must journey to the land of the dead.

Journeys 7: Odysseus and his men make a journey to the land of the dead, a journey that men are supposed to make only once in their lives. Here, the dead journey to meet them and tell their tales. Tiresias tells Odysseus how he must continue his journey and where not to go. When the dead swarm too much, they must turn around and leave.



Journeys 8: Odysseus returns from the land of the dead and Circe gives him advice on how to continue his journey. He makes it past Scylla and Charybdis only losing six men but his men mutiny and demand to stop on the island where the cattle of the sun are kept. They are kept on the island by storm winds and after twenty days they slaughter the forbidden cattle. Their ship is destroyed once they leave and Odysseus is the only survivor. He drifts back through Scylla and Charybdis and lands on the Island of Calypso.

Journeys 9: Odysseus makes the final leg of his seaward journey in sleep. When he wakes he does not recognize his home.

Journeys 10: Telemachus is sent on the last leg of his journey by Athena. He travels quickly through the day and avoids stopping in Pylos so that he can get home as soon as possible. When he nears Ithaca he gets off the ship near the house of the swineherd and the rest of the men return to the city.

Journeys 11: Odysseus returns to the theme of journey as he speaks to Penelope still disguised as a beggar. He weaves elements of his actual story into his lies.



Book 1

The singer begins this epic song with an invocation to the muses referring to Odysseus' long journey home and introducing the main themes of the text: Odysseus' wandering; the entrance of Telemachus into manhood; and their vengeance on the suitors. All the gods but Poseidon pity Odysseus. The singer's narrative begins on Mt. Olympos where the gods are gathered for a feast. They are discussing Aegisthus who has just been killed by Orestes the son of Agamemnon. Zeus speaks first:

*"My word, how mortals take the gods to task!
All their afflictions come from us, we hear.
And what of their own failings? Greed and folly
double the suffering in the lot of man.
See how Aegisthos, for his double portion,
stole Agamemnon's wife and killed the soldier on his homecoming day.
And yet Aegisthos knew what doom lay in this."* Book 1, lines 48 - 55

Orestes has recently killed his mother Clytemnestra and her lover, Aegisthus, to avenge his father. Zeus believes that Orestes did what was right because the gods had warned Aegisthus. Athena interrupts and pleads with Zeus to turn his attention to Odysseus who suffers on the island of Calypso. Zeus reminds her that Poseidon is still angry at Odysseus because he blinded his son Polyphemus. Nevertheless, she asks Zeus to send Hermes to Calypso to tell her to release Odysseus so he may return home. Zeus assents to this. Then Athena takes up her spear and goes to Ithaca to warn the suitors to leave before Odysseus returns. She finds the suitors and Telemachus sees her while daydreaming: "what if his great father/ came from the unknown world and drove these men/ like dead leaves through the place" Book 1, lines 145-7. He leads the disguised goddess into the feast where the servants are hustling about to please the suitors. There is a roast being served and a singer performing... Telemachus makes an excuse for the opulent show and asks her where she is from (she is disguised as a man). She tells him that she is Mentos from Taphos and has come because she heard that Odysseus has returned home. She asks him if he is Odysseus' son and he replies:

*"Friend, let me put it in the plainest way.
My mother says I am his son; I know not
surely. Who has known his own engendering?
I wish at least I had some happy man
as father, going old in his house-
but unknown death and silence are the fate
of him that, since you ask, they call my father."* Book 1, lines 258-64

Athena confirms his lineage for him and asks about the feast that is being carried on. He tells her that these men are the lords of the island courting Penelope. They hang around wasting the family's wealth because there is no one to fight them off. Penelope does not dare deny them, but she does not want to marry any of them. Athena tells Telemachus a story of when she saw Odysseus in a feast at her father's house. She



advises him to go abroad for news to Nestor and Menelaus to confirm or deny his father's death. She gives him Orestes as an acceptable model of revenge. When she begins to leave, Telemachus stops her and offers hospitality to her. She explains that she is a merchant and must go attend to her business. As she lives she replenishes his spirit with thoughts of his father. He returns to the suitors.

The minstrel continues to sing inside about the homecoming of the heroes from the siege of Troy. Penelope reaches out in tears and asks him not to sing such a sad story because Odysseus has not returned. Telemachus intervenes and tells her that it is a good song for other people and it should be heard. She retires to her bedroom. The suitors begin to explain profanely how they would like to sleep with her and Telemachus tells them they will have to leave tomorrow. Antinous responds to Telemachus: "Zeus forbid you should be king in Ithaka!" Book 1, line 436. Telemachus explains that he does not want to be king; he just wants control of his own unravaged household. Eurymachus asks where the stranger came from and whether or not he brought news of Odysseus. Telemachus recounts the tale of Athena.

*"So said Telemakhos, though in his heart
he knew his visitor had been immortal.
But now the suitors turned to play again
with dance and haunting song. They played till nightfall
indeed black night came on them at their pleasure.
and half asleep they left, each for his home."* Book 1, lines 472-7

Telemachus goes to his room and undresses for sleep.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 1

Topic Tracking: Journeys 1



Book 2

Telemachus wakes at dawn and has criers call the citizens to assembly. He takes his father's position among them. Lord Aigyptios, an old man is the first to speak among them. He asks who called the assembly, since it is only the station of kings to do so. Telemachus stands and says "No need to wonder any more, Sir,/ who called this session. The distress is mine." Book 2, lines 42-43

He appeals to the assembly that the suitors should be expelled because it is not right for them to hang around. He gets more emotional during the speech and throws his staff to the ground. Antinous answers him harshly and tells the assembly that the blame should fall on Penelope for fooling them repeatedly. He uses the unwoven loom as an example of her trickery. He demands that Telemachus either dismiss her from his house or give her to marry because "she makes a name for herself" Book 2, line 133. Telemachus replies that he will not turn his mother out and he repeats his plea to Zeus. Zeus sends a pair of eagles through the sky. Halitherses speaks to interpret the omen and says it means that Odysseus will not be gone for long. He reminds the assembly that he foretold that Odysseus would be gone for nineteen years. Eurymachus has a different interpretation:

*"Old man go tell the omens for your children
at home, and try to keep them out of trouble.
I am more fit to interpret this than you are.
Bird life aplenty is found in the sunny air,
not all of it is significant. As for Odysseus,
he perished far from home. You should have perished with him-"* Book 2, lines 188-193

Eurymachus repeats the request that Penelope be given in marriage or turned out of the house. He says that the suitors deserve to be fed because they have spent so much time there waiting for her to make a decision. Telemachus tells everyone that he is done with the conversation and is going to Pylos and Sparta to search out news of his father. Mentor stands next to Telemachus and announces to the assembly that it is obvious that none of these men deserve to be king because "it is so clear that no one here remembers/ how like a gentle father Odysseus ruled you" Book 2, lines 244-5. He is upset by the fact that the community dishonors Odysseus' memory by allowing the suitors to behave in this way. A man speaks up to end the debate and Telemachus goes to the shore and makes a prayer for his journey. Athena comes to him in the form of Mentor and makes him bolder. She, in the form of mentor, tells him that he will secure a ship and sailors because there are plenty of ships and sailors in Ithaca. Telemachus recognizes the divine speech and goes home reassured. Antinous comes to him laughing and tells him to forget his anger and feast with the suitors. Telemachus says he cannot feast with men who have committed such wrong. Antinous mocks him and his wish for revenge and another suitor joins in telling him that he will get lost at sea like his father. Telemachus goes to the storeroom and looks over the goods drawing out what he will need for the journey. He calls Eurykleia and asks her to have the goods prepared to be taken and she is upset by the command. She asks him who but such an idea in



his head and reminds him that his father went missing in a strange place. Telemachus tells her that a god told him to do this and he makes her swear not to tell his mother.

Meanwhile Athena is gathering sailors. She wakes Telemachus in the middle of the night and tells him to leave. She leads him to his crew and his ship and they prepare the ship to sail. After a libation they set off and sail into the dawn.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 2

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 1



Book 3

The ship sails into the rising sun as on the shore nine bulls are sacrificed to the gods. In Pylos when they beach the ship, Telemachus is hesitant to continue, but Athena, disguised as Mentor encourages him to be brave and go to Nestor because "he will tell you history and no lies" Book 3, line 24. Telemachus asks her how to speak respectfully to Nestor and she just tells him to trust that his mind will give him the right words. They turn and walk together to the altars of Pylos where Nestor is sitting on his throne. Peisistratos and Thrasymedes welcome the visitors and Nestor asks Athena (still in the form of Mentor) to invoke Poseidon in the sacrifice. She does as he asks but grants the prayer herself. They feast with their hosts and then Nestor asks Telemachus why he has come. Telemachus answers that he is not on official business from Ithaca but personal, to inquire about the fate of his father. Nestor begins to tell the story of the nine years of the Trojan war praising Odysseus wherever appropriate, then he turns to Telemachus:

*"Well I must say I marvel at the sight of you:
your manner of speech couldn't be more like his;
one could say No; no boy could speak so well.
And all that time at Ilion, he and I
were never at odds in council or assembly"* Book 3, lines 131-5

He tells them that after the sack of Troy the gods decided to make life hard for the Greeks. First, the Greeks held an assembly at sundown, which is wrong in itself, during which Agamemnon and Odysseus argued with each other in front of the troops. The forces split: half stayed in Troy, half left under Menelaus. When Menelaus' men stopped to make a sacrifice, Odysseus turned around with the Ithacan contingent to plead with Agamemnon. Nestor stops reminiscing and refers to news from Idomeneus in Crete that Agamemnon was killed by Aegisthus, who was in turn killed by Orestes. Telemachus states that he wishes he were as brave as Orestes and could exact that sort of revenge. Nestor has heard of what is going on with the suitors in Ithaca and he asks Telemachus whether or not the people side with him. He also mentions that Athena used to protect Odysseus and will probably also help Telemachus. He also expresses hope that Odysseus will return home and avenge himself. Telemachus doesn't want to believe this, but Mentor (Athena) criticizes him for not having faith saying that Odysseus may already be on his way home because his fate has been better than Agamemnon's. Telemachus replies "Mentor, grievously though we may miss my father/ why go on as if that homecoming could happen?" Book 3, lines 258-9. Nestor retells the tale of Orestes and Aegisthus. A minstrel had been left to care for Clytemnestra but Aegisthus had 'taken care' of him. Menelaus and Nestor came home together but there was a storm and Menelaus was blown to Egypt where he made a lot of money while Aegisthus continued to rule Argos. In the eighth year, Orestes returned and killed his mother and her lover. Menelaus returned from Egypt with ships full of gold. Then he turns again to Telemachus: "don't stay too long away from home, leaving/ your treasure there, and brazen suitors near;/ they'll squander all you have or take it from you," Book 3, lines 341-3.



He tells Telemachus that Menelaus will know more than he and then continues to talk until the sun goes down. Athena suggests they should offer a sacrifice and then retire. Telemachus turns to go to his ship, but Nestor stops him and tells him it would be shameful unless he and Mentor would sleep in his house. Mentor says he must leave, but advises Nestor to send Telemachus to Sparta in a chariot and gives elaborate instructions for the sacrifice of a heifer. Athena leaves and the rest go to Nestor's house where they mix wine and pour libations. At dawn Nestor sends for his sons and gives them the mission of fitting a heifer with golden horns for sacrifice and to prepare a feast. His sons leave and the errands are accomplished. They feast and prepare more food. The horses are harness and given to Telemachus. Peisistratos is to leave with him. They are to begin the journey in the morning.

*"That day they made the grainlands of Laikedaimon,
where, as the horses held to a fast clip,
they kept on to their journey's end. Behind them
the sun went down and all the roads grew dark."* Book 3, lines 539-42

Topic Tracking: Journeys 2

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 3

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 2



Book 4

The travelers journey to the house of Menelaus who is holding a double wedding for his daughter to Achilles' son and another's daughter to his son. When Telemachus and Peisistratos arrive, they are immediately announced to Menelaus, but the herald asks if they should invite them in. Menelaus is indignant with this question as he tells the herald, because he would never have made it home if it were not for the charity of other hosts. After being led into the hall, Telemachus and Peisistratos are cleansed by hand-maidens and fed. When they are ready, Menelaus welcomes them and asks to hear their names. They sit down at the feast, but Telemachus does not stay silent. He speaks to Peisistratos:

*"My dear friend, can you believe you eyes?-
The murmuring hall, how luminous it is
with bronze gold, amber, silver, and ivory!
This is the way the court of Zeus must be,
inside, upon Olympus. What wonder!"* Book 4, lines 77-81

Menelaus tells him that mortals cannot rival Zeus and describes how hard it was to get such wealth through seven years wandering and war. He tells them he would gladly have only a third of the wealth to have his friends back. He says next that Odysseus went through more than anyone else. Telemachus is affected by this and he begins to weep. Helen tells Menelaus that the guests have not yet introduced themselves but she is sure that one is Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Menelaus says he also sees the likeness. Peisistratos speaks and confirms their suspicions also explaining that they were sent by Nestor because Telemachus was seeking news of his father. He also describes Telemachus' plight with the suitors. Menelaus exclaims "His son, in my house! How I loved the man,/ And how he fought through hardship for my sake!" Book 3, lines 181-2. Then he says that he would have done anything for Odysseus, surmising that the gods must have been jealous to smite Odysseus. Grief rises in everyone and they all weep. Peisistratos tells them that they should not weep because it will be dawn soon and that he lost a brother at Troy. Menelaus responds that he speaks sensibly and is much like his father in the way he reasons. Menelaus has everyone cleanse themselves and they go back to eating.

Helen decides she will drug them so that they will sleep and forget their sorrow. She puts a potion into the wine as it is served and then recounts a deed of Odysseus. In Troy he had disguised himself as a beggar.. Helen had discovered his identity but promised not to reveal him to the Trojans. He told her about the dying Akhaians and made her want to return to Greece. Menelaus says that he has never seen another man like Odysseus and recounts how Odysseus stopped men from crying out inside the wooden horse. Telemachus speaks out and says that all of his cleverness did not save Odysseus from destruction. Helen calls the maid to make the beds and they all go to sleep. When dawn comes again Menelaus goes to Telemachus and asks him why he came. Telemachus tells him that he seeks news of his father and he relays the news of



the suitors. This enrages Menelaus. "If only that Odysseus met the suitors, / they'd have their consummation, a cold bed!" Book 4, lines 371-72

Menelaus recounts his own journey and tells how he was becalmed for twenty days. His plight distressed Eidothea, a nymph who came to him and asks him why he lets his people waste away. He asked her how to get home and she told him that if he captured her father Proteus by surprise, he would help him leave. She told him there is a certain cave where seals sleep that Proteus goes to at dawn. Menelaus and two chosen men were to go there and hide among the seals and grab Proteus by surprise. They were to hold on no matter what form he changed into. When he stopped changing, then Menelaus could ask him which god was angry with them, then they could sacrifice to that god. Menelaus and his men snuck into the cave before dawn and grabbed Proteus when he came to look over the seals. He changed into animals and trees and tried to frighten them, but they did not let go. Menelaus asked him "Which of the immortals chained me here?" Book 4, line 502. Proteus told him that he did not sacrifice to Zeus and the other gods upon his departure and advises that they needed return to the Nile and make a sacrifice. Menelaus told him he would do this but asked him about his comrades. Proteus answered that one is alive at sea and the other, Ajax is dead. Proteus also told him about the death of Agamemnon. Menelaus recounts to Telemachus:

*"Before the end my heart was broken down,
I slumped on the trampled sand and cried aloud,
caring no more for life or the light of day,
and rolled there weeping, till my tears were spent."* Book 4, lines 574-77

Proteus told him not to mourn but to hasten home. First he had to make sacrifices. Menelaus asked one more question of Odysseus and Proteus told him that Odysseus was weeping on the island of Calypso. Soon after, Proteus departed and in the morning Menelaus carried out a funeral for Agamemnon. They returned home. Menelaus tells Telemachus that he should stay with him for eleven or twelve days and then he may return home with handsome gifts. Telemachus responds that he must not be kept because his sailors are waiting idly in Pylos and his affairs are proceeding without him in Ithaca. Menelaus is pleased with this and gives him a mixing bowl made by Hephaistos.

Meanwhile in Ithaca, the suitors are having a javelin competition and Noemen, the man who lent the boat to Mentor (Athena), asks Antinous when Telemachus will return. The suitors are surprised because they didn't think he would really leave. Noemen tells them that he gave the boat because it is right to help a good prince. After he leaves, Antinous blazes with anger and says that he wants to pursue Telemachus and make sure that he doesn't return. Medon, the crier, rushes to Penelope and tells her that her son has left. She laments that her son is in danger, "Why has my child left me?... / Why did he go? Must he, too, be forgotten?" Book 4, lines 758-61. Medon tells her that a god made him leave and Penelope says that the winds have blown her son away. She asks for someone to be sent to inform Laertes to ask for help. Eurykleia admits that she took part in Telemachus' departure and she tells Penelope to pray to Athena who will help



her son. She advises that old Laertes should be spared the news. Meanwhile the suitors prepare to leave. Penelope falls to sleep and Athena sends her a dream. The dream speaks:

*"Sleepest thou sorrowing Penelope?
The gods whose life is ease no longer suffer thee
to pine and weep, then; he returns unharmed,
thy little one, no way hath he offended."* Book 4, lines 857-60

Penelope asks the dream why she has come and laments her fate again. The dream tells her not to fear because Athena pities her. Penelope asks what has become of Odysseus and the dream says she cannot speak of him. The suitors leave in search of Telemachus.

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 3

Topic Tracking: Journeys 3



Book 5

Dawn rises the next day and Athena addresses Zeus about the suffering of Odysseus on Calypso's island. She tells him it is not right that no one in Ithaca remembers Zeus while the suitors plot to kill Telemachus. Zeus replies:

*"My child, what odd complaints you let escape you.
Have you not, you yourself, arranged this matter-
as we all know- so that Odysseus
will bring these men to book, on his return?"* Book 5, lines 24-7

He sends Hermes to Calypso to demand that she release Odysseus, prescribing that Odysseus must make his own raft and float alone for twenty days until he lands on Skheria where the Phaiakians will honor him. Hermes flies like a gull over the crests of waves and arrives at the home of Calypso. She recognizes him and gives him food and drink. He tells her that he has been forced by Zeus to tell her to release Odysseus. She shouts "Oh you vile gods, in jealousy supernal/ you hate it when we choose to lie with men-" Book 5, 124-5. She reflects on other gods who have slept with mortals and then tells Hermes that she has no ship in which to send Odysseus. Hermes tells her that she needs to send him, nevertheless, in a raft of his own making. He leaves and she goes out to find Odysseus. She tells him that he must build a raft which she will provision with food and clothing. Odysseus does not believe her and exclaims at the idea of crossing the ocean on a raft. He asks her to swear to enchant him no more and she does, unwillingly. He goes to her house and eats in the place left by Hermes. Calypso asks him how he can want to go home when she is divine and beautiful. He replies:

*"I long for home, long for the sight of home.
If any god has marked me out again
for shipwreck, my tough heart can undergo it.
What hardship have I not long since endured
at sea, in battle! Let the trial come."* Book 5, 229-33

The sun sets and they go to sleep. At dawn Odysseus prepares for the journey and carefully builds a raft. This takes four days. On the fifth Calypso bathes him and enchants a wind to push him advising him to keep certain stars on his left side. He sails for seventeen days and then sees land. Poseidon sees this and is upset by it. He knows that he cannot stop the journey so he decides to make it harder. He sends a storm that makes Odysseus wish he had died at Troy. The waves batter him and one breaks his mast. The goddess Ino sees him struggling in the water and gives him her magical veil which will support him as he makes the long swim to shore. She advises him to drop it as soon as he nears land, but he doesn't trust her because he thinks she is trying to trick him from the boat. A wave forces him into the water. He floats for two days and when he nears the land all he can see are violent crags and cliffs. He loses heart and laments "A cruel turn, this. Never had I thought/ to see this land, but Zeus has let me see it-" Book 5, lines 426-7. As a wave lifts him he grips onto a rocky ledge and is pulled back by the undertow. When he comes up again he sees the mouth of a calm river and



goes for it praying to the god of the stream. The river god makes it quiet for him. Odysseus lays on its bank for a while, barely breathing. He gets up and tunnels under some leaves in a thicket to avoid the cold just as a man buries the last embers of fire to save them for the next day.

Topic Tracking: Journeys 4



Book 6

Odysseus sleeps in the thicket. The king of the island on which he landed, Skheria, is Alcinous. Athena enters his palace to find his daughter Nausicaa. She takes the form of one of the princess's friends and tells her that she should be married soon, so she should go and do a ritual washing of clothes in the river. She adds "Go beg thy sovereign father, even at dawn/ to have the mule cart and mules brought round." Book 6, lines 41-2. Athena departs and at dawn Nausicaa goes to her father and asks for everything Athena told her to and he grants it. The mules are brought around and the cart is filled. At the river the girls bathe themselves as well as the clothing. While the clothing dries, they eat and play a game with a ball. The princess throws the ball the wrong way and it hits the thicket. Odysseus shouts out and then steps out of the bushes hiding his genitals with an olive branch. The other girls run away but Nausicaa stands to face him. Odysseus considers falling and clinging to her knees but he decides that this might scare her. He asks her whether she is a god or a mortal because she is so beautiful. He compares her to a young palm tree. He continues to praise her and then she speaks:

*"Stranger, there is no quirk or evil in you
that I can see. You know Zeus metes out fortune
to good and bad men as it pleases him.
Hardship he sent to you, and you must bear it.
But now that you have taken refuge here
you shall not lack for clothing, or any other
comfort due to a poor man in distress."* Book 6, lines 201-207

Nausicaa introduces herself and tells her maids not to be afraid because strangers and beggars come from Zeus. They give him olive oil and tell him to bathe. He says he cannot bathe in front of them so they leave. He bathes and Athena helps him look more noble. The girl is amazed when he returns, remarking that she wishes her husband would look like him. They give him food and drink and tell him to follow them to the palace but he thinks it would be improper for them to be seen with a man. He gets directions so that he may go by himself. She tells him to supplicate her mother first and then leaves. Odysseus prays to Athena that he may find love and mercy among these people. Athena hears him and plans to fulfill his wish without showing him her true form.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 4

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 4



Book 7

Nausicaa rides home and goes to her own room as Odysseus walks into the city and to the palace. Athena covers him in a fog so that no one will hinder him and she comes to him in the form of a small girl holding a jug. Odysseus speaks to her:

*"Little one, could you take me to the house
of that Alcinous, king among these people?
You see, I am a poor old stranger here;
my home is far away; here there is no one
known to me, in countryside or city."* Book 7, lines 25-9

She tells him that many people do not trust stranger so he must be quiet and she guides him to the palace which was built by a son of Poseidon. Alcinous is Poseidon's grandson and his brother died young leaving only a daughter Arete who was married to Alcinous. She is wise and merciful. Odysseus goes into the palace filled with gold and silver with enough rooms for fifty maids-in-waiting. There is an orchard on both sides with tender fruits of all kinds. Beyond is a vineyard and many sorts of vegetables. Odysseus, hardened by the sea, is amazed by all of this and just stares. He enters the house and throws himself at the knees of Arete pleading that she give him passage to his fatherland. Everyone is silent after he speaks. An old man speaks first and tells Alcinous to give courtesy to the guest and offer him food and shelter. Alcinous heeds his advice and his eldest son yields his own seat at the table to Odysseus.

After he has eaten, Alcinous speaks and asks that the elders gather in the morning to discuss the stranger and how he may get home quickly. Odysseus tells him that he is not going to harm them and asks for a little more food because he is so hungry and has suffered for a long time. Everyone accepts this request and Odysseus continues to eat alongside the King and Queen. Arete asks him who he is and how he came to the island and where he got clothing. He tells, briefly, of the island of Calypso and the drowning of his shipmates. After many years he was allowed to leave and was struck by a terrible storm on the sea. He recounts what happened in the thicket and how he rose to the sound of Nausicaa and her servants who helped him. He explains that he came into the city after them. Alcinous replies:

*"Friend, my child's good judgment failed in this-
not to have brought you in her company home.
Once you approached her, you became her charge."* Book 7, lines 321-3

Odysseus tells him that he wouldn't have walked with the girls anyway. Alcinous says that if he wishes he may marry Nausicaa and become his son-in-law, but if he doesn't, he will lend him a ship to get home. Odysseus is overjoyed and prays to Zeus that everything may be done in this way. A maid leads him to his bed and he goes to sleep.

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 5

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 5



Book 8

Alcinous wakes at dawn and calls the assembly of old men. Athena rouses them to get up and go to the assembly. She makes Odysseus look more lordly and everyone is impressed when he arrives. Alcinous tells the assembly that the traveler has appealed to them for passage home. They grant him a ship and fifty-two crewmen. While this is being prepared, they all go to a feast and listen to the songs of the singer Demodokos. The singer begins:

*"In time, when hunger and thirst were turned away,
the Muse brought to the minstrel's mind a song
of heroes whose great fame rang under heaven:
the clash between Odysseus and Akhilleus,
how one time they contended at the godfeast
raging, and the marshal, Agamemnon
felt inward joy over his captains' quarrel!"* Book 8, lines 78-84

Odysseus tries to hide that he is crying as this story continues. Alcinous sees this and decides to hold a contest of physical prowess instead of the harp. He has men line up outside in preparation for the running contest. His son wins. Next there is a wrestling match, the broad jump, the javelin, and boxing. Alcinous suggest that they ask Odysseus if he competes in anything because he looks impressively strong. Laodamas encourages him to join the contest and Odysseus asks them why they want to challenge him. At this, a young man nicknamed Seareach jests that he must be of a lowly birth because he never learned a sport. Odysseus tells Seareach that he has a fine body but no brains. Then he says that although he is old and cramped with pains he will take the challenge because he feels insulted. He grabs a discus and throws it further than anyone else. Then he announces that he will accept a challenge (from anyone except Laodamas, the son of his host) in any sport but running because his legs are weak from his days on the sea. Alcinous tells him that he shouldn't fear offending Laodamas because he was offended first and then calls for another feast. The minstrel sings of Ares' affair with Aphrodite and how her husband Hephaistos crafted a trap to catch them in the act of love. When Hephaistos returned to find his trap full he called out to Zeus: "O Father Zeus, O gods in bliss forever,/ here is indecorous entertainment for you," Book 8, lines 323-4.

All the gods crowded into to gawk at the shameful scene and then tried to appease Hephaistos so that he would release them. Apollo offers him a chain coverlet and Hephaistos says all he wants is to lie next to his wife... The gods laugh at this and Poseidon says that he will pay what ever Hephaistos asks if he releases Ares. Hephaistos releases them and they both flee. Odysseus enjoys the tale and when it is finished Alcinous calls his sons to dance. They balance and bounce a ball as they dance. Odysseus compliments the king. Alcinous calls the men together and announces that each should present Odysseus with a cloak and a bar of gold. Seareach gives Odysseus a broad sword as well as an apology. Odysseus accepts this and the gifts of everyone else. Arete has everything put in a chest for him and tells him to bind it up so



that no one may steal anything. He is lead to the wine hall and Nausicaa wishes him farewell. At the feast, Odysseus eats with Alcinous and has a piece of meat given to Demodokos in praise for his songs of the Akhaians and advises him "Now shift your theme and sing that wooden horse/ Epeios built, inspired by Athena-." Book 8, lines 526-7. The minstrel sings about the horse and the destruction of Troy. He mentions how Odysseus fought side by side with Menelaus and Odysseus begins to weep again. He tries to hide it but Alkinous sees it and asks for Demodokos to stop because it is not right to harm a guest. Then he turns to Odysseus and asks him to tell them where he is from and what he has been doing. He says that his father once told him that some of his men would be killed for giving passage to a stranger. Then he asks Odysseus if any of his friends or kin died at Troy.

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 6



Book 9

Odysseus begins by saying that it is a great thing to listen to such a minstrel perform his songs, but that by asking for the cause of his sorrow he causes more grief. He gives them his name and says his home is Ithaca. Then he says that he has been detained for a long time by Calypso and before her by Circe. He starts at his departure from Troy:

*"The wind that carried west from Ilion
brought me to Ismaros, on the far shore,
a strongpoint on the coast of the Kikones.
I stormed that place and killed the men who fought.
Plunder we took, and we enslaved the women,
to make division, equal shares to all."* Book 9, lines 43-8

When he ordered his men to leave this landing, they mutinied and could not leave before reinforcements arrived. Many of his men were killed trying to get away from there. Next, a storm delayed them for three days after which a wind pushed them for nine days to the island of the Lotus eaters. The men who ate the Lotus with the island's inhabitants had no desire to leave the island but had to be dragged away kicking and screaming. Next they came near the land of the Cyclops and they landed on an island in view of it. They admired the island for its good land and harbors and they slept there for the night. When dawn rose they hunted the plentiful game and feasted on many goats, gazing at the smoke of the Cyclops. When they woke up, Odysseus addressed them and told them that he wanted to cross the bay and investigate what type of men lived across it. In one ship they crossed the strait and could see the flocks and rough buildings of the Cyclops.

They beached close to where they could see one sleeping in his cave. Odysseus walked up to the cave with a goatskin full of wine. The cyclops had left the cave because he took his sheep out to pasture. In the cave they found cheeses and lambs separated by age. The men wanted to take these things but Odysseus told them not to. They lit a fire to make an offering and eat some cheese. When the cyclops returned they hid and watched him milk the ewes. Soon, he saw them and reacted "Strangers. . .who are you? and where from?/ What brings you here by sea ways- a fair traffic? Book 9, lines 274-5. Odysseus was afraid but he spoke anyway and entreated the cyclops to give them the courtesy due a guest. The cyclops told him that he didn't care about Zeus and did not fear him. He asked where they hid their ship and Odysseus, knowing that the cyclops means to destroy it, tells him it was destroyed and they are shipwrecked. The cyclops grabbed two of the men and bashed their heads on rocks. The remaining men cried aloud as he ate their comrades. Odysseus had a sword but did not dare kill the cyclops because he was afraid that he wouldn't be able to move the stone the beast rolled in front of the door. When dawn rises, the cyclops lights a fire and takes his sheep through the door, rolling the stone in front of the cave as he left. Odysseus found a mast size portion of an olive tree and they sharpened it in the fire. Odysseus and four other men agreed to wield the weapon. When the cyclops came



back Odysseus offered him the wineskin and he drank it all. Once he is drunk, Odysseus said to him:

*"Kyklops,
you ask my honorable name? Remember
the gift you promised me, and I shall tell you.
my name is Nohbdy: mother father and friends,
everyone calls me Nohbdy."* Book 9, lines 394 - 399

The cyclops was drunk enough to be stumbling around, and they take this opportunity to drive the giant pike into his eye. He yells out and claws at his face pulling out the pike. The other cyclops gathered around the outside of the closed cave trying to figure out what is causing the terrible wail. The cyclops Polyphemus yelled to them that "Nohbdy, Nohbdy's tricked me, Nohbdy's ruined me" Book 9, line 443. They thought that he was saying 'nobody' so they went away because they assumed it the work of the gods. Polyphemus opened the door and to let his sheep out but stood in front of it to stop the men from leaving. Odysseus thought hard to figure out how to get past him and he devised away for the men to be strapped to the under bellies of the sheep. The next morning, as the sheep went out, Polyphemus ran his hands over heir woolly backs to make sure that they are sheep. They dropped from the bellies of the sheep when they got out and ran to the ship. Once away, Odysseus yelled back:

*"O Kyklops! Would you feast on my companions?
Puny, am I, in a Caveman's hands?
How do you like the beating that we gave you,
you damned cannibal? Eater of guests
under your roof! Zeus and the gods have paid you!"* Book 9, lines 519-23

Polyphemus hurled rocks after them and caused giant waves. The men told Odysseus to stop yelling because his voice was guiding the cyclops' aim. Odysseus yelled out his name and took responsibility for blinding him. Polyphemus yelled that he would get vengeance from his father Poseidon. Then he prayed to his father that even if Odysseus was destined to return home, may he return home with no companions and after a great while... He hurled again and just barely missed. They rowed quickly and joined the other men and made a sacrifice of part of the flock they stole from Polyphemus. They feasted all day long and left at dawn the next morning.

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 7

Topic Tracking: Journeys 5



Book 10

They landed next at the island of Aeolus the god-made king of the winds. He kept Odysseus a month to hear the entire story of his journey. In return for the tale, he gave them a bag of storm winds with the promise that they would swiftly arrive at Ithaca. In sight of Ithaca, Odysseus fell asleep and his men, thinking that there was treasure in the bag for Aeolus, opened it and released the winds. There was a terrible storm that blew them all the way back to Aeolus' island. The king asked them why they had returned and when Odysseus explained requesting more help, he responded "Take yourself out of this island, creeping thing-/... Your voyage here was cursed by heaven!" Book 10, lines 82-5.

There was no wind after they left for six days so they rowed and arrived at a nightless island called Lamnos. Here they sheltered for some sleep and then Odysseus sent some men out to investigate where they had landed. These men were eaten by giants, the inhabitants of the island. They came running after the ships and they had to depart in haste. Next they landed on the island Aiaa, Circe's island. They pulled into the cove and rested. After a day, Odysseus left with his weapons to inspect the landscape. He saw a house with smoke coming from its chimney and decided not to approach it without companions. As he returned to the ship, he killed a buck with his spear and dragged it to his companions. At dawn, Odysseus addressed his men and told them about the house. They were hesitant because of their past few experiences. Odysseus, however, roused them and sent 22 off. All around the house of Circe were wolves and mountain lions who would not attack. They came up to the men like pets. One of the men said to his companions that it must be the house of a kind weaver, therefore they need not be stealthy. All the men but Eurylochus went into the house and drank with the woman. They were all turned into pigs by the woman Circe. Eurylochus ran back to the ships and told Odysseus this. Odysseus takes his weapons and asked Eurylochus to lead him back. Eurylochus was too afraid to return so Odysseus went alone. Hermes came to Odysseus and advised him not to go and fight but to take an amulet from him and ingest a flower that would defeat her magic. Hermes picked the flower for him and then left. Odysseus went into the house of Circe. When he drank her potion it did not affect him and she was impressed and assumed that he was a god or a great man. When she found out who he was, she spoke:

*"Odysseus then you are, O great contender,
of whom the glittering god with the golden wand
spoke to me ever, and foretold
the black swift ship would carry you from Troy.
Put up your weapon in the sheath. We two
shall mingle and make love upon our bed.
So mutual trust may come of play and love."* Book 10, lines 371-77

Odysseus made her swear that if he went to bed with her she would do no harm to him. Circe's four maids attended to him and bathed him. When they brought him food, he wouldn't touch any of it. Circe asked him why this was and he told her that he could not



to eat when his men had been turned into pigs. She transformed them back into men and they were happy to see Odysseus. She told them to get the rest of the men from the ship. They stowed the ship, but Eurylochus yelled against this plan thinking it to be further trickery. Circe spoke to Odysseus and told him to think of joy and not sorrow. After a year on the island, one of the shipmates spoke to Odysseus saying "Captain, shake off this trance, and think of home-/ if home indeed awaits us," Book 10, lines 521-2. Odysseus went to Circe and begged her to let them leave. Circe told him that he must go to the land of death and seek the prophecy of Tiresias before he could go home. Odysseus was upset by this and asked who destined this journey. She told him how to get to the land of the dead and what sacrifices to make there. As they prepare to leave, Elpenor who had fallen asleep in drunkenness on the roof, fell and died. No one noticed as Odysseus instructed his men:

*"Homeward you think we must be sailing
to our own land; no elsewhere is the voyage
Kirk has laid upon me. We must go
to the cold homes of death and pale Persephone
to hear Teiresias tell of time to come."* Book 10, lines 621-5

The men wept as they went to the ship, fearful of the journey to come. Circe gave them a black ram and a black ewe to sacrifice when appropriate.

Topic Tracking: Journeys 6

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 8



Book 11

They sailed through the night into the sea. They came to the land of the men of winter and beached the ships. Here Eurylochus and another prepared the ram and ewe for sacrifice. Odysseus addressed a prayer to the dead and sacrificed the sheep into a pit that had been dug. He let the blood and gore of the beasts fall into the pit. The shadows of the dead began to gather around this. The first of the dead to walk into the pit was Elpenor. Elpenor told them what happened to him and asked them to come back and bury him before they went home. Odysseus' mother Antikleia came next but Odysseus had to hold her off with a sword. After here, Tiresias arrived and spoke: "Stand clear, put up your sword;/ let me but taste of blood. I shall speak true." Book 11, lines 106-7. Odysseus rested and Tiresias warned him of the trouble ahead. He told him not to kill the cattle of the sun and he foresaw that he will return home alone. After he deals with the suitors in Ithaca, he is to walk inland until he finds people who have never heard of the sea and sacrifice to Poseidon. Odysseus asked him why his mother did not look at him and Tiresias said that she must be allowed to taste the blood.

She came to him after awhile and asked him why he was in the gloom of the dead and not in Ithaca. He told her that he had not yet been home and she told him that Penelope was still there with Telemachus. She relayed that Laertes was not doing well because he was sick with longing for his son. She died recently. He tried to embrace her three times but couldn't. He lamented to his mother. She explained that she was not flesh and bones but just a soul. Many ghosts continued to surround the pit and Odysseus had to hold them off with his sword. Next a granddaughter of Aeolus told her story and then the mother of Heracles and others. The mother of Oedipus and Nestor's mother came forward. After these, the mother of Castor and Pollux and Ariadne came. Odysseus goes suddenly quiet and stops telling his story. Arete addressed the assembled men "How does he stand now in your eyes, this captain,/ the look and bulk of him, the inward poise?" Book 11, lines 391-2. Arete and Alcinous command that Odysseus rest one more day before he leaves for Ithaca. Odysseus says that he would wait a year if Alcinous wished it because it would be far better to return to Ithaca with wealth. The king tells Odysseus that he wants to hear more of the story.

Odysseus continues, saying his story gets sadder. After the women stopped coming Agamemnon appeared but had trouble speaking. Odysseus wept and asked him how he died. Agamemnon relayed the story of Aegisthus and Orestes' revenge. His wife and betrayer had not even closed his mouth and eyes after his murder. Agamemnon continued saying that his wife did a deed that reflected on the whole of her gender. Odysseus noted that Zeus had cursed the house of Atreus because thousands died for the sake of Menelaus' wife Helen. Agamemnon told him to be wary of women even though he need fear nothing from his own wife who was loyal. He asked Odysseus if he had been home and Odysseus tells him that he hasn't. Achilles and Ajax appeared next. Achilles spoke first and asked him how he came to the underworld. Odysseus told him that he need not be upset by death because he was honored so much. Achilles responded quickly:



*"Let me hear no smooth talk
of death from you, Odysseus, light of councils.
Better, I say, to break sod as a farm hand
for some poor country man, on iron rations,
than lord it over all the exhausted dead."* Book 11, lines 578-81

Achilles asked about his son and Odysseus told him that he came into the battle and the assembly holding his own. He was the only Greek not afraid in the horse and went home with much plunder. Ajax hung around the pit but did not talk because he was still angry that Odysseus had gotten Achilles' armor instead of him. When Odysseus asked to talk to him, Ajax walked away. Odysseus saw many of the classical heroes and villains: Tityos, the raper of Leto, whose liver was being ripped out by vultures for eternity; Tantalos who has water flow up to his chin until he can almost drink it and then disappear and grapes that do the same from above; and Sisyphus who must push a boulder up a hill but every time he gets near the top it falls back to the bottom. Then Heracles approached him and compared his labors to Odysseus'... Then he lamented his own fate and then turned away. Odysseus wanted to see more but the dead were swarming so they rushed to the ship and left.

Topic Tracking: Journeys 7



Book 12

They kept sailing back to Circe's island and they buried Elpenor. Circe gave them food and addressed them "Hearts of oak, did you go down/ alive into the homes of death? One visit/ finishes all men but yourselves, twice mortal!" Book 12, lines 25-7. They feasted late into the night and Circe told Odysseus about the Sirens and their bewitching song that makes men drive their boats ashore and perish. She advised him to fashion earplugs for his men from beeswax, but if he wanted to listen to their son he must be lashed to the mast or else he would jump ship to get to them. After the Sirens are the drifting rocks which must be avoided by taking a route that goes past Scylla, a six-headed monster, and Charybdis, a whirlpool. She advised him to sail near the cave of Scylla and take the chance of losing six men rather than all of them. After these obstacles would be the island of the cattle of the sun. She warned him not to touch them because that would clearly mean his doom.

At dawn Circe left and Odysseus prepared his men for departure. He addressed them warning them that there was danger ahead. He told them about the Sirens but purposefully left out Scylla and Charybdis. When they neared the island of the Sirens, the men put in their ear plugs and lashed Odysseus to the mast. As the song got louder he thrashed more and more but they just tied his bonds tighter. He describes their beautiful song to the crowd. When the island was out of sight his men released him. The men hesitated in fear of whatever was to come next so Odysseus paused and encouraged them. They rowed faster and watched the Charybdis on their left vomiting up debris. While they watched this, Scylla struck from her cave and ate six men. Odysseus heard the yelling but had the men row faster. Soon they were out of danger and they were nearing the island of the cattle of the sun. Odysseus spoke this warning:

*"Shipmates, grieving and weary though you are,
listen: I had forewarning from Teiresias
and Kirke, too; both told me I must shun
[this island of the Sun, the world's delight.
Nothing but fatal trouble shall we find here,
Pull away, then, and put the land astern." Book 12, lines 350-5*

Eurylochus cursed him and asked if he was human and told him that they did not want to row through the night. He told Odysseus that they could stop there and not touch the cattle or flocks and eat from their own ample stores. Everyone agreed with him so they landed on the beach and Odysseus made them all swear not to touch the animals on the island. They ate and mourned the men they lost to Scylla. They became stuck on the island because of storms for twenty days. They tried to fish for food but get very little. One day Odysseus went off alone to pray to the gods in peace and while he was gone Eurylochus encouraged the men to kill the cattle and make offerings to the gods for appeasement. They killed the cattle and begin an elaborate sacrifice. Odysseus woke from a slumber and smelled the smoke. He immediately prayed to Zeus cursing his own fortune. The Sun went to Zeus and asked for revenge. Zeus told him that he would destroy their ship once it went out to sea. When Odysseus approached his men,



the hides of the cattle were still moving around. They feasted for six days and on the seventh day they left with a good breeze behind them. Soon after they were on the sea a thunderhead appeared and Zeus split the ship in half with lightning.

Odysseus climbed up on the floating mast and lashed it to the remnants of the keel. All his men were dead and the wind made him drift back to Scylla and Charybdis. He was almost sucked into the whirlpool but he jumped at the last minute and grabbed hold of a fig tree. He waited for the remnants of the ship to be vomited back up and jumped onto it. Fortunately, Scylla did not notice him and he floated to the island of Calypso. This is where he started and ended his story .

Topic Tracking: Journeys 8



Book 13

Odysseus ends his tale and Alcinous assures him that his wanderings are over for good. He calls to the lords and asks them to add a tripod and a cauldron each to Odysseus' treasures. In the morning he steps onto the ships he is going to lend to Odysseus and then makes a sacrifice to Zeus as Demodokos continues to sing. Odysseus keeps turning to the sun waiting for the day to end so that he may return home after so many years. When it is night, Odysseus is happy as Alcinous blesses him and they drink from the wine bowl. Odysseus puts his goblet in the hands of Arete saying "Live in felicity,/ and make this palace lovely for your children,/ your countrymen and your king" Book 13, lines 75-7. He goes to the sea with his new crew and sets off in the night. He sleeps while the ship speeds and they pull up near Ithaca at dawn. The sailors pull into a special cove and unload Odysseus as he is sleeping. They stow all of his goods in the roots of an olive tree and turn around to go home. Poseidon goes to Zeus and complains that Odysseus has been returned home without a sacrifice to him. Zeus tells him to do as he thinks appropriate and when the ship nears the bay of Skheria Poseidon turned the ship and the sailors into stone. At first the people wonder who would moor so far out of the bar, but Alcinous speaks to them:

*"The present doom upon the ship - on me-
my father prophesied in the olden time.
If we gave safe conveyance to all passengers
we should incur Poseidon's wrath, he said,
whereby one day a fair ship, manned by Phaiakians,
would come to grief at the god's hands"* Book 13, lines 215-220

Alcinous decrees that they will no longer give passage to all wanderers and that they should sacrifice twelve bulls to Poseidon. Odysseus wakes but does not recognize his home. Athena covers him in a mist to hide him and he is worried that he is in another strange land and doesn't know what to do with the treasure. He thinks first that he was betrayed but when he finds that none of the treasure was stolen he thinks otherwise. Athena comes to him in the shape of a shepherd. He asks her to help him store his treasure and to tell him where he has landed. Athena replies that he must be a fool not to know what country he is in. She goes over the wonderful attributes of Ithaca. He replies, lying, that he is a refugee from Crete who killed the son of the king there because he wanted to take away his plunder from Troy. He tells her that he paid some men to take him away from Crete and they left him here. Athena smiles and reveals herself to him and tells him to stop being crafty. She asks if he even guessed that it was Athena and not a shepherd. She tells him that she planned for him to come to the island with the new wealth. He doubts that he is in Ithaca and tells her to prove it. She gets a little frustrated with him and describes the cove in which he landed and he kisses the earth because he knows he is home. She tells him to have courage and that they are going to hide the treasure in a cave nearby and then decide what to do next. They move all the treasure and Athena speaks to Odysseus:



*"Son of Laertes and the gods of old,
Odysseus, master of land ways and sea ways,
put your mind on a way to reach and strike
a crowd of brazen upstarts. Three long years
they have played master in your house: three years
trying to win your lovely lady, making
gifts as though betrothed."* Book 13, lines 468-73

Odysseus laments about his wife's situation and realizes that he could have ended up like Agamemnon. She tells him not to be afraid because she will be there to support him. She tells him that she will disguise him as an old man so that no one will recognize him and that he should go stay with the swineherd while she retrieves Telemachus. Odysseus asks why they shouldn't tell Telemachus that his father has returned and She says that Telemachus has his own troubles with the sailors waiting in ambush. She changes him into an old man and then leaves to find Telemachus.

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 9

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 6



Book 14

Odysseus goes into the forest to the remote clearing of the swineherd Eumaius. There are many pigs in the pens and they are guarded by dogs. The dogs snarl at him and Odysseus throws a rock at them. Eumaius yells at him and tells him that he almost got hurt. He complains that he has been wasting away in the forest while his master has been gone. He leads Odysseus into his hut and Odysseus blesses him for his kindness. Eumaius tells him that the gods have hindered his master's return. He slaughters two young pigs and shares the meat with Odysseus:

*"There is your dinner, friend, the pork of slaves.
Our fat shoats are all eaten by the suitors,
cold-hearted men, who never spare a thought
for how they stand in the sight of Zeus. The gods
living in bliss are fond of no wrongdoing,
but honor discipline and right behavior."* Book 14, lines 97-103

Eumaius complains about the suitors who have destroyed the estate and he longs for the return of Odysseus. Odysseus continues to eat but then asks Eumaius the name of his master because he has been all over and may have seen him. Eumaius tells Odysseus that Penelope and Telemachus no longer trust travelers because they have been given false hope on so many occasions Odysseus swears to Eumaius that he is telling the truth when he says that Odysseus will return and avenge his wife and estate. Eumaius answers that he believes him but will give him no gift for the news. He tells Odysseus that Telemachus went to find news of his father and is in danger of an ambush. Then he changes the subject and asks Odysseus to tell his story. Odysseus begins to tell his tale but warns that it might take a year to tell completely. He tells Eumaius that he comes from Crete and his mother was the concubine of a rich man. When the man died, his legitimate sons stripped him of most of his wealth. His connections, however, allowed him to marry into a wealthy family. He loved war, not farming and family, and spent most of his time getting plunder from battles and sieges. He went to Troy with his own ships and when the war there was over he sailed to Egypt in search of gold. His men were killed by the Egyptians and he was put into forced labor. He was there for seven years, during which he was freed and amassed another fortune. In the eighth year, he was taken in by a Phoenician adventurer who "took me in completely with his schemes,/ and led me with him to Phoinikia/... he meant in fact, to trade me off, and get/a high price for me." Book 14, lines 337-47..

The ship became lost on the way and he washed up on an island where the king took care of him. There he heard of Odysseus who had been recently sent off to Ithaca. The king offered him passage and they plotted to make him a slave, abandoning him on Ithaca without a tunic or a cloak. He escaped from the ship and hid in a thicket and then wandered into the forest where he found the hut of the swineherd.. Eumaius is sad for him, but he does not believe the part about Odysseus. He tells him that he moved out of the town and goes there only at the call of Penelope. Once, men made a fool of him by promising that Odysseus was coming back. He got his hopes up and was heart-broken.



Since then he has believed no news. Odysseus offers a pact: if his news is correct, Eumaius will give him a tunic and cloak when Odysseus arrives and if he does not come back he should have the slaves throw him from a cliff. Eumaius replies that it is a bad deal for a host to make with a guest. They feast on a great pig and Eumaius makes an offering to the gods for the return of Odysseus. Odysseus blesses him for giving him shelter and kindness. At night Odysseus talks Eumaius into giving him a cloak to keep him warm at night. He tells him the story of an ambush at Troy he participated in with Odysseus when he had left his own cloak behind and was very cold. Odysseus sent a runner back to the camp so he would leave his cloak behind and everyone would have one. Eumaius tells him that this is a good story and he lends him his own cloak for the night but would have to give it back in the morning. Odysseus goes to sleep, but Eumaius goes out to watch the pigs.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 7

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 10



Book 15

Athena travels to Sparta and finds Telemachus with Nestor's son Peisistratos at the house of Menelaus. He is awake even though it is night time and she tells him to end his journey and go home. He is to tell Menelaus that Penelope's family is forcing her to marry Eurymachus and if he does not return home he will lose all his possessions. She also warns him that some of the suitors are waiting in ambush but reassures him that the immortals will give him a swift wind home. She advises that when he gets to Ithaca he should stay one night with the swineherd. When she leaves, Telemachus wakes up Peisistratos and tells him that it is time to leave. The son of Nestor responds:

*"It is still night,
and no moon. Can we drive now? We can not,
itch as we may for the road home. Dawn is near;
allow the captain of the spearmen, Menelaos,
time to pack our car with gifts and time
to speak a gracious word, sending us off.
A guest remembers all of his days
that host who makes provisions for him kindly."* Book 15, lines 68-75

Dawn comes and Telemachus goes to Menelaus and asks him to send him home. Menelaus tells him that he is free to go but he wants to accompany him part of the journey. Telemachus tells him that he must go quickly to protect his belongings and the king prepares everything for him. Helen gives him a beautiful robe for his future bride. They eat breakfast and afterwards Menelaus bids the two young men farewell. As the king speaks there is an omen of an eagle killing a white goose. Peisistratos asks Menelaus to read the omen and he says it is a sign that Odysseus will return to his house in fury. Telemachus prays to Zeus that he is right and rides off. They travel through the day and when they near Pylos, Telemachus appeals to Peisistratos and their new friendship, asking if he will allow him to go straight to the ship and not stop in Pylos where Nestor is sure to detain him. Peisistratos agrees and they avoid the city. Telemachus calls his crew together and loads his new gifts. They ready the ship as Telemachus prays to Athena. At that moment a wandering man skilled in prophecy arrives. The man, Theoklymenos, murdered someone near Argos and had been expelled. His father had been expelled from Pylos. He approaches Telemachus and advises him to make a libation before they go to sea. He explains why he was pushed from his city and asks Telemachus for space on the ship. Telemachus gives it to him. They sail away quickly with Athena's wind propelling them.

That night Eumaius and Odysseus eat again and Odysseus tests Eumaius to see if he is still hospitable:

*"At daybreak I must go and try my luck
around the port. I burden you too long.
Direct me, put me on the road with someone.
Nothing else for it but to play the beggar."* Book 15, lines 381-4



Eumaius will not allow Odysseus to go beg and he insists that he stay with him. Odysseus blesses him for all his kindness and then he asks him to tell him about Odysseus' mother and father. Eumaius tells him that Laertes still lives but wants to die and that his wife did die from sorrow. Eumaius was brought up by Odysseus mother with her daughter. He tells Odysseus that he became a slave as a child. He asks Eumaius about his homeland and Eumaius tells him of an island where there are not many people but there are two towns both of which were ruled by his father. When he was very small a group of Phoenician sailors came ashore for trading and stayed over a year. One of the sailors seduced a Phoenician servant of the king and promised to take her back to Sidon when they left if she brought goods with her. After the year was up she joined them with treasures and the young son of the king to sell as a slave. They sailed for six days and the woman died. The Phoenicians sold the boy to Laertes in Ithaca. Odysseus is saddened by the tale and asks him if he hasn't had at least had some good in his life. The two men talk into the night.

Telemachus approaches Ithaca and they stop on another part of the island and the ship returns leaving Telemachus. He has another of his crew lodge Theoklymenos for the night promising to fetch him the next day. A hawk attacks a dove in an omen and the feathers fall between them. Theoklymenos tells him that this means that his family will be powerful. Telemachus puts on his sandals and goes into the forest to find the house of Eumaius.

Topic Tracking: Journeys 10

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 11



Book 16

Telemachus finds two men in the forest hut: Eumaius and a strange old beggar. The dogs do not bark at him and Eumaius is so happy he covers him with kisses. He tells him that he was sure he wouldn't return. Telemachus asks about his mother and Eumaius tells him that she is worn out by grieving. Odysseus moves aside to give his couch to Telemachus but Telemachus tells him not to move. Eumaius makes him a seat of his own from fleece and prepares some food for him. Telemachus asks Eumaius about his guest and the swineherd tells him that he is from Crete and is seeking protection. Telemachus tells him that he can barely protect himself but he will clothe the man and give him a sword. He warns that he should not stay in the hall with the suitors because it would be too dangerous. Odysseus asks Telemachus why he has done nothing about the suitors alleging that if he were in his position he would give his life to fight their wrongdoing. Telemachus calmly replies that he has no siblings or male relatives to assist him or replace him and all the princes of the island oppose him. He tells Eumaius to "Go down at once and tell the lady Penelope/ that I am back from Pylos safe and sound" Book 16, lines 151-2 but not to let everyone else know. Eumaius wants to go and inform Laertes as well but Telemachus tells him that since there is not sufficient time to go to both, he should send a housekeeper to Laertes. Athena watches all this and Odysseus sees her. She approaches him and speaks (the others don't see this):

*"Son of Laertes and the gods of old,
Odysseus, master of land ways and sea ways,
dissemble to your son no longer now.
the time has come: tell him how you together
will bring doom on the suitors in the town."* Book 16, lines 195-9

When Eumaius leaves, she restores Odysseus to his original shape and he returns to the hut. Telemachus is thunderstruck and thinks that Odysseus is a god from whom he must beg mercy. When Odysseus tells him that he is his father, Telemachus does not believe him. Odysseus tells Telemachus that he is not acting princely and that he is the only Odysseus who will ever come. He explains that Athena changed his shape and Telemachus hugs him and begins to weep. He asks Odysseus how he came to Ithaca and Odysseus tells his story then asks Telemachus to count the number of suitors and their followers for him. Telemachus tells him that there are scores of men and they cannot defeat them. Odysseus assures Telemachus that Athena will be with them along with Zeus Telemachus replies that these are two great defenders but they are distant and the suitors are near. Odysseus assures him that they will help and he should not fret too much. The he tells him that when he comes to the house tomorrow as a beggar he should tolerate their ill treatment of him until he gives him a sign. At the appropriate time, Telemachus is to hide all the weapons except enough for the two of them with the excuse that he is preventing a drunk accident. He also asks him not to tell anyone else of his arrival. Telemachus tells his father that he will be courageous and thinks it is a good plan.



During this exchange, Telemachus' ship arrives in the city and the swineherd announces to Penelope her son's return. The suitors are confused and dumfounded. Eurymachus addresses them:

*"Friends, face up to it;
that young pup Telemakhos, has done it;
he made the round trip, though we said he could not.
Well- now to get the best craft we can find
afloat, with oarsmen who can drench her bows,
and tell those on the island to come home."* Book 16, lines 415-20

Their comrades have already returned from the island and Antinous is in disbelief. They begin to make a new plan to kill Telemachus before he gets them exiled. No one speaks in reply to his proposal for a few moments, but soon Amphinomos says he does not want to kill Telemachus but that they should consult the gods either way. Penelope knows they are plotting her son's death as she barges in on them and tells them they are evil. She tells Antinous that his father was saved by Odysseus and he should have some respect for their household. Eurymachus speaks to her and swears on his life that they would never harm Telemachus. He lies and she retires to her room to weep for Odysseus. At dusk Odysseus and his son hear Eumaius coming and Athena turns him back into an old man. Telemachus greets Eumaius and asks about the town. Eumaius says that there is confusion among the suitors. they eat and go to sleep.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 8



Book 17

When dawn rises Telemachus puts on his sandals and is eager to go to the city. He tells Eumaius that he must go to town to show his mother in person that he is all right ... Then he tells him that the beggar should be led to town. Odysseus agrees with him and tells him that the old rags he is wearing might be his death but in the town he might find some merciful people. Telemachus is seen by Eurykleia first who runs up to him. Then Penelope sees him and exclaims:

*"Back with me!
Telemakhos, more sweet to me than sunlight!
I thought I should not see you again, ever,
after you took the ship that night to Pylos-
against my will, with not a word! You went
for news of your dear father. Tell me now
of everything you saw!"* Book 17, lines 51-7

He tells his mother to bathe and pray as he goes to retrieve Theoklymenos. He avoids the suitors as he leaves and runs into Theoklymenos being led to his house by one of the sailors. Telemachus tells the sailor to watch his gifts from Menelaus until the whole affair is over. He leads Theoklymenos to his mother who still wants to know if there is any news about Odysseus. He tells her that Nestor knew nothing but Menelaus told him that Odysseus was trapped on the island of Calypso. This upsets Penelope but Theoklymenos interrupts swearing that Odysseus is on the island planning to get revenge on the suitors. She tells him that if this were true she would give him many gifts. The suitors are competing with the javelin and then they go inside for a feast. While this continues, the swineherd is leading Odysseus into the town. Eumaius tells him that he wishes he wouldn't go beg but Odysseus asks him for a walking stick. They travel to the city over a spring and through some poplars when they cross the path of Melanthios who taunts them:

*"Here comes one scurvy type leading another!
God pairs them off together, every time.
Swineherd, where are you taking your new pig,
that stinking beggar there, licker of pots?
How many doorposts has he rubbed his back on
whining for garbage, where a noble guest
would rate a cauldron or a sword."* Book 17, lines 278-84

Odysseus has to stifle his anger as Melanthios kicks him in the hip. Eumaius is outraged by this behavior and he pleads for Odysseus to stay away from the town. Melanthios taunts him more and tells him that Odysseus died at sea and that the suitors are going to kill Telemachus. He leaves them and they come to the hall of Odysseus where the minstrel Phemius is singing. Odysseus turns to Eumaius and says, "here is the beautiful place- who could mistake it?/ here is Odysseus' hall: no hall like this!" Book 17, lines



340-1. Eumaius advises him that it is not safe for a beggar to go in there and Odysseus thinks that Eumaius should go in first.

While Eumaius speaks, an old dog who was trained by Odysseus as a puppy and is laying on a dung pile perks up his ears and tried to move but was too weak. Odysseus tells Eumaius that it is a wonder such a fine dog is neglected Eumaius tells him that servants are lazy without a master to tend to them. The dog, named Argos, dies after they leave. Telemachus sees the pair entering the hall and calls Eumaius over to eat. Odysseus enters the doorway later and Telemachus gives the beggar two handfuls of meat and bread. Odysseus blesses Telemachus and Athena whispers in his ear that he should go around and beg from three suitors to see what kind of men they are. Some give to him well and some do not. Melanthios tells the queen that he saw Eumaius leading the beggar to the house... Antinous lashes out asking him why he brought a beggar there. Eumaius tells him that he is a hard man and is interrupted by Telemachus who says that Antinous just wants to cause trouble. Telemachus then turns to Antinous and tells him that he is in no place to throw people out. Antinous yells back that he gave his footstool to the beggar, a good gift and others only gave him bread. Odysseus speaks to Antinous and tells him that he should give more than the rest of them because he is more lordly. Then Odysseus begins to tell his false tale and Antinous exclaims at his annoyance. He tells Odysseus that he has gotten enough from everyone else because they are generous with someone else's food. Odysseus retorts:

*"A pity you have more looks than heart.
You'd grudge a pinch of salt from your own larder
to your own handy man. You sit here, fat
on others' meat, and cannot bring yourself
to rummage out a crust of bread for me!"* Book 17, lines 594-9

Antinous is enraged and he bounces the stool off Odysseus' shoulder, Odysseus shakes his head and stays calm then speaks to the crowd. He says that Antinous hit him for being hungry and he wishes him to die before his wedding day. Antinous tell him to be quiet and eat or be beaten. Others rebuke Antinous for assaulting a guest. Telemachus sits still and gets more angry as Penelope curses under her breath. She tells her maid, Eurynome that Antinous is the worst of the lot and then asks her maid to go to Eumaius and have the beggar brought to her for questioning. Eumaius tells her the beggar is enchanting but warns her that he bears false news of Odysseus. Penelope tells him to lead the beggar to her so she can have a diversion from the suitors' behavior. Eumaius has the beggar follow him with the promise of a cloak and tunic. Odysseus says that the crowd of suitors worries him because they are so violent. He tells Eumaius to have the queen wait until sundown and then he will come. When Penelope asks why Eumaius has returned alone he explains that the beggar thinks it wiser if they not be seen together by the suitors. Penelope thinks this is wise and Eumaius rejoins Telemachus. He tells him that he has to leave to go attend to the swine. The suitors drink and dance into the evening.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 9

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 12



Book 18

Another local beggar comes into the room and tries to move Odysseus. Odysseus frowns and tells him that there is room for both of them. The beggar, named Irus, gets angry and says "Listen to him! the swine can talk your arm off,/ like an old oven woman! With two punches/ I'd knock him snoring,..."Book 18, lines 30-2. Antinous laughs at the challenge and points it out to everyone and tells them that whoever wins may sit and dine with them. Odysseus says he has no business fighting but he will do it because he is hungry. Telemachus tells him that he doesn't have to worry about a foul blow from one of the suitors because he will watch out for him. Athena gives Odysseus extra strength and bulk so that when he takes his ragged shirt off everyone is stunned at the beggar's physique. When Irus panics, Antinous mocks him and tells him that he will be sold as a slave if he doesn't fight. Odysseus wonders to himself how badly he should wound the man and decides just to hurt him a little. They fight and with the first hit Odysseus breaks Irus' jaw.

The suitors are very entertained and Antinous gives Odysseus blood pudding. Amphinomos gives him wine and Odysseus tells him that his hands are clean and that no man should break the law of the land and should stop before there is vengeance. Amphinomos is startled and wants to leave but Athena stops him. Penelope reenters the room prompted by Athena who wants her to show how beautiful she is to her husband (Penelope does not know this). She addresses her hand-maiden Eurynome and tells her she wishes to be seen among the suitors. Eurynome tells her to bathe so that she will not look as if she has been weeping. Penelope agrees and asks for her hand-maidens to come with her so she is not alone among the men. She falls asleep for awhile and the gods make her more attractive.

She wakes and gets ready and goes into the hall. She approaches Telemachus and chastises him for letting the beggars be shamefully treated. He tells her that he has no control over the suitors. Eurymachus interrupts and tells her that such a beauty will bring a hundred more suitors the next day. She tells him that her beauty was lost when her husband went to Troy. She recounts that Odysseus told her that she should take a new husband if he was not back by the time Telemachus had a beard. She tells them that this is soon but their behavior is inappropriate. Odysseus laughs at the way she toys with them and Antinous responds that it is only fair for her to accept their gifts. All the suitors present her with gifts and she takes them to her chambers. The suitors party into the night and Odysseus tells the maidens that he will tend the fires so that they can tend Penelope all night. Some of them laugh at the beggar. Melanthius' sister Melanthe ridicules the beggar and Melanthius tells his sister he is going to tell Telemachus how she is behaving and then calls her a slut. The girls are dumbfounded and they go away as he wishes. Athena wants Odysseus to be ridiculed more so Eurymachus baits him and says:

*"Friend, you have a mind to work,
do you? Could I hire you to clear stones
from wasteland for me- you'll be paid enough-*



*collecting boundary walls and planting trees?
I'll give you a bread ration every day,
a cloak to wrap in, sandals for your feet.
Oh no: you learned your dodges long ago-
no honest sweat. You'd rather tramp the country
begging, to keep your hoggish belly full."* Book 18, lines 443-51

Odysseus replies with a challenge that if they should complete with plows or weapons he would win when Odysseus returns. Eurymachus yells at him and takes a stool to throw at him but Odysseus hides by Amphinomos. The stool hits a wine steward and spills the wine. Telemachus advises that they go home to their beds and many of the suitors glare at him. Amphinomos holds them back and says that they should have one more drink and return home. They mix the wine and then leave to go to bed.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 10



Book 19

Odysseus turns to Telemachus and tells him to hide the weapons. Telemachus obeys and tells Eurykleia to shut the women in their chambers. She replies that it is time for him to pay attention to such things. Telemachus gives her the beggar as a torch bearer and she is moved by his stately speech. Odysseus tells Telemachus to be quiet because he is going to test Penelope and the hand-maidens. Telemachus does as he says and goes to his bed-chamber. Penelope steps from her chamber and is described to be like a goddess. Melanthe sees Odysseus again and taunts him calling him a goat, threatening to burn his behind with a torch. Odysseus warns her that everyone comes upon hard luck. He was a wealthy man and is now a beggar. She had better be careful. Penelope hears this and harangues the maid and has Eurynome fetch a skin for Odysseus to sit on. She asks him to speak of where he is from and he request not to recall what will make him weep. Penelope replies that she has been in grief since Odysseus left and it has gotten worse. She recounts her deception on the loom that lasted four years and how they caught her unweaving at night. She continues:

*"I have no strength left to evade a marriage
cannot find any further way; my parents
urge it upon me, and my son
will not stand by while they eat up his property.
He comprehends it, being a man full grown,
able to oversee the kind of house
Zeus would endow with honor."* Book 19, lines 184-90

She asks the beggar again to tell his tale and he retells his false story and how he once saw Odysseus cast by a strong gale. He tells her that he was a host for him for twelve days until the wind was favorable again. Penelope believes him and weeps. Odysseus' heart aches for her and she asks for some proof that he was host to him. He describes a brooch and shirt that Odysseus wore and his messenger. She put the brooch and shirt on him so she thinks that he is telling the truth. Odysseus tells her not to weep and tells her the story of the cattle of the sun and how Odysseus was supposed to come to Ithaka from Skheria. He says he hears this from the king with whom he stayed last and Penelope exclaims that if this were all true they would love him. She tells him that Odysseus will not come back and calls her maids in to bathe the beggar and give him finer clothing. Then she tells him that the lives of men are short. Odysseus tries to take neither a bath nor bedding, but she insists. He submits to being bathed by Eurykleia. She bathes his feet and begins to move upward when Odysseus realizes that he has an old scar she will recognize. He got it from a boar when he was a young man hunting with his maternal grandfather. Odysseus went after the boar first and speared him in the shoulder as the boar gored his thigh right above the knee. When he went home he got the glory of telling that story. The old nurse recognizes the scar:

*"Oh yes!
You are Odysseus! Ah, dear child! I could not*



*see you until now- not till I knew
my master's body with my hands!"* Book 19, lines 549-52

She turns to Penelope but Athena makes it so that she doesn't notice. Odysseus pulls Eurykleia to him and tells her that he may have to kill her if she isn't quiet. She is amazed that he speaks to her this way and promises to reveal all the disloyal handmaidens. Odysseus tells her that she should be quiet as she continues to bathe him. Penelope breaks the silence and asks if she may ask one more question of him. She asks him if she should stay with her son or marry and tells Odysseus of a dream of 20 fat geese and an eagle. The eagle broke their necks and told her to be glad because they were the suitors. Then he told her that her lord had returned. Odysseus asks her how the dream could be read any differently and she says that there are two gates of dreams: one ivory and one horn. False dreams come from the ivory and real ones from the horn. She says that tomorrow she will have a contest between the suitors and whoever can string Odysseus' bow and shoot through 12 axeheads may marry her. Odysseus tells her not to delay the contest and she tells him that he is a great comfort. She wishes he could comfort her longer but she has to go to sleep. They part and Penelope goes to sleep.

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 13

Topic Tracking: Journeys 11

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 11



Book 20

Odysseus makes his bed outside in the entry way and lies there without sleeping. Many women pass him on their way to the beds of the suitors and he wants to stop them but restrains himself. He tosses and turns in bed ... Athena comes to him and asks why he is being wakeful. Odysseus tells her that he worries because he is only one man. She tells him that with her by his side he could beat fifty bands of men. Penelope does not sleep much and prays to Artemis that she be killed rather than marry one of the suitors. During her prayer she sees a vision of Odysseus and cries out. The cry wakes Odysseus and he prays to Zeus asking for a sign. Zeus hears him and he releases a peal of thunder. A woman working hears this and prays that this be the last day of serving the suitors. Odysseus hears this and feels better. Telemachus awakens and goes to Eurykleia asking how the guest was taken care of. He accuses his mother of being unfair because the beggar slept on the floor. Eurykleia explains that the beggar wouldn't take a bed and Telemachus demands that the maids clean the house before all the suitors return. The swineherd returns and asks Odysseus if the suitors were respectful of him and Odysseus replies with a request that Zeus repay their deeds. Melanthios returns and taunts Odysseus again. Odysseus remains silent but gets more angry. The cattle foreman, Philoitios, arrives and asks who the beggar is. He welcomes him as a friend and wishes him luck because he reminds him that Odysseus may be in rags in some foreign land. He tells him that the life of a cattle herder is hard, especially with the suitors whom he would like to attack and Odysseus reassures him:

*"Herdsman, I make you out to be no coward
and no fool: I can see that for myself.
So let me tell you this. I swear by Zeus
all highest, by the table set for friends,
and by your king's hearthstone to which I've come,
Odysseus will return. You'll be on hand
to see, if you care to see it,
how those who lord it here will be cut down."* Book 20, lines 250-7

Eumaius and Philoitios echo his pledge as the suitors come together and speak about a plot against Telemachus. Amphinomos speaks against them and says that they should just all go and feast. The table is set and Telemachus has Odysseus sit on a stool next to him. He tells him he will guard him from any suitors. Antinous tells him that they should pay no heed to Telemachus. In the meantime cows are being sacrificed in Ithaca and Athena desires Odysseus to be offended more. She inspires one of the suitors, Ktesippos, to throw a cow hoof at Odysseus' head, It misses him and Telemachus tells him that he is lucky that he missed. Another suitor, Agelaus says that no one should touch the beggar but tells Telemachus that it is obvious that his father will never return and that his mother should be married. Telemachus replies that he is not impeding his mother's marriage but he will not force her. Athena makes the suitors laugh uncontrollably. Theoklymenos warns them that he has foreseen them dripping with blood. Eurymachus says that the guest is wrong and he should be shoved outside. Theoklymenos warns them that he sees damnation for all of them and he leaves. The

suitors try to provoke Telemachus but he ignores them. Penelope watches it all in silence.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 12



Book 21

Athena looks at Penelope and feels sorry for her. Penelope brings out the bow of Odysseus that he got as repayment for sheep that were stolen from Ithaca. She opens a store room door and looks over the fine clothing and has maids bring out 12 axeheads. She enters the hall filled with suitors and speaks:

*"Here is my lord Odysseus' hunting bow.
Bend and string it if you can. Who sends an arrow
through iron axe-helve sockets twelve in line?
I join my life with his and leave this place, my home,
my rich and beautiful bridal house, forever
to be remembered, though I dream it only."* Book 21, lines 78-83

She has Eumaius carry it into the courtyard. Philoitios cries at the scene and Antinous tells him to stop. He knows that this will not be an easy task but he makes it sound hard to intimidate the other suitors. Telemachus laughs and then covers it up by saying that Zeus has made him a half-wit. He tell them that he would like to bend the bow himself. He digs a little trench and tries three times and almost has it on the fourth try but stops with a look from Odysseus. He addresses the crowd and makes fun of his own youth. Antinous tells them to go one man at a time, thinking that if he goes last the bow will be the most supple.

The first suitor to try fails and announces that no one will be able to do it. Antinous tells him that he is just a weakling and at the prompting of Melanthios they warm and grease the bow. Everyone fails. Eumaius and Philoitios leave together and Odysseus follows them. He asks them if they would stand by Odysseus and when they both give positive answers he reveals himself and promises them marriages and gifts. They rejoice and weep. He tells them to stop and drift back inside separately. He tells Eumaius that when he is inside he should give him the bow to try. Philoitios is to lock all the doors and tell the women to lock themselves away. Eurymachus picks up the bow but cannot string it. He curses the humiliation. Antinous says that it is a holiday and they should feast and delay the contest for a day. Just then Odysseus speaks out and asks if he may try the bow... Antinous replies violently and compares him to a centaur who went insane from drunkenness. Penelope tells Antinous that he is being discourteous and that the beggar should be allowed to try. Eurymachus responds that they would be shamed if he could do it and she tells him that he has not good repute anyway so why should it matter if he is shamed. Telemachus responds to his mother:

*"Mother as to the bow and who may handle it
or not handle it, no man here
has more authority than I do- not the lord
or our own stony Ithaka nor the islands lying
east towards Elis; no one stops me if I choose
to give these weapons outright to my guest."* Book 21, lines 388-393



He tells her to go back into her chamber and stay there and she does, stunned by her sons speech. The swineherd gives the bow to Odysseus and the suitors yell at him. Telemachus tells Eumaius that it is all right and the suitors laugh at him. Odysseus tells Eumaius to make sure all the women are locked in their rooms. He takes his time looking over the bow and the suitors laugh at his seriousness. He strings the bow in one motion as a musician would an instrument. Zeus lets out a peal of thunder and Odysseus shoots through the 12 axes. He tells Telemachus that the stranger he invited into his house served him well. Telemachus readies himself for battle.

Topic Tracking: Guests and Hosts 14

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 13



Book 22

Odysseus leaps out of his rags and begins to shoot arrows at the suitors. He hits Antinous under the chin as he lifts a cup. The suitors look around for arms but cannot find any weapons. They yell and Odysseus tells them that it is over. They are all dumbfounded. Only Eurymachus speaks and tells Odysseus that everything that was wrong was the fault of Antinous so now Odysseus had his revenge. Odysseus tells him that he will have to fight his way out. Eurymachus tries to rally the suitors as he draws his sword to go after Odysseus, but Odysseus hits him in the liver. Amphinomos rushes Odysseus but Telemachus hits him in the back with a spear. He leaves the spear in the body and yells to his father telling him he will get them weapons.

Telemachus returns with shields and armor and arms the two men while Odysseus picks off suitors with his bow. The suitors see a window in the wall and try to get into it to go get help. Melanthios tells them that it is too narrow but he will scale the wall and bring back weapons. When Odysseus sees armed men he knows there has been treachery. Telemachus tells him that he forgot to lock the storeroom door as they see Melanthios return with another load of weapons. Odysseus sends Eumaius and Philoitios to stop him. In the storeroom they tie him to the ceiling beam. Eumaius tells him that he will be up there until dawn. They close the door and go to join Odysseus who is fighting forty men. Athena enters in the form of Mentor but Odysseus guesses that it is her. One of the suitors, Agelaus, cries out to Mentor telling him that Odysseus is in the wrong and he should fight with them. Athena tells Odysseus that he is not fighting smart enough. Agelaus rallies the suitors and gets six of them to throw spears at Odysseus at the same time. They miss and Odysseus and his companions fling their spears killing four suitors. They reclaim their spears and each kills again. Odysseus kills Agelaus and Telemachus hits another. Athena begins to make the suitors scatter like cattle stampeding from a hornet. One suitor, Leodes, clings to Odysseus' knees and asks for forgiveness. Odysseus replies that if he was the diviner of the crowd he should have foreseen this revenge. He kills him by chopping off his head. Then Phemius clings to Odysseus' knees and tells him he was forced to serve the suitors. Telemachus calls across the carnage and tells his father to spare the minstrel. He also tells him to spare their herald. The herald hears this and scrambles to his feet from his hiding place. Odysseus tells him it is all right and that he should go outside. He looks over the dead bodies as his fury subsides:

*"Think of a catch that fishermen haul in to a halfmoon bay
in a fine-meshed net from the white-caps of the sea:
how all are poured out on the sand, in throes for the salt sea,
twitching their cold lives away in Helios' fiery air:
so lay the suitors heaped on one another."* Book 22, lines 432-6

Odysseus tells Telemachus to get Eurykleia. She sees Odysseus covered in blood and gore and begins to cry. He tells her to have courage and asks her who of the women are innocent. She says of the fifty there are twelve who are corrupt. She tells him to go to Penelope, but he says it is not yet time. He tells Telemachus to have the servants



clean up the dead bodies and the blood. When it is clean he tells the treacherous girls that they are sluts and he hangs them one by one in the courtyard. Then Melanthios is brought out. His nose and ears are ripped off and they tear his genitals off for the dogs. Odysseus wants the house cleansed of the bloodshed and Euryklea tells him to put on a clean tunic. He tells her that he will when the palace has been cleansed with brimstone smoke.

Topic Tracking: Disguise and Deceit 14



Book 23

The nurse goes upstairs excited by the news and she wakes Penelope telling her that her husband has returned. Penelope tells her not to play tricks on her and Eurykleia is surprised that Penelope would joke about such a thing. She tells her that the old beggar was Odysseus and he killed all the suitors. Penelope asks her how this is possible and Eurykleia replies:

*"I did not see it,
I knew nothing; only I heard the groans
of men dying. We sat still in the inner rooms
holding our breath, and marvelling, shut in,
until Telemachos came to the door and called me-
your own dear son, sent this time by his father!"* Book 23, lines 41-6

She tells her that the corpses were piled up at the gate and that the house has been cleansed. Penelope warns her not to lose herself in happiness because it was the gods who struck down the suitors and Odysseus hasn't come. Eurykleia tells her that she saw his scar the night before and knew it was him, but Penelope still thinks they are being tricked by the immortals. She goes downstairs unsure what she will find and sees a man leaning against a pillar at whom she gazes for a while. Telemachus calls to her and asks her why she is being so cruel and avoiding her husband. Penelope tells him that she is stunned but will seek secret signs. Odysseus smiles and tells Telemachus to be at peace because they might be in trouble for killing citizens. Telemachus tries to say that it doesn't matter because they can stand together. Odysseus thinks that everyone should dress well and they should act like there is a feast so that no one will hear of the deaths for the time being. They do this and everyone in the town thinks that Penelope has finally gotten married. Meanwhile Odysseus was being bathed by Eurynome. He goes to his wife and tells her that the immortals have made her hard. He asks for Eurykleia to make him a bed on the floor.

Penelope remains aloof because she still isn't sure it is him and she tells Eurykleia to make the bed outside her bedroom. He raged that his olive bed, their secret pact, had been moved from the bedroom. When she hears him describe how he built it she burst into tears and ran to him asking him not to rage at her. She asks him to forgive her because she had to be on guard for so many years. He begins to weep and would have wept until dawn if Athena did not slow the night. Odysseus tells his wife that there is one more trial foretold by Tiresias. She asks him what the trial is and he at first says he wants to sleep but explains that he must go to a land where they have never heard of the sea and sacrifice to Poseidon. At this place a man will mistake his oar for a winnowing fan. They stop talking and have sex after the maids have left the room. Telemachus quiets the dancing downstairs:

*"The royal pair mingled in love again
and afterward lay revelling in stories:
hers of the siege her beauty stood at home*



*from arrogant suitors, crowding on her sight,
and how they fed their courtships on his cattle
oxen and fat sheep, and drank up rivers
of wine out of the vats. Odysseus told
of what hard blows he had dealt to others
and of what blows he had taken-all that story." Book 23, lines 337-46*

He recounts his journeys from island to island and his lost men as well as the nymphs who loved him. While they talk and sleep Athena takes care of everything else. When they wake, Odysseus tells her that their life has started again. He tells her to watch over the house because he is going to go see his father. He is worried that word will reach the town that all the suitors are dead. He goes off with his son and the herdsmen.



Book 24

While they leave for the house of Laertes, Hermes takes the souls of the fallen suitors down to the underworld to join the rest of the dead. They meet the ghosts of Achilles, Ajax, and Agamemnon. Achilles speaks to Agamemnon and pities his death at home instead of in battle where he should have died. Agamemnon agrees with him and describes the elaborate funeral games that were held after Achilles fell. His mother presented them with extravagant prizes. His body was burned and his bones interred in an amphora with Patroclus, his fallen comrade. As they spoke, Hermes came close to them and Agamemnon recognized one of the suitors Amphimedon. He asks the suitor how he came to the land of the dead. Amphimedon recounts the trickery of Penelope at her loom, keeping the suitors waiting for years. After four years they found out that she was unraveling the work. Then he tells Agamemnon that the swineherd and Telemachus conspired and snuck Odysseus into the hall as a beggar. The beggar was allowed to try the bow:

*"So the great soldier
took his bow and bent it for the bowstring
effortlessly. He drilled the axeheads clean,
sprang, and decanted arrows on the door sill,
glared, and drew again. This time he killed
Antinous." Book 24, lines 196-201*

He tells Agamemnon about the rest of the carnage and that the bodies lie unburied in the hall. When Amphimedon stops, Agamemnon shouts aloud that Odysseus was fortunate to marry such a loyal wife. He describes how differently his wife behaved and how shameful it was.

As they talk of the world of the living, Odysseus and his companions near the house of Laertes, which has become run down since his departure. Odysseus tells his companions to go inside and prepare a meal as he walks the fields trying to find his father, who has gone to clear out a distant field. He finds his father working the earth near a fruit tree looking downtrodden. He decides that he should test him first. He speaks to him:

*"Old man, the orchard keeper
you work for is no townsman. A good eye
for growing things he has; there's not a nursing,
fig tree, vine stock, olive tree or pear tree
or garden bed uncared for on this farm.
But I might add- don't take offense- your own
appearance could be tidier. Old age
yes- but why the squalor, and rags to boot?" Book 24, lines 270-7*

He asks Laertes who his master is and pretends that he is a man from elsewhere who has come in search of Odysseus whom he took care of and presented with gifts.



Laertes' eyes begin to fill with tears and he tells Odysseus that he has come to Ithaca. He tells him that Odysseus has never come home and is probably dead and left unburied far away. Then Laertes asks him where he is from and how he came to Ithaca. Odysseus tells him many lies: He is from Sikania, his name is Quarrelman and his ship is in a nearby cove. He tells him that he saw Odysseus five years before heading home. Laertes is overcome by grief and he pours dirt over his head. Odysseus is struck by this and embraces his father telling him who he is and that the suitors are taken care of. Laertes asks for some proof and Odysseus shows him the boar's wound on his thigh and the old man almost faints and thanks the gods but is worried that the death of the suitors will bring their kin against them. Odysseus tells him to leave the worrying to him. They go back to the house where Telemachus and Eumaius are preparing a meal. Athena makes Laertes stronger. Laertes tells his son that he wished he were young again and could have helped him fight the suitors. The slave Dolios come to the house and is amazed to see Odysseus. He asks him if Penelope knows he has arrived and Odysseus laughs at the question. They all sit down and eat.

Meanwhile the news of the battle reaches the town and everyone goes to an assembly. An old man gets up and encourages the assembled men to pursue Odysseus for the murder. Medon, Odysseus' herald, stands to speak:

*"Now hear me, men of Ithaka.
When these hard deeds were done by Lord Odysseus
the immortal gods were not far off. I saw
with my own eyes someone divine who fought
beside him, in the shape and dress of Mentor;
it was a god who shone before Odysseus,
a god who swept the suitors down the hall
dying in droves." Book 24, lines 489 - 96*

Another old man gets up and tells the townspeople that the deaths were their own fault. He urges them to let the matter drop. Many people agree, but a good number run for their arms. The father of Antinous rallies them. Athena approaches Zeus while this happens and asks him what he plans to do. Zeus says he already has plans but advises that Odysseus be made king in a sworn pact and everyone be made friends again. Athena goes down to Odysseus as he finishes his dinner, before the mob arrives. Odysseus arms with his companions and his father. Athena appears as Mentor and Odysseus encourages Telemachus not to shame his family in the coming melee. Athena halts them and tells them to invoke her name and Zeus' as they throw their spears. The fight began and Antinous' father is killed immediately. Athena stops them and tells them to make peace. Everyone is unnerved by the voice of the goddess. She speaks to Odysseus:

*"Son of Laertes and the gods of old,
Odysseus, master of land ways and sea ways,
command yourself. Call off this battle now,
or Zeus who views the wide world may be angry." Book 24, lines 605-609*



Odysseus obeys her and the parties swear to peace, with Athena (in the form of Mentor) as their peacemaker.

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